Emotional Connection: Research on short video communication of "Rural online celebrities" from the perspective of interactive ritual chains

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Abstract: Enter in the second half of the cyber space, rural short videos have sprung up on the increasingly expanded short video content track. This paper uses the questionnaire survey method to explore the relevant factors of the current rural online celebrities' attention and based on the interactive ritual chain theory. The study found that in the process of conducting a series of interactive rituals with rural internet celebrities, short video users satisfy their own psychological needs for country style life and profound emotional experience, which generate important rituals such as "identity" and "emotional bond" in the end. The results provide a certain reference for the dissemination and development of rural short videos.

Keywords: Interaction ritual chains, Rural celebrities, Short videos, Affective labor

1 Introduction

With the pervasiveness and application of the mobile Internet, short video content with the advantages of being lightweight, fragmented and instantaneous meets the viewing demands of contemporary online users that being a sudden emergence in China. Scores of residents from countryside join the queue of creators, and the rural image constructed by their own shooting and editing surges the user's long-standing rural memory. Nowadays,pan-rural short videos focus on three categories: Daily-rituals vlogs and situational short dramas with a documentary nature; covering popular science-based rural food production, customs explanation, agricultural knowledge popularization and policy communication; agricultural product promotion and live broadcast mainly for profit-earnings and so on . From their own perspective, content creators have changed the ambiguity and one-sidedness of the concept of "rural" by mass media and interpersonal communication in the past. Although the initial rural short videos violated the recognition of mainstream values, relevant departments have further rectified and improved , with the regulation and transformation of media platforms, rural short videos in today have returned to a pure scene. By studying the new transmission-reception relationship constructed under the content category, it provides ideas for the creation path of contemporary agriculture-related content, telling rural stories well, and serving rural revitalization.

At present, most of the researches on the digital narrative and dissemination of rural stories in the academic world focus on three elements: scholars use in-depth interviews, questionnaires, case studies and other methods to research the dissemination effect of rural short videos, and the structure and emotional connection of the relationship between the creators and followers .However, there has not been a more comprehensive and in-depth discussion on the emotional dependence of followers of “rural online celebrities” mix with the emotional and social factors that create rural online celebrities prevailed .

Based on the user portraits of rural short video followers and their usage habits on short video platforms such as Kuaishou and Tiktok, this paper adopts the questionnaire survey method to study the factors that create and intensively integrate the emotional interaction between short video users and rural online celebrities.

2 Literature Review

2.1 The theory of Interactive Ritual Chain

From ancient times to present, ceremonies have entrusted myriad ad individuals ‘ longings for a better life.For instance ,religious ceremonies and sacrificial ceremonies. In modern society, ritual phenomenon is preserved but exists more as a "field" for sharing emotions and doctrines. For the same purpose, people gather in the constructed "field" to share and exchange emotional experiences. German sociologist Simmel first proposed the term social interaction. He considered that the macroscopic structure and process of society are, in the final analysis, a reflection of interpersonal interaction. Erving Goffman analyzed the rituals in people's dailys and tended that rituals are shared immediately about reality experience, and participants exchange emotions and pay attention to each other in the process of participation, resulting in group solidarity and symbolization.

In 1986, Randall Collins, a well-known American sociologist, formally proposed the theory of the chain of interactive rituals. He proposed that the interactive rituals include the following four elements: (1) Two or more people gather in the same place. (2) Setting boundaries for outsiders. (3) People focus their attention on a common object or activity. (4) People share a identical emotion or emotional experience. The results chiefly include: (1) group solidarity (2) individual emotional energy (3) symbols representing the group (4) group morality. Božić Saša in the context of the global 2019 COVID-19 pandemic, the isolation measures introduced by various countries have profoundly affected the consequences of the microscopic and closed interactive ritual market in society: such as the interference ritual structure of interaction, loss of emotional energy, isolated families Growth in violence and more.

