

The Cultural Communication Practices of "Village Broadcasting": A Study on the Reconstruction of Rural Symbols and the Expression of Rural Agency

Dan Xia

School of Literature and Communication, Hunan Women's University, Changsha, Hunan, 410004, China

ABSTRACT

With digital technology deeply integrated into rural areas, "village broadcasting" has emerged as a new form of communication in which villagers participate independently. Through the activation of everyday life scenarios, the extension of emotional narratives, and innovative modern transformations, it has promoted the upgrade of rural symbols from "regional identifiers" to "cultural IP." Villagers have achieved a transformation from "cultural silencers" to "communication agents" through verbal autonomy, cultural awareness, and group participation. Its core value lies in establishing a new channel for equal dialogue between urban and rural cultures, infusing digital vitality into the modern inheritance of rural culture, and providing important insights into the revitalization of rural culture in the digital age.

KEYWORDS

Village broadcasting; Cultural dissemination; Rural symbols; Rural subjectivity; Digital narrative

1 Introduction

1.1 Origin of the study

When culture thrives, the nation thrives; when culture is strong, the nation is strong. Rural culture reflects the lives of rural residents and is also an important vehicle for their historical heritage and cultural identity ^[1]. In today's era of booming new media, when live streaming cameras focus on the figures working in the fields, the craftsmanship passed down in traditional workshops, and the folk performances during village festivals, "village streaming" offers the most authentic local perspective, instantly conveying the daily rhythms and cultural heritage of rural life to audiences on the other side of the screen. This form of communication led by rural residents breaks with traditional media's "othering" of rural culture, giving rural culture a voice for the first time. In the context of "village broadcasting," rural symbols are no longer static cultural specimens, but rather generate new meanings through interactive communication. Rural residents are no longer passive recipients of cultural transmission, but have become active producers of cultural meaning. Behind this transformation lies the underlying logic of rural cultural dissemination in the digital age, which warrants further exploration.

1.2 Literature review and problem statement

Existing research has mostly focused on the economic dimension of the role of "village broadcasting" in promoting agricultural product sales, or explored the empowering effects of digital tools on rural areas from a technological perspective, with insufficient attention paid to the core issue of cultural dissemination. In the field of cultural studies, relevant research findings have mostly focused on the superficial aspects of "village broadcasting," such as folk custom displays and agricultural activity records, lacking in-depth analysis of the process of producing the meaning of rural symbols. Discussions on rural subjectivity tend to focus on macro policy levels, failing to reveal the micro mechanisms of individual practices and group identity. Based on this, this paper raises the core questions: How can "village broadcasting" achieve innovative reconstruction of rural symbols? Through what paths do rural residents express their subjectivity in live streaming practices? Answers to these questions will help us understand how digital technology can revitalize rural culture and provide theoretical reference for the modern inheritance of rural culture.

2 Pathways for the reconstruction of local symbols in "village broadcasting"

2.1 Activation of real-life scenarios: from "static specimens" to "dynamic practice"

The cultural significance of traditional rural symbols often depends on specific regional contexts, and when removed from their original settings, they tend to become "symbolic shells." "Village broadcasting" achieves the vivid transmission of cultural meaning by embedding symbols into specific everyday life scenarios. In the live stream, the host does not simply showcase the "old cloth shoes" in isolation, but instead begins with the morning task of twisting hemp rope, presenting the entire production process from "twisting hemp—cutting patterns—sewing the sole—attaching the

upper” in its entirety. Accompanied by dialect commentary, this approach helps viewers understand the practical wisdom behind the symbols.

Agricultural live streaming activates symbolic meaning through sequential presentation. Streamers track and record the growth cycle of crops from spring plowing and summer cultivation to autumn harvest and winter storage, combining symbols such as “wheat fields” and “fruit trees” with the 24 solar terms and agricultural proverbs. While watching the live stream of “apple bagging,” viewers not only saw the work in progress, but also gained an understanding of the ecological concept of “unity between heaven and humanity” in agricultural culture through the host's explanations.

