Original Paper

Research on Innovative Pathways for Zhanjiang's Intangible Cultural Heritage "Short Video + Cultural Tourism" Discourse System in the Context of Rural Revitalization

Jia Luo[1]

[1] School of Music and Dance, Lingnan Normal University, Zhanjiang, Guangdong, China

Abstract

Revitalizing rural culture creates a chance for revitalizing intangible cultural heritage. Zhanjiang has many intangible cultural heritage resources, but the way they are disseminated has been affected by outdated models that are disconnected from today's audience. This study aims to explore the ways in which new discourse systems for Zhanjiang's intangible cultural heritage can be developed in light of the integration of short videos and cultural tourism. It has been found that overcoming the challenges presented by the current limitations of single narrative and superficial content will require systematic innovation related to subject cultivation, narrative development, and the communication loop. This innovation will enable the conversion of intangible cultural heritage's cultural value into an engine for rural development, resulting in a sustainable "see experience identify" development model.

Keywords

Rural Revitalization, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Short Video Dissemination, Cultural Tourism Integration

1. Introduction

The Intangible Cultural Heritage of Zhanjiang represents the deep historical memory and collective emotions of the Leizhou Peninsula, and as such is a significant part of the rural social fabric. However, these valuable cultural practices are now experiencing an ongoing break in transmission due to competing influences of Modernisation and Digitisation. Because of this, traditional methods of as static displays and one-way explanations have great difficulty encouraging connections between cultural and experiential cognitive and emotional needs, especially those of the youth within their generation. Thus, the exploration of a contemporary linguistic expression that meets with current forms

of media and serves as an effective bridge between cultural equity in the marketplace and cultural viability are the key links to solve both problems - preservation of ICH and revitalisation of rural communities. The immediate nature and need for solutions is evident.

2. The Theoretical Implications of the "Short Video + Cultural Tourism" Discourse System for Intangible Cultural Heritage

2.1 Conceptual Definition and Constituent Elements of Discourse Systems

The discourse system is not an abstract theory, it directly relates to how Zhanjiang intangible cultural heritage is narrated and understood. The core components of this system include several interdependent elements: the narrator determines the perspective of the story, and traditional exhibitions of Zhanjiang's intangible cultural heritage often rely on fixed inheritors with a single perspective; The content and presentation form constitute the flesh and blood of the story, and the oral and experiential teaching of the past needs to be transformed into visual language in short videos; The characteristics of media platforms shape the way of interaction, and the short and fast-paced nature of short videos requires a compact and impactful narrative; The final target audience and their feedback form a closed loop of meaning, and audiences outside of rural areas participate in cultural re creation through likes and comments. These elements work together, and without any link, intangible cultural heritage stories can become dull or distorted, making it difficult to effectively disseminate and transform their value in contemporary contexts.

2.2 The Intrinsic Requirements of Cultural Tourism Integration for Reconstructing Intangible Cultural Heritage Discourse

The deepening of the integration of culture and tourism has put forward an inherent shift in the discourse expression of Zhanjiang's intangible cultural heritage from "static display" to "dynamic narrative". This process first requires the narrative perspective to go beyond simple technical records and instead explore the vivid community stories and emotional connections behind customs such as Leizhou Stone Dog Carving and Wuchuan Floating Color Parade. Therefore, it is necessary to construct a clear experiential clue for the discourse content, so that the audience can naturally associate it with the possibility of visiting drama societies and experiencing cultural tourism through makeup when watching lightning drama clips online. The ultimate goal of discourse is to establish an anticipated "summoning" structure, so that the visual wonder and cultural charm conveyed by short videos can be smoothly transformed into concrete actions for viewers to personally explore, experience, and consume in rural areas of Zhanjiang, thus completing a closed loop from online cultural perception to offline economic participation.

3. The Practical Challenges of Zhanjiang's Intangible Cultural Heritage "Short Video + Cultural Tourism" Discourse System

3.1 Monolithic Narratives Resulting from Absent Discourse Subjects

The current narrative of short videos on intangible cultural heritage in Zhanjiang mostly relies on the on camera explanations of a few representative inheritors. Although these inheritors are skilled, they are often limited by fixed expression patterns and relatively traditional camera language. The younger generation in rural areas and a wider range of local cultural participants actually rarely actively use short videos to share their perspectives on intangible cultural heritage stories, which leads to a nearly identical observation perspective and emotional tone in the dissemination of Zhanjiang's rich and colorful folk activities. External professional content creators, due to a lack of long-term and in-depth experience of rural life, tend to limit their works to superficial records of scenery and skills, making it difficult to touch the vitality of intangible cultural heritage flowing in daily community life. Ultimately, this leads to a narrow dimension of information received by the audience and a flattened cultural landscape (Zhu, 2025).