From 2008 to 2022, the number of articles from Mainland China on the "interactive ritual chain" has fluctuated and increased. The original literature on the "interactive ritual chain" was mainly used in social communication, contemporary art, tourism and other fields. In the

promotions of integrating the theory of interactive ritual chain and communication, Chinese research mostly orbited around the following two aspects:

2.1.1 Research on social phenomenon and interactive behavior

Huang Jianmei (2008) was the first Chinese academic to apply the theory of interactive ritual chain to explain social phenomen. He discussed the custom of Chinese folks stealing melons, fruits and vegetables during traditional festivals, reflecting the social and psychological sustenance of praying for children and blessings. Rituals that exist under pressure, during which custom is a chain of interactive rituals. By observing fans holding birthday support meetings in their real life for idols, Li Huajun's analysis shows that this kind of cognitive coherence is continuously strengthened, and fans are triggered to generate various conscious behaviors, forming a closed loop of the ritual chain.

With the movement of mobile technology, scholars have begun to conduct comprehensive analysis and research on online and offline spaces in combination with social platforms. Chang Jiang and Wang Xiaopei intend the views that mediation has opened up new social spaces and changed the organization and interaction of social actions. Short videos construct a virtual mediated space, which interacts and influences the real space. The interweaving of virtuality and reality builds s the human world a "reality-virtual" continuum.

2.1.2 Research on subculture and group aspects of the network

Scholars take network subcultural groups as research objects, assuming that there are strong identity and close emotional connections in different groups. Meanwhile, these groups have certain potential to form influential social forces.

Scholar Deng Xin used the interactive ritual chain theory to analyze the barrage interaction behavior of barrage website Bilibili, combined youth subculture communication with interactive ritual chain theory, and conducted in-depth research on ACG subculture communication, barrage interaction, and its user emotional connection and group identity behaviors in Bilibili. The interaction of Asian culture Communication is an individual's desire to pursue group identity and sense of belonging as a matter of facts.

Ma Zhonghong reckons that while subculture develops and evaluates in the cyber area , it has the trend of integrating and applying with multiculturalism. Youth subculture has complicated relationship of integration and maintenance with different branches of other cultures and even similar cultures. Subcultures desire to present their own differentiated positioning by comparing with other cultures. In cyberspace, words are rights. This discourse provides a reference for young netizens to enhance vitality and express their positions in the social structure.

It can be clarified that most Chinese scholars apply this theory to practical research. Based on the chain of interactive rituals, they rendered a comprehensive and in-depth discussion of the interactive behavior of various media and groups, plus afforded a new research perspective for

the interactive behavior of humans online . Indeed , they also study the dissemination of rural short videos in this article which provides great reference value. In contrast, the Chinese research on the role of the principle of interactive ritual chain in rural short videos is relatively limited. In the process of social development, the interactive ritual chain theory plays an vital role in the benign development of rural short videos.

2.2 Research on the short video in rural themes

In the Chinese articles on "short videos" that study rural themes in the context of the theory of "interactive ritual chain", the research objects are centered on: rural Internet celebrities, social platforms, short video platforms and their users, as well as mobile terminals; the research content is more distributed in: user use motivation, user psychology, rural short video development strategy research, Communication characteristics with media contact.

CNKI takes "agriculture, rural areas along with farmers short videos", "agricultural/rural Internet celebrities" and "rural short videos" as keywords for search. Through sorting, it is found that the Chinese research on rural online celebrities predominantly engaged in the following aspects:

2.2.1 Research on the mechanism of rural short video production

The majority of studies believe that the birth of rural online celebrities benefitted from the development of mobile Internet technology and the sinking of creative thresholds. As a member of the widely known Internet celebrity group, the scale of rural short video groups is also expanding. Rural users in different regions have also begun to shoot videos of agriculture, rural areas with farmers with different themes and forms.

At the beginning of the study,a large amount of scholars limited rural short videos to pure rustic "scenario dramas", "social shaking", etc. As well as simple shooting methods, old-fashioned jokes, and ostentatious acting skills to show the landscape of rural and towns. Scholar Liu Na saturated the scope of local short videos and subdivided them into drama performances, talent display, daily life records, and rural public issue thinking. Yang Ping believes that the narrative expression of local short videos solely caters to the psychology of netizens' strange hunting and ugliness, with special discourse symbols and post-modern characteristics of marginal and flatness.