Take Liu Jing, a new farmer who returned to her hometown to start a business. Through her social media account, “Xiong Yulan Dried Fish,” she shares the natural gifts that Dongting Lake has given to the local people—dried fish. She provides detailed demonstrations of the entire production process, from fishing and processing raw fish to drying and selling. When making a purchase, netizens can see the product manufacturing process more clearly and learn about the various aspects of this craft. At the same time, through Liu Jing's lens, they can see a different side of Dongting Lake. Under the guidance of the rural revitalization strategy, it presents a diverse image of the new countryside through authentic records and artistic representations of agricultural production, rural culture, rural ecology, and villagers' lives, endowing traditional rural areas with new value connotations and contemporary characteristics ^[2].

2.2 Emotional narrative extension: from “functional attributes” to “emotional connections”

Through emotional storytelling, “village broadcasting” imbues rural symbols with emotional value that transcends their practical functions, creating emotional resonance between urban and rural audiences. In the folk live stream, the host not only demonstrates the craftsmanship involved in traditional brocade weaving, but also shares stories about the connection between brocade and family memories, such as, “This craft was passed down from my grandmother, and the brocade she wove herself was part of her dowry when she got married.” This personalized narrative connects the symbol of “brocade” with emotions such as “motherly love” and “heritage,” evoking viewers' associations with family craftsmanship and intergenerational affection.

The core of emotional narrative is “the connection between personal experience and collective memory.” By sharing life stories and growth experiences related to local symbols, the host elevates individual emotions to a collective resonance. This narrative approach allows rural symbols to transcend geographical boundaries, becoming an emotional link connecting urban and rural memories and enabling the cross-group sharing of cultural significance.

2.3 Innovative modern transformation: from “traditional carriers” to “cultural IP”

In order to revitalize the excellent traditional culture of rural areas in contemporary society, it is necessary to closely integrate innovative elements such as modern design, technology, and art to create cultural products that meet modern aesthetic standards and needs ^[3]. “Village broadcasting” is not a simple replication of rural symbols, but rather a creative transformation of symbols through the integration of modern elements. In traditional craft live streams, hosts actively incorporate modern design concepts to innovate symbols such as “indigo dyeing” and “paper cutting”: dyeing patterns are designed to be more in line with modern aesthetics, and modern themes such as environmental protection and anti-fraud are incorporated into paper cutting. This innovation is not a departure from tradition, but rather a way to connect rural symbols with contemporary life. For example, a certain live streamer used traditional paper-cutting techniques to broadcast “24 Solar Terms Science Popularization,” using paper-cut works to display the climatic characteristics of each solar term and allowing ancient symbols to regain their modern vitality.

The application of digital technology also provides new avenues for symbol conversion. Broadcasters use time-lapse photography to show the growth of crops, animations to demonstrate the construction principles of traditional buildings, and VR technology to give viewers an “immersive” experience of folk activities. These technological tools not only enhance communication effectiveness but also expand the dimensions of expression for rural symbols. For example, through 360-degree panoramic live streaming, viewers can “enter” traditional villages and observe the architectural details of stilt houses from different angles, gaining an understanding of their practical wisdom in “moisture and animal resistance” and their ecological concept of “building in harmony with the mountains.” Innovative modern transformation allows local symbols to retain their cultural core while acquiring forms of expression adapted to modern communication, achieving a value upgrade from “traditional carriers” to “cultural IP.”

3 Dimensions of expressing rural subjectivity in “village broadcasting”

3.1 Discourse autonomy: From “silent observer” to “narrative subject”

In the traditional communication context, rural culture is often defined by outsiders, and the voices of rural residents

are frequently overlooked. "Village broadcasting" allows rural residents to tell rural stories in their own words, thereby constructing a unique discourse system. The hosts refuse to use stiff "official language" and instead express themselves using local dialects and colloquialisms: when explaining the quality of agricultural products, they don't say "organically certified," but rather "our fruit isn't sprayed with pesticides, so you can just wipe it off and eat it." When introducing traditional crafts, instead of saying "intangible cultural heritage," they say, "This is a craft passed down from our ancestors, and we must not lose it." This simple and straightforward way of speaking is more effective in conveying the true nature of rural culture.