3.2 Superficial Content Undermining Cultural Depth

The current dissemination of numerous short videos about Zhanjiang's intangible cultural heritage often tends to showcase the magnificent costumes of thunder dramas or the lively scenes of annual parades, but rarely delves into the clan rituals or community social networks maintained by the wandering god teams behind these costume patterns. This type of narrative habitually focuses on visual wonders and ritual outcomes, actively avoiding the strict rules of apprenticeship and the profound impact of phenological changes on folk activities in the inheritance of skills, as well as the complex psychological landscape in faith practice. The audience can only repeatedly consume these superficial symbols that have been stripped of context and cultural logic. They may remember the color of the lion dance, but they have no way of knowing the village history and collective spirit implied by the asynchronous hunting of the lion team, resulting in the deep cultural texture of intangible cultural heritage being quietly diluted in rapid scrolling browsing.

3.3 Fragmented Dissemination Disconnecting from Cultural Tourism Industries

The reality of fragmented dissemination is that the short video content of Zhanjiang's intangible cultural heritage is often presented in isolated and exciting segments, such as the moment when a lion jumps onto a high pole or a high pitched singing voice in a thunder drama, which are scattered across different platforms and accounts. These contents rarely systematically include specific geographical locations, fixed performance cycles, and recommended information on available experience workshops or surrounding accommodations. Even if potential tourists are interested, it is difficult for them to connect these scattered cultural highlights into a clear and feasible travel route, let alone judge when to start and experience the core activities based solely on fragments. As a result, online popularity is difficult to convert into stable offline customer sources and consumption, and the cultural and tourism industry has missed important opportunities to rely on digital communication for precise drainage and

product innovation.

3.4 Modern Expression Dilemmas of Rural Cultural Symbols

The traditional symbols in Zhanjiang's intangible cultural heritage, such as the majestic image of the Leizhou stone dog or the specific color of the Nuo dance mask, carry rich local knowledge and ethical concepts in the local context. The creative logic of short videos often tends to extract the most visually striking appearance features of these symbols, but it is difficult to calmly explain the taboos, legends, and community norms behind them in just a few seconds. Contemporary audiences, especially young people, are more likely to view these symbols as exotic decorations or objects of curiosity, rather than understanding their profound connotations as representations of rural order and spiritual world. Symbols therefore face the risk of being stripped of their original meanings, becoming flattened images that are detached from the cultural matrix, weakening the integrity of the meaning system that intangible cultural heritage relies on for inheritance.

3.5 Lack of Systematic Support and Long-Term Mechanisms

Content creation and dissemination activities are currently mostly short-term or scattered attempts, and stable and efficient collaboration frameworks and resource sharing channels have not yet been established between local governments, inheritors, and commercial institutions. There is a relative lack of specialized skills training for short video creation, cultural and tourism product design, and online and offline operations, making it difficult for rural youth to systematically acquire the sustainable ability to transform local knowledge into modern expression. The evaluation of market feedback and communication effectiveness often relies on simple likes or short-term tourist growth, lacking comprehensive consideration of deep indicators such as deepening cultural identity, enhancing community cohesion, and long-term brand value. The weak state of this support system makes it difficult for many beneficial attempts to iterate and upgrade, and cannot form a stable model that can be replicated and promoted, which restricts the overall development momentum and scale (Li, 2024).

4. Core Strategies for Discourse System Innovation Aimed at Rural Revitalization

4.1 Cultivating Localized, Diverse Creative and Narrative Subjects

The training program should initially target young villagers with potential within Zhanjiang's rural areas and the descendants of intangible cultural heritage inheritors. It will provide them with systematic digital skills training, including short video shooting and editing as well as storytelling. The training content may specifically cover how to use mobile phones to capture the intricate process of makeup preparation backstage in Lei Opera performances, or how to choreograph a series of shots to showcase the traditional techniques and labor rhythms of fish drying in coastal fishing villages. This initiative aims to equip these groups, most familiar with the local cultural context, with modern expressive tools, enabling them to spontaneously document family divisions of labor during year-end festivals or depict daily scenes of Lei Opera duet performances. At the same time, efforts should be made to actively introduce and retain external content creation and cultural tourism planning teams. These teams are

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tasked with establishing long-term collaborations with local narrators rather than conducting brief field research, jointly exploring deeper cultural themes—such as temple worship activities in a specific village—and collaborating to develop a comprehensive communication strategy. This includes pre-event short videos, live streaming of key rituals, and offline cultural study experiences. Effective collaboration among diverse stakeholders will ultimately build a multi-layered narrative network, ensuring both the authenticity of cultural expression and enhancing the appeal and impact of dissemination through professional techniques (Zhou, Dai, Zhang et al., 2025).