Since 2019, People's Daily Online Venture Capital has announced its vital research results, "Short Video Supporting Agriculture, Innovation and Development Report" (hereinafter referred to as the "Report"). The report pointed out that it relied on short videos to develop rural revitalization and build the main force of "short video + Internet celebrity + agriculture, rural areas and farmers". As an necessary starting point for rural revitalization, short videos of agriculture, farmers can play their due role in the form of short video communication.

2.2.2 Research on the Characterization of Rural Short Video Creators and Followers

Through the external manifestations of local short videos, some scholars discuss the cognitive differences and interesting differences caused by the imbalance in the level of education and media literacy of different groups, revealing the differences of social stratum and cultural separation between urban and rural areas in China's vivid urbanization process. From the perspective of creators-followers, some scholars analyzed the creators and their audiences with rural short video bloggers Huanong Brothers and Hua Lingzi as the main observation objects. They believe that the former records rural life with a healthy and positive attitude to face the yearning of urban groups for "paradise", while the latter is strange and vulgar.Express yourself in a way to accept the ugly needs of some users to "look down".

Chen Yawei divides his creative and viewing groups into township youth and urban youth. In his research, he found that local short videos are the confrontational performances of township youth and a symbol of meeting the imagination of class leapfrogging. With short videos as the medium, it creates an ugly carnival for youngsters in cities, thus exemplified the enormous cultural tearing and the complex situation of contemporary youth arising from China's rapid development.

Li An and Yu Junwen conceive that rural groups, as new media users, are becoming new producers and industrial attributes have been discovered. Short videos have demonstrated great industrial value in rural revitalization.

2.2.3 Research on the relationship between short video creators and digital labor

From a macro perspective, the characteristics and profit model of rural short videos as an pushing classification among short videos are also worth in-depth discussion. Through digital ethnography, Lv Peng illuminated the embodiment of online emotional affective labor based on rewards to obtain income in the labor of Kuaishou anchors on short video/live social media platforms. He believes that online emotional labor on Kuaishou has a clear purpose of making profits. This labors not only a performance using specific skills and discourse, but also uses the private life and real emotions of anchors, ordinary anchors are in an solute weak position to obey capital in online emotional labor.

Because of it rural short video bloggers are increasingly selling and circulating their personalities.They live as part of online emotional labor, largely because anchors realize that social media platforms and society are constantly encouraging and inducing them to finish this operation and owning the economy from this operation with earning-based praise.

Therefore, scholars focus on the reasons for the popularity of rural short videos and believe that the external environment and the characteristics of short video creators themselves constitute the subjective and objective reasons for the popularity. However, most short video scholars focus on the communication impact t and social effectiveness of rural short videos.It has a blank space about the interactive characteristics and video sway between rural short video

creators and audiences, and the improvement of communication paths, etc.

Thus,this article will take this as the starting point to concrete the theory of rural short video with the phenomenon of short video correlation, with a view to supplementing the research of rural short video topics in rural short video transmission mechanism, communication efficiency and benign development. The questions focused on this article are as follows:

RQ1:How can the audience have a sense of belonging with online celebrities when watching short videos of rural online celebrities?

RQ2:What are the emotional social elements that are popular with rural online celebrities?

3 Research Method

The paper adopts the research method of questionnaires which try to fix out the questions above.

3.1 Questionnaire Method

Based on these questions, the corresponding assumptions are :

H1: The psychological demands of the audience to watch rural video clips are significantly related to the emotional reliance of rural Online celebrities.

H2: The frequency of interaction between the audience and rural Internet celebrities and the degree of emotional reliance on rural Internet celebrities are typically related.

To verify these hypothesis, the study sampled the population through questionnaires and designed questionnaires.

3.2 Sampling method

The research object of this hypothesis is the group of short video users.

Firstly, a representative sample of this group is made for taking the users of rural video clips as the research as the whole;This survey completed the process of data collection, arrangement and analysis on October 10, 2022. The survey mainly focusses on closed ended questions. The main contents are: (1) basic information confirmation: including gender, age, household registration and academic backgrounds. (2) Independent variable "user viewing habits" (3) dependent variable 1 "identity" (4) dependent variable 2 "Frequency of recommendations about rural short videos by the platform mechanism". 12 questions, including 5 single-choice questions are combined in the questionnaire within 3 multi-choice questions and 4 scale questions. It adopted online distribution and spread it through social platforms such as WeChat Moments, QQ space and Weibo.

