

Original Paper

From the Perspective of Media Constructivism, an Analysis of the Reconstruction of Rural Media Images by Short Videos of New farmers in Ganzi Prefecture

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Abstract

From the perspective of media constructivism, new farmers in Ganzi Prefecture, relying on short-video platforms, independently construct the rural media image from a local perspective. Based on the official public data of Ganzi Prefecture from 2023 to 2025, this paper explores the path of new farmers' short video reconstruction of rural image from four aspects: natural landscape, ethnic culture, production and life, and industrial value, and finds that new farmers' short video has effectively increased local cultural and tourism revenue, online retail sales of agricultural products, and income of rural residents. But there are still problems in the image construction, such as superficial content, cultural symbolization, narrative homogeneity and dissemination fragmentation. Based on this, this paper proposes four optimization paths: deep narrative, cultural orientation, brand building, and collaborative communication, to provide practical references for rural image communication and rural revitalization in ethnic areas.

Keywords

New farmers, Short videos, Media image, Ganzi State, Rural Communication

Quotations

In the era of traditional media, the image of rural media was more often constructed by foreign media, with obvious traces of “externalization”. In the coverage of rural areas in plateau ethnic regions like Ganzi Prefecture, rural areas were often labeled as poverty-stricken areas, remote areas, backward areas. Some young people returning to their hometowns, grassroots workers and inheritors of intangible cultural heritage have become new farmers. They independently disseminate rural content through forms such as documentary filming, entrepreneurial records and immersive experiences, and are one of the forces for reconstructing the rural media image.

Based on official statistics, this paper examines the reconstruction effect and real predicament of the rural image of Ganzi Prefecture by short videos of new farmers, and proposes optimization strategies.

1. Core Theory and Limitations of Traditional Rural Media Image

1.1 Core Content of Media Construction

The medium is the producer and disseminator of knowledge in the broadest sense. People obtain information, images and ideas through the medium, and the medium becomes the main source for most people to understand the common past and the current social position, and also the map that determines where we are and who we are. (Zhou & Li, 2017) By setting up public issues, using cultural symbols, organizing narrative structures, the media guide the public to focus on specific content and form corresponding emotional tendencies and value judgments, ultimately shaping social reality and social image.

In the course of rural media practice, the influence of new visual media, mainly in the form of short video live streaming, has spread to various fields and levels of rural society, and the effect and influence of new media logic can be perceived in many aspects such as lifestyle, resource structure, and cultural form. (Li & Liu, 2021) As the people present in the countryside, the new farmers can present the natural environment, ethnic culture, production scenes and living conditions more realistically and delicately, making the rural media image more three-dimensional, human and credible, effectively reversing stereotypes and enhancing the public’s emotional and value identification with the countryside.

1.2 Shortcomings of the Traditional rural Media Image in Ganzi Prefecture

There are three shortcomings regarding the rural media image of Ganzi Prefecture: First, the media image is flat and stereotyped. The media's perception of rural areas in Ganzi Prefecture mainly focuses on poverty, remoteness and poor conditions as the main reporting content, which has led to the public's perception of rural areas in Ganzi Prefecture being biased and stereotypical; Secondly, there is a weak sense of subjectivity. Villagers have no voice of their own and cannot express their current living conditions, development demands and spiritual outlook well. The countryside is “watched and defined”, lacking local sentiment and cultural connotations. Third, the means of communication are monotonous and the communication power is weak.

2. The Reconstruction Path of Rural Media Image by Short Videos of New farmers in Ganzi Prefecture

2.1 Natural Landscape Image: From Remote Isolation to Ecological Livability

In the narrative discourse of traditional media in the past, people's spatial imagination of highland rural areas has long remained in a state of hardship and isolation, while ignoring the ecological advantages they themselves possess. New farmers use immersive, panoramic photography to showcase the beauty of snow-capped mountains, glaciers, meadows, forest areas, sea of clouds, stars and moon, and local houses on the plateau, directly presenting the beauty of Hailuoguo, Jiagenba, Zeduo Mountain, Danba village, etc., to the masses.

In 2024, Ganzi Prefecture received 43.8509 million tourists and achieved a combined tourism revenue of 48.149 billion yuan, increasing by 5.9% and 6.3% respectively compared with the previous year. (Bureau of Statistics of Ganzi Prefecture, 2024) The positive reconstruction of the natural landscape image has laid an important foundation for the development of rural cultural tourism industry, the rise of homestay economy and the enhancement of regional popularity.

