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# Innovative Strategies for Hosts in the Dissemination of China's Narrative System in the Age of Intelligent Media

Heying Zhang <sup>1,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

\* Correspondence: Heying Zhang, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

**Abstract:** In the report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the "second integration" emphasized the contemporary significance of excellent traditional Chinese culture, highlighting the construction of an independent narrative system based on the integration of traditional Chinese culture and local cultural practices. In today's society, China faces challenges in the dissemination of its narrative system, such as the external shaping of cultural symbols and a relatively singular form of cultural communication. The integration of culture and tourism has become a popular topic in recent years, with tourism programs serving as a window to showcase Chinese culture. Although cultural programs and tourism programs have both seen substantial development, creating a comprehensive program that effectively integrates both remains a task requiring continuous reflection from hosts. Particularly, current tourism programs face challenges like weak cultural relevance, lack of distinctive hosting styles, and hollow content. These issues present new challenges to hosts and offer great development potential for related programs. The key topic of this paper is how hosts can leverage their expertise to expand the program's reach or enhance its content dissemination. Through research, the paper identifies innovative approaches for hosts in cultural tourism programs, summarized into three phases: tasks to be completed in the pre-production, production, and post-production stages. The analysis covers the core content, the host's positioning, and communication methods. The proposed innovative paths provide new perspectives and ideas for more effectively disseminating Chinese cultural symbols abroad.

**Keywords:** the host; tourism program; innovation strategies

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. The Context of the Era

In the National Conference on Propaganda and Ideological Culture held in 2023, the new era's cultural thought was officially proposed and systematically elaborated, emphasizing "to continue to promote cultural prosperity, build a strong cultural nation, and construct the modern civilization of the Chinese nation at a new historical starting point, to firmly believe in our culture, to be open and inclusive, and to persist in innovation while preserving our cultural heritage." It was also pointed out that the excellent traditional Chinese culture is the "deepest cultural soft power" [1]. This provides theoretical guidance for broadcasters and hosts to carry out new era propaganda and ideological cultural work, and to undertake new cultural missions, clarifying the task book and roadmap. From the perspective of the integration of culture and tourism, the essence of the excellent traditional Chinese culture that people use daily without realizing it and the popular theme of

tourism are combined, excavating and reorganizing the cultural symbols permeating daily life, and imprinting the marks of history on today in a way that people enjoy, allowing the stories of culture to continue to be passed down.

As for the term "cultural tourism," it emerged as early as the 1980s: "Tourism is a cultural undertaking with strong economic characteristics, and it is also an economic undertaking with strong cultural characteristics." [2] From the 1990s to the early 21st century, many research documents on the relationship between culture and tourism emerged. As early as 1993, the document "Opinions on Actively Developing Domestic Tourism" first proposed the important role of the combination of culture and tourism in the development of cultural affairs. Later, with the development of the times, the relevance of the combination of culture and tourism has been increasingly enhanced. In 2018, the state established the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, which provided a strong guarantee for promoting the integrated development of culture and tourism. Today, "promoting tourism with culture" has become an important guideline for promoting tourism development and cultural construction across the country. Cultural tourism programs themed on tourism need to follow this trend of development, and traditional media has invested a lot of energy in producing many programs on this subject, entering the vision of thousands of households. The most well-known include cultural experience programs that visit various scenic spots and delve into cultural symbols, such as "Qiang Qiang Xing Tian Xia," cultural tourism exploration reality shows like "Qing Chun Huan You Ji," and cultural tourism quiz programs that combine culture, tourism, and education for entertainment and learning, among others.

