

*A Study on the Integration of AR and Communication Design in
Promoting Taiwan's Local Culture*

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Abstract

Since the late 20th century, with the wave of globalization and the global push for policies, the cultural industry has progressively taken center stage. Within this trend, people have begun to pay attention to their own land, contemplating how to unearth the unique local culture and ensure its continuation amid the evolution of time. Despite Taiwan's recent efforts to promote a renaissance of local culture, Guishanhou Street in Taoyuan's Guishan District, with its rich historical and cultural treasures, remains somewhat overlooked. Traditional marketing methods and communication with consumers have been relatively simple and indirect. With the rise of social media and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a shift in the lifestyle of the public. The focus on information has gradually transitioned from offline to online platforms. Today, brands effectively establish a close connection with consumers by leveraging marketing technology. This study, through a case study approach, aims to understand the manipulation model of incorporating Augmented Reality (AR) into local design promotion. By utilizing the characteristics of AR, which enhance the user's storytelling experience in real environments, the research integrates the design of AR cultural activities in Guishanhou Street, Taoyuan. The results indicate that, through the participation of the younger demographic in a series of AR activities designed for Guishanhou Street, there is an increased understanding of the historical and cultural development of the street. This, indirectly, contributes to the promotion of local regeneration and the sustainable development of culture.

Keywords: Augmented Reality, Cultural Industry, Local Design, Story Marketing

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Introduction

In the age of globalization, the influx of foreign cultures has ignited a growing interest in local cultures. Chiang Yu-Chan (2004) highlights that within this global wave, the threat of homogeneity has prompted concerns about the potential erosion of local cultures. People must consider how to protect local assets and emphasize the importance of local culture, promoting local characteristics through slogans such as "global localization" or "global thinking, local action."

According to the Ministry of Culture (2020), since 2016 in Taiwan, the core ideology of the nation's cultural policy has shifted towards pursuing active artistic freedom, ensuring comprehensive freedom of expression. This is reflected in five key cultural strategies: revitalizing cultural governance and fostering an environment of artistic freedom, preserving and representing the historical narratives of land and people, fostering community development to promote local culture, enhancing cultural content to stimulate the cultural economy, and charting a new course for the cultural future by encouraging youth creativity, bolstering digital innovation, and fostering international connections. This underscores the importance of locally-rooted culture and the imperative to reshape local and regional identities, charting the course for future national development.

The Guishan District is located in the northeastern part of Taoyuan City and is considered a subsidiary satellite administrative area. The common impression of Guishan often revolves around industrial zones, numerous factories, and transportation hubs, lacking distinctive local characteristics. However, Guishan District boasts natural resources such as the Hutoushan Environmental Park, Nankan River Bike Path. Its cultural and historical assets include Guishan Military Dependents' Village Museum, Sianguang 2nd Village, Guanyin Temple, Tsao's House, Taolin Railway, and Guishanhou Street.

In recent years, various old streets across Taiwan have been actively promoting local cultural activities. However, the cultural industry development in Guishanhou Street area has not yet fully matured, and there is limited research on Guishanhou Street. Therefore, this study aims to explore local cultural industries by reviewing literature and conducting case studies of Taiwan's distinctive old streets. Finally, through technology marketing, the study will employ augmented reality (AR) integrated marketing communication to promote Guishan. The goal is to gain recognition from local residents and attract more visitors to become acquainted with Guishanhou Street.

Literature Review

Local Cultural Industries

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) typically defines cultural industries as "the combination of creativity, production, and commerce, where the content inherently possesses intangible assets and cultural concepts, and receives protection under intellectual property rights, presented in the form of products or services" (Zhou, 2016). In a broader sense, "cultural industries" refer to the utilization of local historical and cultural assets to stimulate economic activity, even if profits do not directly benefit the community, they still generate ripple effects. However, from an operational perspective, the narrower definition of "cultural industries" refers to entities that involve community residents in their creation, development, operation, and benefits. These entities

are based on the community's existing cultural and historical resources and are developed through the discovery, confirmation, and utilization of these resources. They provide industries for the sharing, experiencing, and learning of community culture in various aspects such as community life, production, ecology, and livelihood (Huang, 2003).

In 1994, the Executive Yuan's Cultural Construction Committee planned to promote the "Community Overall Construction Project," with a focus on the "cultural industry," proposing an "endogenous" development strategy for rural revitalization (Su, 2011). This initiative aimed to transform "culture into industry and industry into culture," further solidifying its position as a influential national policy. In 2002, the Council for Cultural Affairs (CCA) designated the "cultural industry" as a policy priority. The cultural industry relies entirely on creativity and individuality, emphasizing the characteristics of products, local traditions, and uniqueness, even the originality of artisans or artists, emphasizing the vitality and spiritual value of products. It is characterized by community-based, local, and regional production organizations and collaboration. This industry model prioritizes traditional, creative, individual, and charismatic aspects over mass production (Chen, 1998).