Discourse autonomy is also reflected in the choice of narrative perspective. "Village broadcasters" present rural life from the perspective of "locals," neither deliberately romanticizing the "idyllic countryside" nor exaggerating the "decline of rural areas," but rather authentically documenting the daily life of rural communities. There is both the joy of a bountiful harvest and the hardships of labor; There is both a commitment to tradition and modern change. This authentic narrative breaks down external stereotypes about rural areas, allowing audiences to see a multi-dimensional picture of rural life and enabling rural cultures to define themselves. As industry reports show, the high level of audience recognition for "village broadcasting" is largely due to their trust in this "authentic narrative."

For example, the million-follower blogger "Supermodel Kun" bases his videos on the real-life conditions of rural areas, showcasing vibrant "cross-generational friendships" through interactions with villagers. Meanwhile, "Supermodel Kun's" daily live streams are set against the backdrop of the village's natural scenery, with spontaneous interactions with passing villagers during the broadcasts. Through these live streams, she not only showcases the authentic scenes of rural life where tranquility and bustling activity coexist, and development and future prospects go hand in hand, but also sells the village's specialty agricultural products directly from the source. This approach masterfully embodies the concept of "village broadcasting." China National Radio titled its feature article on him "The 'High-Heeled Secretary' and His Rural 'Best Friend.'" This authentic narrative breaks down external stereotypes about rural areas, allowing audiences to see a multifaceted picture of rural life and enabling rural cultures to define themselves independently. As industry reports show, the high level of audience recognition for "village broadcasting" stems largely from trust in this form of "authentic storytelling." Through the media practice of "local reimagining," returning youth have reshaped the media visibility of rural areas, providing urban audiences with an empathetic space to channel their nostalgia and longing for return ^[4].

3.2 Cultural self-awareness: From "cultural inferiority" to "value recognition"

The interactive communication of "village broadcasting" has enabled rural residents to reevaluate the value of their local culture, shifting from a sense of inferiority toward traditional culture to one of confidence, thereby fostering a deep sense of cultural self-awareness. Many live streamers initially feared being ridiculed for being old-fashioned, but later took the initiative to explore local culture, such as collecting folk tales and learning traditional skills, deepening their understanding and recognition of local culture through dissemination.

Cultural self-awareness is also reflected in taking proactive responsibility for cultural heritage. As the influence of live streaming has grown, many rural areas have established cultural communication groups, with villagers participating together in content planning. The elderly teach traditional skills, middle-aged people are responsible for live streaming, and young people provide technical support. Through discussions on "what content to broadcast live" and "how to tell cultural stories well," a collective identity with local culture gradually formed. This sense of identity is not the result of passive acceptance, but rather the product of active construction in the process of dissemination. It not only highlights the subjectivity of rural areas, but also injects endogenous momentum into the inheritance of rural culture.

3.3 Group participation: From "individual practice" to "community action"

The cultural dissemination practices of "village broadcasting" have gradually evolved from individual behavior to collective participation, forming a co-construction model where "everyone is a disseminator." In many rural areas, "village broadcasting" is no longer the domain of a select few, but rather a collective endeavor involving the entire village. Some people provided live streaming materials, some helped with camera work, and others were responsible for logistical support. The villagers worked together to come up with ideas for the live stream content. This kind of group participation breaks the elitist model of cultural transmission, allowing every villager to become an expresser and transmitter of rural culture.

Participation in joint construction is also reflected in the "decentralized" nature of cultural dissemination. There is no fixed "main character" in "village broadcasting." Whether elderly, young, or children, everyone can showcase their perspective on rural culture in front of the camera. The elderly tell folk tales, the young demonstrate agricultural skills, and the children sing rural nursery rhymes. This model of collective participation in communication transforms the abstract concept of rural agency into concrete practice, realizing the communication ideal of "my village, my voice" and strengthening the cultural cohesion of rural communities.