## 1.2. Significance of the Study

### 1.2.1. Theoretical Significance

The General Secretary pointed out in the report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China: "Strengthen the construction of international communication capacity, comprehensively enhance the effectiveness of international communication, and form an international discourse power that matches our country's comprehensive national strength and international status." [3] At the same time, on July 24, 2023, the meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China indicated that it is necessary to actively expand domestic demand and promote service consumption such as sports leisure and cultural tourism [4]. Against this background, there have been many research achievements on the construction strategies of China's narrative system, and the research on innovative strategies for cultural symbols is relatively active, with a certain number of articles accumulated. However, from the perspective of the host, there is less academic research on the theme of program innovation strategies, and most of the analyses are based on traditional media content. This article mainly studies the innovative ideas of hosts in the era of intelligent media for the construction of China's narrative system and the dissemination of cultural symbols, thereby deepening the theoretical research on the aforementioned issues based on the research of predecessors.

### 1.2.2. Practical Significance

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party, cultural propaganda work has achieved historic accomplishments and undergone historic transformations. However, there are still significant challenges in external communication and international dissemination. China faces issues such as an imperfectly constructed discourse system, relatively singular communication methods, and a relative bias in communication content. This paper stands from the perspective of a host, who is a program creator, and conducts a comprehensive analysis from the initial creative ideas to the shooting methods of the program, from theory to practice, to address the difficulties, narrowness, and generality in the international communication of China's narrative system. By applying relevant theories to analyze the aforementioned issues, this paper aims to break through the limitations of

traditional media communication and avoid the disadvantages of self-media's pan-entertainment, enabling Chinese stories to be told from a global perspective and in innovative ways, thus finding new methods to solve the dilemma.

### 1.3. Research Objectives

The construction of China's narrative system is inseparable from specific cultural symbols as carriers and requires more concrete dissemination. However, research indicates that in recent years, China's culture often encounters the predicament of "other shaping" in the process of international communication, where the solidification of cultural symbols and outdated communication forms can no longer meet the needs of enhancing China's international cultural influence and soft power in the era of intelligent media. How to carry out efficient, three-dimensional, systematic, and innovative dissemination has become an urgent issue that needs to be addressed.

In today's era of intelligent media, new media is developing rapidly and plays a significant role in the process of information dissemination. Therefore, it is even more necessary to integrate resources and use innovative methods of communication to comprehensively enhance the effectiveness of international communication. As the leaders of programs, hosts should focus on thinking about innovative communication strategies in the preparatory work. When necessary, they should absorb and summarize the admirable aspects of new media into program creation. In recent years, a large number of "bloggers" have emerged on the internet, filming daily life from innovative perspectives and disseminating cultural symbols at home and abroad, attracting high attention. These are innovative strategies that hosts can refer to under this background, achieving a dissemination that combines professionalism and interest.

Especially for the important theme of the combination of culture and tourism, many travel programs have been launched in recent years. However, these programs have significant issues such as serious entertainmentization and weak cultural nature in the presentation process, and the presence of the host is not obvious, with a unclear identity positioning in the program. The above issues will affect the quality of cultural symbol dissemination, and the dissemination benefits are greatly reduced.

This work adopts the method of literature analysis to determine the topic through background and prospect analysis, and uses the form of cultural travel experience programs to disseminate Chinese traditional culture (especially traditional Chinese medicine culture). By using analogy, it draws on the advantages of both traditional and new media, integrates multiple perspectives into the work, and adopts various shooting methods (such as interviews, improvisational oral expression, one-shot filming, etc.) to ultimately achieve efficient and innovative dissemination, and in this process, responds to the call for the inheritance and development of excellent traditional Chinese culture.

## 2. Current State of Research

### 2.1. The Development Status of Cultural and Tourism Variety Shows Cultural and tourism

Variety shows refer to programs that integrate cultural and tourism resources, and present the folk culture and natural scenery of different regions to the audience in the form of variety shows through various media platforms [5]. In the rapidly developing era of intelligent media, the country is promoting the integration of tourism and culture to mutually promote and achieve rapid development. Both traditional and new media are competing to produce related cultural and tourism programs, resulting in a greater number of high-quality and popular programs and videos appearing in the public eye. Against this backdrop, there is an increased demand for hosts of cultural and tourism programs. However, in the current cultural and tourism programs, there are many issues with the identity of the hosts.