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Local Cultural Marketing

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is a marketing concept advocated in the 1990s. The American Association of Advertising Agencies (4A) defines IMC as a marketing communication plan that involves marketers fully understanding the brand and proposing comprehensive communication methods for the brand, combining various vehicles such as advertising, direct marketing, promotion, and public relations to provide the brand with clear and coherent information, thus maximizing the impact of communication (Dai, 2015).

Research on the application of integrated marketing communication in local culture marketing can be roughly divided into two categories. The first category analyzes the effectiveness of integrated marketing communication in tourism or festival activities. For example, studies like "Analysis of the Promotional Benefits of Integrated Marketing Communication in Local Culture: A Case Study of Hengchun Folk Songs" (Chen, 2019), "Integrated Marketing Communication in Cultural Tourism Industry: A Case Study of Hakka Tung Blossom Festival" (Tseng, 2010), and "Integrated Marketing Communication Applied to Cultural Festival Activities: A Case Study of the '2009 Fu City Qixi Sixteenth Art Festival'" (Lo, 2010). The second category focuses on regional integrated marketing communication research. For instance, studies such as "A Study on the Integrated Marketing Communication Performance of the West Lake Commercial District" (Hsu, 2015) and "A Study on Integrated Marketing Communication in Community Leisure Tourism: A Case Study of Yougui Ecological Community" (Lai, 2015).

Overall, there is limited research exploring the application of integrated marketing communication in promoting local cultural activities from a design perspective. Subsequently, this study will investigate the application of integrated marketing communication in local culture promotion from the perspective of visual communication design.

Methods

Case study is a comprehensive method of research that involves collecting complete and effective case data, capturing the development and changes of a single research subject from various aspects, and conducting in-depth and specific research on the research subject (Yeh,

2013). The research unit could be an individual, a family, an organization, a group, a community, a region, or a country (Yin, 2009). The steps of the case study in this research are as follows: (1) Describing the objective: Research on the application of integrated marketing communication in promoting local cultural activities. (2) Designing the research approach: Analyzing the promotion activities of old streets throughout Taiwan. (3) Collecting data: Gathering visual designs related to old street activities. (4) Organizing the data: Integrating cases into a complete research structure unit. (5) Writing reports and discussing the importance of results: Completing the overall research case analysis and deriving conclusions (Wang & Wang, 2020).

Sample

This study examines the visual designs associated with promotion activities in various old streets across Taiwan. The cases analyzed include Tou Cheng Old Street's "Travel slowly Toucheng" and "The Way We Live Touching Toucheng," Shengkeng Old Street's "New Taipei Have fun Easy to buy," Chidong Old Street's "Taipei Stroll," Daxi Old Street's "Mystery Tour of Da Xi," and Sanxia Old Street's "Sanxia Romantic Paradise," totaling six cases. The analysis encompasses the campaign theme, duration, objectives, integrated communication tools, and visual designs.

Results

Case Study Results

As shown in table 1, all six cases utilized posters, which are one of the most common mass communication tools, known for their ability to capture people's attention and effectively convey information. Creative poster designs can further enhance their attractiveness. According to the statistical results, social media ranks second. Compared to other marketing communication tools, social media offers advantages such as real-time updates on event information and increased interaction with target audiences. Ranked third are AR (Augmented Reality) and app. An increasing number of events are using AR immersive experiences to attract public participation, often combined with app usage to promote brands or events. Finally, ranking fourth is DM (Direct Mail). DM can carry more detailed event content, providing comprehensive information.

Table 1: Statistics of Integrated Marketing Communication Tools in Case Analysis

| case | IMC tools | | | | |
|------|-----------|--------|-----|----|----|
| | poster | Social | APP | AR | DM |
| 1 | • | • | | | |
| 2 | • | • | • | • | |
| 3 | • | • | | | |
| 4 | • | • | | | |
| 5 | • | | | | • |
| 6 | • | | • | • | |

Guishanhou Street AR Advertising Campaign for Promotion

Upon conducting on-site investigations, it became apparent that Guishan lacks sufficient local publicity efforts and hosts relatively few events. This lack of promotion makes it challenging for outsiders to discover local attractions and cultural features, resulting in a failure to attract visitors to Guishanhou Street and revitalize tourism in the area.