4 The value of cultural dissemination through “village broadcasting”

4.1 Building new channels for equal dialogue between urban and rural cultures

“Village broadcasting” has broken the asymmetry of cultural communication between urban and rural areas and established a two-way interactive communication channel. In live broadcasts, urban audiences are no longer passive consumers of culture, but participate in the construction of the meaning of rural culture through methods such as asking questions in real-time comments and interacting through messages. Rural residents are no longer passive participants in cultural activities, but actively contribute their cultural perspectives by responding to questions and clarifying doubts. This equal dialogue breaks down cultural barriers between urban and rural areas and promotes mutual understanding.

Urban audiences learn about the real situation in rural areas through live broadcasts, dispelling romanticized notions or outdated perceptions of rural life. Rural residents, through interaction with urban audiences, gain insight into external demand for and evaluation of rural culture, thereby providing direction for cultural innovation.

4.2 Activating the self-renewal capacity of rural culture

While disseminating rural culture, “village broadcasting” also promotes cultural self-renewal. Through interaction with viewers, the host continuously receives new perspectives and suggestions, reinterpreting and innovatively expressing local symbols. For example, based on audience demand, traditional cuisine can be modified to better suit modern tastes while retaining core techniques. Adapting traditional stories into more accessible modern narratives while conveying cultural spirit. This innovation is not a rejection of tradition, but rather a way to make rural culture more adaptable to the needs of modern society while upholding its cultural core, thereby achieving “creative transformation and innovative development.”

Many rural areas have discovered the modern value of their local culture through “village broadcasting,” and have subsequently launched activities such as the development of cultural and creative products and the design of distinctive cultural tourism projects, thereby transforming traditional cultural resources into development advantages. This virtuous cycle of “communication promoting innovation and innovation feeding back into communication” has activated the self-renewal capacity of rural culture, allowing it to develop through inheritance and be inherited through development.

4.3 Enhancing the cohesion and influence of rural culture

The cultural dissemination practices of “village broadcasting” have strengthened the cultural cohesion of rural communities. When villagers see their lives and culture being noticed and praised by the outside world, they develop a strong sense of pride and belonging, which in turn encourages them to participate more actively in cultural heritage preservation and rural development. Many rural areas have used “village broadcasting” to build consensus on development and turn cultural resources into development advantages, such as developing unique cultural tourism projects and creating cultural brands. In this process, rural culture has become a spiritual bond that unites people and strengthens the cohesion of rural communities.

At the same time, “village broadcasting” has enabled rural culture to break through geographical barriers and spread to a wider audience, thereby enhancing the visibility and influence of rural culture. Through live streaming, the folk culture and traditional crafts of remote rural areas have become known to more people. Some crafts that were on the verge of being lost have gained new opportunities for inheritance, and some unique cultural resources have attracted cooperation and investment from outside. This increase in influence has created a favorable environment for the revitalization of rural culture and provided it with sustained momentum.

5 Exploring pathways to optimize the cultural communication practices of “village broadcasting”

5.1 Strengthen technological empowerment and lower barriers to dissemination

Further improvements should be made to rural digital infrastructure to enhance network coverage quality and provide stable technical support for “village broadcasting.” At the same time, develop live streaming tools that are more suitable for rural residents, simplify the operation process, add features such as voice assistance and automatic editing, and lower the technical barriers to use. Technical service stations for “village broadcasting” can be established to organize professional personnel to provide guidance in rural areas, helping villagers master live streaming techniques and solve technical problems, thereby enabling more rural residents to participate in cultural dissemination practices. Platform operators should also launch targeted technical training programs through online courses, offline training, and other forms to improve the digital literacy of rural residents and ensure that technology empowerment truly takes root and yields results.