### 2.1.1. Empty Content

Tourist attractions include both natural and cultural sites, which require the host to have a comprehensive understanding before visiting in order to achieve the best effect in cultural dissemination. However, in common travel programs, hosts often focus on obvious content such as the geographical location and natural scenery of the area, which can be easily looked up online. When the audience is confronted with too much of this kind of information, they inevitably feel bored and unable to maintain their attention for long. Moreover, when hosts are faced with experiential projects, they only superficially engage in the experience instead of providing a genuine feedback to the audience, and the ritualized experience also loses the authenticity of the program.

### 2.1.2. Monotonous Format

Some hosts of travel programs lack awareness of innovation and merely imitate the production of other similar programs during the hosting process. Although these production methods have had successful experiences, they can make the audience feel bored with the content [6]. Especially in the current context, which advocates the combination of culture and tourism, there is a new requirement for hosts to delve deeper into the cultural aspects. However, the program format still remains entertainment-focused without paying attention to cultural aspects; or it is just a cultural program without the process of travel experience and on-site visits. Most programs do not organically combine the two, leading to a high degree of overlap when the audience watches, and a lack of motivation to continue watching.

### 2.1.3. Lack of Cultural Elements

A large number of travel variety shows that have emerged in recent years are positioned as reality shows, inviting many celebrities in an attempt to leverage the idol effect and gain more traffic. However, this process inevitably leads to the weakening of the cultural aspect of the program, with more focus on entertainment and leisure. Although viewers may find it interesting, the overproduction of such programs leads to serious homogenization, and the format of "reality show" goes from innovation to mediocrity and even decline. The role positioning of the host is also relatively vague, shifting the focus of the program from scenery to people, losing the characteristics and connotations that travel and culture programs should have.

### 2.1.4. Weak Personal Style Orientation

The weak branding of travel programs is a common problem in today's travel variety shows. Because in the production process of such programs, the host needs to visit the travel locations in person, which requires a lot of financial resources and time. Therefore, most of these programs lack the host's personal characteristics, and the producers will choose different hosts to visit different scenic spots, which greatly weakens the dissemination of the host's personal IP. However, this is exactly the opposite in new media, especially for travel bloggers, who have gained a large number of fans due to their unique personal style and distinctive visual language, and these series of videos often have a more efficient dissemination effect.

In summary, the role undertaken by the host in the program should not be underestimated, as it lays the foundation for the overall promotion of the program. Against the backdrop of the integration of culture and tourism, travel and culture programs can continue to deeply explore the creative elements of "travel + culture" in the future, continuously seek the source of vitality from traditional culture, and draw fresh stories from current life. Efforts should be made in theme design, audio-visual presentation, integrated communication, and other aspects to promote the in-depth "breakthrough" [7]. The overall development trend encourages more people to innovate, especially to achieve innovative

development with the help of multiple forces, which can further stimulate the development of the tourism industry and promote the inheritance and innovation of China's culture.

## 2.2. *The Practical Needs of Cultural and Tourism Programs*

### 2.2.1. Expression of Ethnic and Cultural Charm

The trend of integrating culture and tourism has increasingly become an important topic for travel variety shows. The setup before the production of such programs should encompass multiple elements. First and foremost is entertainment, the traditional characteristic of variety shows that should be preserved to meet the basic relaxation needs of the audience. Secondly, there is the regional aspect; by showcasing the cultural features and ethnic customs of different regions, the programs allow viewers to understand not only the natural scenery but also the local humanistic landscape, thereby creating an emotional connection. Especially when exploring areas with ethnic minorities or regions with relatively less population mobility, the programs can present things that are not commonly known to the public. However, it is also important not to focus solely on the pursuit of novelty and lose the essence of culture.