2.2 Ethnic cultural image: From marginal Niche to Mainstream Focus

Ganzi Prefecture is rich in distinctive local ethnic characteristics, with a total of 1,027 intangible cultural heritages at or above the prefectural level, leading Sichuan in both quantity and new additions. The emergence of the new farmers, in a more life-like, contextualized and participatory form, brings into short videos folk dances such as Guozhuang and Xianzi, intangible cultural heritage products such as Thangka and local incense, folk festivals such as the New Year and horse racing festival, as well as cultural symbols such as local traditional costumes, cuisine and houses.

The new farmers tell the stories behind the culture from the inside out, making folk customs no longer performances and intangible cultural heritage no longer exhibits. Inheritors of intangible cultural heritage appear on camera to explain the process of skills, new farmers wear ethnic costumes to make local specialties, and tell folk stories in plain language, making ethnic culture more warm and powerful. The top accounts such as "Losang and Little Zhima" and "Mizang Zhuoma" have more than 4 million followers across the Internet, and many cultural videos have been forwarded and liked. The ethnic culture of Ganzi Prefecture has gradually become popular on the Internet, from niche to popular.

2.3 Images of Production and Life: From Poverty and Backwardness to Prosperity and Happiness

New farmers' short videos comprehensively record the production scenes and living conditions of the plateau villages, fundamentally changing the old image of poverty and backwardness. In terms of production, the video presents the entire process of planting, breeding, picking, processing and packaging of characteristic products such as yak meat, matsutake mushrooms, barley and local incense, showing the current situation of industrial scale and standardization development; At the same time, it records the process of new farmers returning to their hometowns to start businesses, platform sales, and teamwork, and conveys the value concept of getting rich through hard work and building a home through hard work.

In terms of life, short videos showcase achievements in rural areas such as hardened roads, safe drinking water, electricity coverage, smooth Internet access, improved housing, enhanced medical care and education, as well as new homes of collectors, convenient transportation, rich cultural and sports activities and harmonious family life. In 2024, the per capita disposable income of rural residents in Ganzi Prefecture reached 18,044 yuan, with an average annual growth rate of 6.7%, higher than the growth rate of urban residents' income. (Bureau of Statistics of Ganzi Prefecture, 2024)

2.4 Industrial Value Image: From Idle Resources to Prominent Value

According to data from the State Bureau of Commerce and Cooperation, from January to May 2025, the state's online transaction volume reached 4.288 billion yuan, up 13.70 percent year-on-year. Among them, the online retail sales of agricultural products reached 101 million yuan, up 16.62 percent. The number of online merchants in the state reached 31,800, and e-commerce created 105,500 jobs. Three e-commerce live-streaming bases and ten live-streaming rooms have been built, and the number of live-streaming viewers reached 4.2 million. (The People's government of Ganzi Autonomous Prefecture, 2025) The annual sales of "Losang and Little Zhima" reached 7.8691 million yuan, driving more than 100 local people to increase their income by an average of 15,000 yuan per year. "ABU's Ruoding Mountain" has an annual sales volume of 5.87 million yuan, providing employment and income growth for more than 200 people and stable dividends for the village collective; "Mizang Zhuoma" sold 5.11 million yuan a year, with high-quality content driving the product to sell well. New farmers' short videos have turned rural industries from being ignored to a market hotspot.

3. The Practical Problems of New farmers' Short Videos in Building the Image of Rural Areas

3.1 Superficial Image Construction

Most of the new farmers have not received professional creative training. The pictures are exquisite but lack interpretability, making the image of the countryside monotonous and lacking long-term communication value. Due to the small scope of e-commerce training in the local area, it fails to meet the requirements for high-quality content construction. Although there are currently three e-commerce live-streaming bases in Ganzi Prefecture, only over 180 people have participated in the training, and the talent reserve is far from meeting the demand for account development. Shallow content production has led to a superficial and thin image of rural media, lacking sufficient influence and appeal.

3.2 Symbolization of Cultural Expression

Some authors merely mechanically use representational symbols such as clothing, architecture, and festivals to turn the ethnic culture into a spectacle, without providing an in-depth introduction to its historical and cultural background, connotation and inheritance. There are many intangible cultural heritages, but few are dissected incisively in the video, which can lead to misinterpretation and make it difficult to achieve the continuous shaping of culture. Ganzi has more than 1,000 items on the list of intangible cultural heritage at various levels, but only a few of them can be fully and deeply interpreted in short videos.