5.2 Deepening cultural exploration and improving content quality

Encourage “village broadcasters” to delve deeper into local cultural resources, shifting from superficial displays to in-depth interpretations, and tell the historical stories, cultural connotations, and spiritual values behind local symbols. Cultural experts, folklore scholars, and broadcasters can be organized to collaborate on rural culture training to help broadcasters improve their cultural literacy and communication skills. Support live streamers in creating content with regional characteristics to avoid homogenized dissemination and establish a cultural dissemination pattern of “one village, one specialty,” allowing the culture of each rural area to be uniquely presented. Relevant departments can compile and publish a handbook of local cultural resources to provide broadcasters with authoritative cultural materials, ensuring the accuracy and depth of cultural dissemination and fully highlighting the cultural connotations of local symbols.

5.3 Building a supportive ecosystem to ensure sustainable development

Establish a “government-platform-community” collaborative support mechanism: The government can set up a special fund to support “village broadcasting” projects with cultural value and commend outstanding cultural communicators. The platform should optimize its recommendation algorithm to prioritize high-quality cultural content and avoid overly pursuing commercial traffic. Rural communities can establish cultural dissemination organizations to coordinate cultural resources, coordinate various forces, and form a long-term mechanism for cultural dissemination. Through multi-party collaboration, provide sustainable support for the cultural dissemination practices of “village broadcasting.” At the same time, it can promote the conversion and utilization of the cultural dissemination achievements of “village broadcasting,” such as compiling excellent live broadcast content into cultural documentaries and developing cultural and creative products, to extend the cultural dissemination chain, expand cultural influence, and form a virtuous cycle of development.

6 Conclusions

In the context of economic globalization, developing and preserving outstanding traditional rural culture is conducive to enhancing China's soft power and international competitiveness, and to addressing the issues of uneven and inadequate development between urban and rural areas in China^[5]. As a new form of rural cultural communication in the digital age, “village broadcasting” provides a new path for the modern inheritance of local symbols and the expression of rural subjectivity. Through the activation of everyday life scenarios, the extension of emotional narratives, and innovative modern transformations, rural symbols have undergone a meaningful upgrade from “regional identifiers” to “cultural IP.” Rural residents have completed a transformation from “cultural silent ones” to “communication subjects” through discourse autonomy, cultural self-awareness, and group participation. The cultural dissemination value of “village broadcasting” lies not only in activating rural cultural resources, but also in establishing a new channel for equal dialogue between urban and rural cultures, thereby injecting vitality into the revitalization of rural culture in the digital age.

In the future, with the further development of digital technology, the cultural dissemination practices of “village broadcasting” will continue to be enriched and improved. By adhering to the core principle of cultural authenticity and the fundamental principle of subjective expression, “village broadcasting” will undoubtedly play a greater role in the inheritance and innovation of rural culture, enabling rural culture to shine even more brilliantly in the digital age and contributing unique strength to the construction of an integrated urban-rural cultural community.

References

- [1] Xiao Rongnan, Liu Xiaoxia. An Analysis of the Inheritance and Development of Excellent Traditional Rural Culture under the Rural Revitalization Strategy [J]. Journal of Baicheng Normal University, 2025, 39 (04): 18-22.
- [2] Yi Xin. The Visual Presentation and Value Implications of the New Rural Image in "Down-to-Earth" Short Videos [J]. Exploration of All-Media, 2025, (07): 142-144.
- [3] Liu Siqi, Liu Xiaoxia. Research on the Pathways for the Inheritance and Development of Excellent Traditional Rural Culture [J]. Journal of Jiamusi Vocational College, 2025, 41 (08): 98-100.
- [4] Xu Guanqun, Zhu Shan. An Examination of Short Video Media Practices Among Returning Youth [J]. Yunnan Social Sciences, 2023, (03): 177-186.
- [5] Li Hui. Research on the Inheritance and Development of Excellent Traditional Rural Culture in the Context of Cultural Revitalization [J]. Journal of Shandong Agricultural Engineering College, 2024, 41(02): 91-95.