### 2.2.2. An Important Window for Regional Image Presentation

People's understanding of regional images mainly relies on media introductions, which greatly influence the dissemination of regional images. How to shape a good regional image plays a crucial role in the development of local tourism. Cultural and tourism programs are a form of expression that combines entertainment with culture, integrating natural scenery with humanistic characteristics to present a more complete "image" of the region. By using unique linguistic shots, distinctive background music, and matching color schemes, these programs can effectively promote the region, allowing more people to break away from "stereotypes" and even reshape the image. This serves as a window for external communication, providing opportunities for local image building and driving tourism development.

### 2.2.3. A Unique Model for Tourism to Promote Economic Development

The integration of culture and tourism can greatly promote the upgrading and innovative development of the tourism industry. The upgrading and transformation of the tourism industry refer to the gradual process of improving the tourism structure, fostering new tourism products and formats, and promoting the industry from a single economic function to a comprehensive one. In this process, it is necessary to deeply explore local tourism products, especially those with value. By integrating culture, tourism, experience, and products, it does not mean indiscriminately mining but selecting the most representative cultural symbols for in-depth research, producing derivative "cultural and creative" products or local specialties, and enhancing the "stickiness" with tourists. This approach can greatly drive the development of the local economy and promote the transformation and upgrading of industries.

## 3. **Innovation Strategies**

In recent years, the country has placed increasing emphasis on the integration of culture and tourism, and cultural tourism variety shows have become one of the important forms to showcase this combination. In the era of rapid development of new media and ever-changing technological advancements, the innovation and development of cultural tourism programs have also unfolded. This approach increases interaction with the audience, presenting the beautiful landscapes of the motherland from more authentic perspectives, and is an inheritance and development of China's excellent traditional culture.

### 3.1. Content Transformation: Cultural Symbols from "Others' Shaping" to "Self-Shaping"

Cultural tourism programs integrate culture and tourism, with tourism as the primary form, and culture as the biggest highlight and core theme. The extraction of cultural symbols should refer to China's traditional culture. The cultural inheritance and development symposium in June 2023 emphasized the inheritance and development of China's excellent traditional culture. The creative transformation and innovative development of China's excellent traditional culture are largely reflected in "secondary creation." That is, by using more modern artistic methods to reconstruct classic artistic texts and transform the traditional elements and classical aesthetic connotations within them [10]. The innovation of modern narrative of China's excellent traditional culture, spanning ancient and modern times, aims to combine traditional culture with contemporary society, interpret cultural symbols, and elaborate on the philosophical thoughts and humanistic spirit they contain. In this process, the selection of cultural symbols is particularly important. Generally speaking, a symbol is an object, language, or behavior, and it can also be an abstract idea or concept about culture, such as gestures, objects, signals, and text [11].

At present, China faces the dilemma of cultural symbol solidification and "others' shaping" in the process of narrative system dissemination. Internationally, when it comes to Chinese culture, the keywords that come to mind are still Chinese Kung Fu, giant pandas, porcelain, silk, and other cultural symbols, which can lead to some stereotypes. Cognition is the most basic psychological process of humans and the first step that affects people after receiving information. It is the process in which information such as sensation, memory, thinking, imagination, and language is processed in the human brain [12]. To break through this bottleneck and achieve the transformation from "others' shaping" to "self-shaping," it is necessary to tell our own stories well and excavate the shining points of culture from history.

At the beginning of the program's creation, the host needs to start with culture and choose the right tourist destination. After determining the central theme of the program's filming, the selection of the subjects to be filmed is an important link. This choice is not blind but should start from the public's daily life to more effectively connect with the audience. It is necessary to explore the content that the audience wants to know and is willing to understand as the main content. In the production process of the program, a clear narrative logic is needed, from the starting point of tourism to the foothold of culture, achieving a progressive layering to provide a detailed exposition of culture, telling the story of culture well, and telling the story of China well.