4 Research results and findings

4.1 Sampling feature description

A total of 154 questionnaires were collected in this questionnaire, most of the people who completed the questionnaire were from county-level cities (28.6%). From the descriptive analysis, in terms of access to rural videos, social media is the mainstay, and 59.1% of people choose "short video apps such as Xigua video, TikTok, Kuaishou", etc. For watching rural videos, the proportion of people who choose "before bedtime" is 29.2%. In terms of the degree of emotional dependence on rural Internet celebrities, the distribution is relatively even. It is believed that the degree of dependence is deeper and insufficient accounts for about 40%.

4.2 Group coexistence and group identity

Through Pearson correlation analysis, it is found that H1 is established (r=0.127, p=0.05*), indicating that the psychological need to watch rural short videos is significantly related to the emotional dependence on Internet celebrities. Anderson proposed that mankind's desire for the community is innate. Although people have an impulse to be independent, they always have a need for joining the colony. Human security and emotions depend on a huge extent on the collective. This view takes the rural rural celebrity "Classmate Zhang" as an example. When he had a bumper harvest, his decent was perceived by the audience through the scene. When he skied with Ertao with tires, the audience can also clearly feel the simple and pure happiness in a simple life. When he ate with Xia Mei but was disturbed by Er Tao, his expression also made the audience align with his joke and self-deprecating. At the same time, the rural life presented in Zhang's video is related to the daily portrayal of tens of millions of "new farmers" and traditional and real multi-person exchanges. It is reconstruction and expression that is not divided from real life. It can be seen that daily life experience is the centre of rural residents' self-identification, and their self-narration is the reproduction of their true self.

4.3 Emotional energy: the key link of interactive closed loop

Maurice Halbwachs once pointed out: "Members of a specific social group share the process and results of the past. The condition for ensuring the inheritance of collective memory is that social interaction and group consciousness need to extract the continuity of that memory.

According to the questionnaire survey, township youth are a large number of powerful forces to watch and create local-flavored short videos. Relying on the short video platform, the group has found a clue to display itself and interact with each other, which breaks the deadlock that township youth groups were in a "aphasia" and "dominated" status in the past. After moving from a town to a town, even completing the transformation of identity, this group has been

accepting the construction of mainstream cultural and rural scenes that are extremely different from the original environment and growth process. As a creator, throughout the real countryside displayed through short videos, it indicates the real self to users who have never met, and has become a powerful output of rural culture. On the one hand, the nostalgia formed by rural images in the scenes of short video sets has become psychological proximity brought about by the old and new arrivals in the real environment; on the other hand, it is a mystery of young people in small towns to bid farewell to the identity disorder caused by long-term differences between urban and rural areas, and a mystery of establishing new identity after having self-expression and display space.

Although in some country short videos, some creators deliberately create country symbols in the stereotype of the public, so as to meet the user's tendency to "triage" and "hunt". However, a large part of the short video content has the function of filling the memory gap and closing nostalgia. First of all, it arouses the good memories of rural short video consumer groups. What's more, it also enriches the understanding of the rural image of urban residents. Gradually, at the same time, when the population moves from the countryside to the town, their homesickness will gradually become consistent. The village that can't go back in my mind constructs the same memory space with the popular rural short video content. H2 was established ($r=0.087$, $p=0.009^{**}$), and the frequency of interaction between rural Internet celebrities is significantly related to the emotional dependence of rural Internet celebrities.The station is the channel for distribution.

5 Conclusion

In this study, rural short video creators or rural online celebrities has been selected as the survey object. The study aimed to explore the presentation of their behavior mechanism in rural short video creation groups and the possible social influence. It is found that in the process of a series of interactive ceremonies with rural online celebrities, short video users meet their psychological needs for rural life and profound emotional experience, and ultimately generate vital ritual effects such as "identity" and "emotional conclusion".Providing a certain channel for the dissemination and development of rural short videos.

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