4.2 Establishing Deep Content Narrative Models Rooted in Cultural Authenticity

To construct a narrative model of profound content rooted in cultural authenticity, the key lies in shifting the lens from isolated performance scenes to the daily lives and community contexts where intangible cultural heritage thrives. Specific practices can be centered around particular villages, organizing filming teams to systematically document the entire process of an intangible cultural practice—from preparation to completion. For instance, following an entire "Yearly Festival" event not only showcases the ceremonial procession of deities but also vividly depicts the collaborative network: how elders organize, when married women return to assist, and how banquet ingredients are prepared. For traditional opera or lion dances, veteran performers can be invited to elaborate on the variations and adaptations of classic routines or vocal segments in different settings (such as festivals, birthday celebrations, or business openings), revealing the emotional logic and social functions behind their artistic norms. When presenting exquisite handicrafts like Leizhou stone dogs, the narrative must incorporate the local artisans' meticulous selection of stone materials, the folk tales behind carving diverse forms, and the specific customs and taboos surrounding the placement of these stone dogs at village entrances or ancestral temples. This narrative approach requires the creative team to immerse themselves in fieldwork, employing serialized short videos or micro-documentaries to reintroduce cultural symbols into their original social relationships and life orders through plain language and coherent visuals. This enables audiences to perceive the complexity and vitality of intangible cultural heritage as a local knowledge system.

4.3 Designing Experience-Driven Online-Offline Traffic Circulation Loops

Designing an experiential-driven online-offline lead generation loop hinges on systematically transforming the online appeal of short videos into offline cultural tourism actions that are reservable and participatory. Operationally, every in-depth piece of content published online should clearly embed actionable cues—for instance, when showcasing the makeup process of Lei Opera, explicitly provide specific dates for local theater troupes' open experience days and contact details for reservations; when presenting traditional fish sauce brewing in fishing villages, include information about nearby homestays or restaurants offering dishes with this flavor. Platform operations must establish unified hashtags and online communities to aggregate scattered interests, while consistently releasing travel route guides infused with intangible cultural heritage elements and seasonal activity calendars. Offline physical venues need to simultaneously set up clear experiential touchpoints, such as establishing

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intangible cultural heritage workshops in relevant villages, creating interactive zones in cultural centers where visitors can try on opera costumes and learn simple gong and drum rhythms, and tightly linking the locations of these points with online content. After completing the offline experience, visitors can be guided to scan QR codes to share their impressions and participate in online topic discussions, forming a complete loop from online attraction, offline experience to online re-sharing. This closed-loop design effectively bridges the gap between digital viewing and physical consumption, enabling cultural dissemination to directly serve the growth of local cultural tourism economies and the enhancement of visitor satisfaction (Leng & Liu, 2024).

4.4 Crafting Emotionally Resonant New Images of Rural Culture

To create a new image of rural culture with emotional resonance, it is necessary to go beyond objective introductions of scenery and skills, and instead explore and present the warmth of human emotions and collective memory carried by intangible cultural heritage practices. The specific operation should focus on collecting and telling real stories that contain emotional tension, such as a traveler who is far away from his hometown regaining his spiritual connection with his homeland through participating in online annual live broadcasts, or a young mother's experience of intergenerational emotional transmission when trying to sew traditional tiger head hats for her children. When presenting thunder dramas or lion dance performances, the camera can consciously capture the subtle movements of veteran performers helping young students tidy up their costumes, or the relaxed communication between mentors and apprentices about a certain technique after the performance, thus presenting cultural inheritance as a vivid interpersonal interaction and emotional continuation. Content creation can systematically showcase how intangible cultural heritage is embedded into the daily life and emotional world of Zhanjiang people, focusing on themes such as "family rituals," "hand warmth," and "charm of local music". This narrative aims to evoke the audience's shared emotional experiences about family, hometown, and tradition, transforming the cultural image of rural Zhanjiang from an external "local characteristic" to an approachable and resonant "emotional homeland", laying a deep emotional identity foundation for subsequent cultural and tourism attraction.

4.5 Building a Long-Term Support Ecosystem Driven by Industry-Academia-Research Collaboration

The key to establishing a long-term support ecosystem driven by industry university research collaboration is to promote the formation of institutionalized and normalized cooperation frameworks between local universities, research institutions, intangible cultural heritage communities, and cultural tourism enterprises. University research teams can rely on disciplines such as anthropology and folklore to conduct systematic field investigations and archive compilation of specific intangible cultural heritage projects in Zhanjiang, providing a solid cultural interpretation foundation and narrative clues for content creation. Vocational college related majors can collaborate with inheritors to offer practical courses such as short video production and cultural tourism product design, allowing students to master skills in real projects and continuously deliver fresh ideas to rural areas. Cultural and tourism enterprises need to jointly develop experiential products with cultural depth based on research

results and market feedback, such as designing immersive script tours based on classic Lei opera plays, or developing rural aesthetic education courses that integrate traditional plant dyeing techniques. This community should also establish a regular communication and evaluation mechanism to enable timely dialogue and mutual calibration between academic discoveries, community wisdom, and market dynamics, ensuring that the innovation activities of the entire ecosystem are always rooted in cultural authenticity and practical needs, thereby providing sustainable knowledge, talent, and market support for the contemporary inheritance of Zhanjiang intangible cultural heritage and rural revitalization.