### 3.2. Model Update: Role Transition from "Participation" to "Experience"

A model refers to "a mature, tested, and verified standard template with stable internal specifications and external orientation, characterized by specific rules and routines" [13]. Cultural tourism programs often adopt the formats of entertainment reality shows or traditional cultural programs. In these fixed models, the host is often seen as a master of ceremonies and an introducer, with a minimal role. If we update the model, starting from the positioning of the host's role, we can transform the host from the "third-person perspective" of the guests to the "first-person perspective," participating as an experienter. They genuinely understand the local culture and convey authentic and concrete content to the audience. Travel programs need to give viewers a real sense of experience, so the program host's tour process must be personally experienced, allowing the audience to experience the types of services at the attractions [14]. The innovative aspect of this model lies in the fact that it is not just a simple travel check-in; cultural tourism programs present the regional characteristics in a diverse, rich, and concrete manner through the experiences and explorations of the guests [15]. To achieve this shift in identity, comprehensive support from technology to content is required.

For the host, to ensure the authenticity of the program, the choice of expression is particularly crucial. Compared to traditional programs where a pre-set script is broadcast,

although it can ensure professionalism and error-free delivery, presenting a more "perfect" overall appearance, there is also a dilemma of emotional "distortion" in this kind of expression. On the contrary, travel hosts can gain more trust for travel programs and better fulfill their responsibilities by accurately describing their own feelings [16]. In travel programs, the host should not only act as a "guide" to explain but also as a "tourist" to experience, using impromptu spoken language to truly express their thoughts and feelings at this moment. Unlike written language, which can be thought over repeatedly, impromptu spoken language is often limited by the surrounding environment and program duration, and in live interactions with guests or local people, new language and logical thinking methods are continuously organized to generate new topics [17]. By presenting the content through impromptu spoken language, listeners will more easily understand the connotations, and the speaker's expression will be more natural and comfortable. In addition to spoken language expression, the host also needs to match appropriate body language, reasonably arranging body movements, facial expressions, and gestures to match the content being expressed, which can greatly enhance the specificity of the expression. This form of expression requires a lot of practical experience to accumulate experience, which also lays the foundation for the host to create personal characteristics. Excellent impromptu spoken language expression can form a distinctive personal style and style over time through training and accumulation, which will serve as a business card for the host and can enhance the communication effect of the program.

### *3.3. Redefinition of Image: From "One Person" to "A Group of People"*

Looking back at past cultural tourism programs, the common pattern was macro-narrative, where the task was considered complete once the events were explained clearly and the locations were introduced. If we choose to put human communication at the forefront, using the real-life portraits of the Chinese people to delve into the commonalities of cultures worldwide, this connects "one person" to "a group of people," providing a new perspective for global audiences to observe China. Stories about people are the most captivating and resonate more with others.

When the host is preparing the program, the focus should be on how to tell the story from the perspective of one person or a group of people. In traditional television programs, a macro-narrative model is often used, where the host's task is considered complete once the subjects are introduced clearly. Most of this content can be found online and lacks uniqueness, turning a program into an educational video and lacking "human participation." When selecting the subjects for filming, the host should not simply take "scenery" or "nature" as the main subject of expression but should use them as an entry point to delve into the theme from a cultural perspective, thereby dividing the program into different sections and expressing the main content more logically. The ultimate focus should also be on the praise of the local humanistic spirit, as the saying goes, "The land nurtures the people," achieving an integration of emotion and scenery. Beautiful landscapes vary, but the Chinese culture, precipitated by history, becomes even more precious.

## **4. Conclusion**

Against the backdrop of the current era, the integration of culture and tourism has become a major trend. China's excellent traditional culture, as the "root" of our country's development, contains many elements worth in-depth exploration by the public. Chinese culture has a long and storied history, with many essences yet to be uncovered. At present, China's narrative system still faces numerous challenges, including the solidification of cultural symbols and outdated forms of communication. In the face of such difficulties, what innovative strategies should hosts adopt is a topic that warrants thoughtful consideration.

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