The projects executed in this study include event posters, augmented reality (AR), social media, DM maps, and an app. The AR design aims to guide audiences in discovering the transformation of Guishanhou Street. Audiences use the map to locate postcards hidden in different locations, scan them with AR to view stories about Guishanhou Street, and participate in AR games to learn about the area's culture and cuisine. Upon completing the postcard collection, participants can exchange them for cultural and creative products (figure 1).

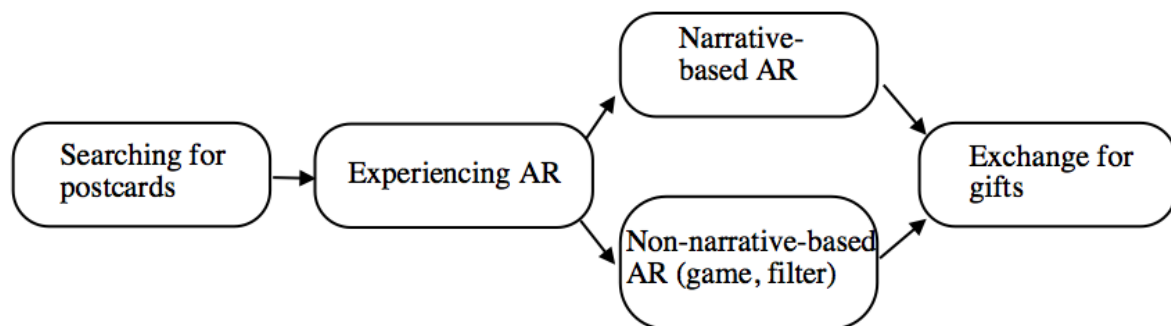


Figure 1: AR design

In this study, two different forms of AR experiences are designed: narrative and non-narrative. The promoted attractions include the Tao's House, Ren De Temple, and CCK Taiwanese Sorbet Ice Shop. These experiences aim to not only lead the younger generation into Guishanhou Street but also to acquaint them with the area's history and the stories behind its cultural landmarks. Through these AR experiences, visitors can gain a deeper understanding of the local heritage and culture, fostering a stronger connection with Guishanhou Street and its community.

Narrative-Based AR

We have designed a character to lead the audience in getting to know Guishan's culture. The prototype comes from the third son of the Cao family. He has an enthusiastic personality and is full of curiosity about things. He once studied at Waseda University, speaks fluent Japanese, and enjoys photography.

Tsao's House, built in 1927 on Guishanhou Street, was the most elegant three-story Western building. Originally operated as "Tsao Shun He," it dealt in tobacco and sundry goods. Today, it has been repurposed into the "Tsao's House Cultural Center."

Ren De Temple, also known as the "Lord of the Three Realms" (Heaven, Earth, Water Officials), is a hub for locals, offering gatherings, performances, and spiritual solace, playing a vital role in safeguarding the community. In the old times, a stage was set up under the big tree at the entrance of Ren De Temple, and people helped the elderly and children to watch the drama.

Non-Narrative-Based AR

The origins of the incense at Ren De Temple can be traced back to the pioneers who brought in the Three Realms incense burner from the mainland. Participants scan the card to reveal a drawing lots, clicking to enter and receive blessings for their health, wealth, and romantic relationships.

CCK Taiwanese Sorbet uses genuine ingredients to create delicious flavors. Participants scan the card and begin clicking on the ice cream falling from above to discover the different flavors available.

Conclusion

This study aims to explore the application of integrated marketing communication design in promoting activities within old streets through case analysis, offering insights for cultural promotion in Guishanhou Street. Practical design employs design thinking to identify consumer needs and utilizes marketing communication concepts for visual design in promotional activities. Furthermore, augmented reality (AR) combined with advertising has become a global phenomenon with significant potential to bring unique communication modes to the advertising industry. However, academic research on how augmented reality can be applied to the market is limited (Scholz & Duffy, 2018). This study integrates AR design into the promotion of Guishan local culture, aiming to engage younger audiences.

The study concludes with the following findings and suggestions: This research found that combining online and offline communication with a consistent visual design in promoting local culture helps create a lasting impression. The findings of this study were effectively implemented in the 'Back to Guishan' cultural promotion campaign. The aim of the study is not only to guide the younger generation to Guishanhou Street but also to acquaint them with its history and the stories behind the historical sites, fostering a deeper connection with their hometown. Future research can focus on testing different AR experience modes to understand the impact and effectiveness of AR experiences on local cultural promotion activities.

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