5. Concrete Implementation Pathways for Innovating Zhanjiang's Intangible Cultural Heritage Discourse System

5.1 Strengthening Top-Level Design and Policy Coordination Mechanisms

Strengthen the top-level design and policy coordination mechanism, requiring local governments to work together with departments such as culture, tourism, agriculture, and rural areas to jointly develop an operational special plan. The plan must clearly define the core tasks of each stage, such as conducting a systematic survey and evaluating the visualization potential and cultural tourism development foundation of various intangible cultural heritage projects in Zhanjiang, and organizing them into a resource catalog available for content creators to use. Relevant departments should establish a joint meeting system for regular consultations and information sharing to coordinate and solve specific problems encountered in project promotion, such as coordinating traditional activity venues for filming and optimizing support measures for non heritage tourism small and micro enterprises. The key to policy coordination lies in guiding resources such as finance, talent, and publicity to gather in designated key directions, providing stable support for subsequent creation, dissemination, and market transformation.

5.2 Deepening Content Creation and Local Brand Development

The implementation path for deepening content creation and local brand building should focus on supporting the production of serialized content based on the regional characteristics of Zhanjiang. Specific operations can revolve around themes such as "Leizhou Peninsula Intangible Cultural Heritage", organize creative teams to go deep into villages and towns, and systematically produce micro documentary collections that showcase the complete lineage of individual intangible cultural heritage. Brand building requires extracting highly recognizable visual symbols and narrative styles from these high-quality contents, and applying them uniformly to the visual design of online communication and offline experience spaces. Continuous content updates and brand maintenance rely on establishing a set of benefit feedback and copyright management mechanisms that encourage local creators to continue producing and combine with the development of cultural and tourism products (Wu, 2022).

5.3 Promoting Platform Integration and Precision Operational Practices

Promoting platform integration and precise operation practice requires the operation team to conduct

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differentiated content distribution and interactive design based on the characteristics and user preferences of each digital platform. Short video platforms focus on delivering visually impactful and emotionally impactful moments of intangible cultural heritage to attract widespread attention, while social media is suitable for publishing in-depth stories and activity previews to cultivate a core fan community. Tourism service platforms need to systematically integrate specialized routes and appointment entrances for intangible cultural heritage experiences. The operations team should continuously analyze traffic data and user feedback in different forms of content, optimize publishing strategies based on this, and identify potential happy and interesting customer groups. The ultimate effectiveness of precise operation lies in effectively guiding the ubiquitous online attention to specific cultural and tourism consumption scenarios offline, achieving substantial transformation of digital traffic into local economy.

5.4 Constructing Effectiveness Evaluation and Sustainable Development Models

The formation of a long-term development model relies on a scientific and executable effectiveness evaluation mechanism as the basis for continuous calibration. The core of this mechanism lies in designing multidimensional indicators, which should include not only the conventional online playback volume and interaction data, but also the booking rate of offline intangible cultural heritage experience projects, changes in tourists' stay time and consumption structure in rural areas, as well as qualitative feedback on the degree of cultural pride improvement in local communities obtained through questionnaire surveys. The executive body needs to conduct cross analysis on these data on a regular basis to clarify the specific effects of different communication strategies and cultural tourism products on market response and cultural identity building. The analysis conclusion should be directly fed back to the content creation, operation promotion, and product development teams to guide them in targeted optimization and iteration. The final evaluation process needs to be solidified into an annual or quarterly work review system to ensure that the entire innovation practice can be dynamically adjusted and sustainably promoted based on objective results.

6. Conclusion

Creating a new framework for connecting short videos and cultural tourism, as this project does with Zhanjiang's intangible culture, is much more than just a technology upgrade or new marketing strategies. At its core, it is about rebuilding an understanding of rural cultural identity and rediscovering the importance and value of those cultures. The goal of all this is for people to be able to relate to the wisdom and knowledge that has been amassed by these cultural communities over the years, thereby making it possible for them to rediscover their inherent vitality and value through methods that will make sense to people in the contemporary world. As a result, when these cultural heritages are no longer seen as merely specimens stored in glass cases but are instead regarded as dynamic stories that can be lived and touched, they become fully integrated into the DNA of rural growth, thus bringing social and economic vitality to these communities and creating a greater sense of

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pride in being a part of this rich cultural heritage.

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