Symbolic expressions tend to leave the public stuck in “curious viewing”, making it difficult for them to truly understand the essence of the culture, and even leading to one-sided and entertainment-oriented misunderstandings, which is not conducive to the protection, inheritance and long-term dissemination of ethnic culture.

3.3 Homogenization of Narrative Methods

The traffic logic and herd mentality have led to obvious homogenization in the shooting form, narrative structure, content topic selection, etc., of new farmers' short videos. After a certain viral video emerges, many creators simply copy and paste, and the picture style, camera language, plot flow tend to be the same. For example, videos of picking matsutake mushrooms are mostly “climb the mountain early in the morning-search for picking-show on the spot”. Landscape videos are obsessed with aerial panoramas and background music; Product promotion videos follow the formula of “product display+verbal sales”.

There are more than 30,000 online merchants in the state, but only a few accounts have truly formed unique ips and are recognizable. Content homogeneity reduces dissemination efficiency and user stickiness, and leads to high viewership but low average conversion value per person, making it difficult to develop in the long term.

3.4 Fragmentation of the Dissemination Pattern

Short video creation by new farmers in Ganzi Prefecture is mostly based on individuals, families or small teams, presenting an overall situation of “fighting on their own and spreading in a scattered manner”. Most new farmers focus more on the traffic, number of followers and sales of their own accounts, lack awareness of regional overall image planning, and have scattered account positioning and different themes. Despite local governments setting up cultural and tourism promotion incentive funds, the proportion of ordinary new farmers who receive support and participate in unified communication is not high. Fragmented communication makes it difficult to create a concentrated momentum, which is not conducive to building a unified, distinct and competitive overall brand image of rural areas in Ganzi Prefecture.

4. Optimization Strategies for Rural Media Image Construction

4.1 Adhere to Deep Narrative and Increase Content Thickness

On the one hand, local governments, live-streaming bases and training institutions should strengthen their training efforts and conduct practical training in topic discovery, story construction, picture application and copy writing to enhance the content production capacity of new farmers; On the other hand, new farmers are encouraged to take root in the countryside, delve deeply into themes such as rural historical stories, intangible cultural heritage inheritance experiences, family changes, and entrepreneurial journeys, incorporate ecological, cultural, industrial, and livelihood elements into complete stories, and enhance the appeal of videos with real details and emotions.

4.2 Based on the Cultural Orientation, Strengthen the Dissemination of the Content

Encourage new farmers to systematically study local ethnic culture, historical traditions and intangible cultural heritage knowledge, enhance cultural identity and self-expression awareness, and avoid simply piling up symbols. In creation, incorporate the essence of culture naturally into everyday content in a contextualized, life-like, and knowledge-based way; Intangible cultural heritage inheritors, cultural scholars, and local elders can be invited to shoot and explain to enhance the professionalism and authority of the content. Let the people truly understand the unique charm of Ganzi culture in a way that is deep, warm and rich in cultural dissemination.

4.3 Strengthen Brand Building and Create Distinctive Ips

It is suggested that new farmers, focus on creating content, try different camera uses, plot developments, communication patterns, etc., and avoid simply copying and pasting; Actively build the overall brand image of the account, and form a unified image design, language tone, promotional slogan, etc. Strengthen recognition and dissemination, and gradually build a dual-engine model of “new farmers IP+regional public brand”.

4.4 Promote Collaborative Communication and Build a Communication Matrix

The government take the lead in designing the village image, and while unifying the publicity theme, slogan and visual system, establish a communication and exchange mechanism to encourage new farmers to travel together and achieve win-win cooperation; Publicity, culture and tourism, business and other relevant departments push and support excellent content about new farmers as part of government publicity; Actively contact video platform providers to obtain traffic resources, event resources and policy resources. Guide new farmers to understand the platform rules, improve communication strategies, and create a communication model that focuses efforts and speaks out as a whole.

5. Conclusion

Cultural and tourism revenue, e-commerce sales, and farmers' income all demonstrate the practical value of image reconstruction. At the same time, problems such as superficiality of content, cultural symbolization, narrative homogeneity and dissemination fragmentation still restrict the dissemination effect. In the future, we will continue to optimize the path of rural image construction based on deep narrative, with cultural orientation as the core, brand building as the handle, and collaborative communication as the guarantee, to shape a more authentic, three-dimensional and comprehensive rural media image of Ganzi Prefecture.

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