

Research on Rural Regional Image Communication in the Practice of Agricultural Products E-commerce

Ruolin Zhu

School of Journalism and Communication, Anhui University, Hefei, Anhui, 230039, China

Keywords: Rural Communication, Disembedding, Agricultural Products E-commerce

Abstract: In the current prevalence of consumerism culture, the strong rise of digital economy has provided an important driving force for agricultural products e-commerce to promote rural modernization and build a new pattern of rural revitalization and development. Agricultural products have also become an important symbol carrier for rural regional image communication. Based on this, with the help of disembedding theory, the paper mainly studies the media practice of agricultural products e-commerce. It is found that in this process, agricultural products e-commerce makes rural scenes separate from the physical field and embed in the media space, so that the rural landscape has a certain publicity and visibility, and the identity of multiple communication subjects is reconstructed. With the blessing of big data and e-commerce platform, traditional local culture is separated from the rural space and embedded in the modern consumption space, forming purchasing behaviors. The symbolic attributes of agricultural products themselves and the image cognition of rural areas are also widely spread through consumer behaviors.

1. Introduction

Under the background of the national strategy of rural revitalization, the agricultural products e-commerce has become an important force for rural digital transformation. The direct goal of agricultural products e-commerce is to obtain profits through the marketing of physical products based on online channels. In this process, the sales body will commercialize the local culture and lifestyle, take the commodity as the carrier, and embed the local landscape and knowledge into the marketing scene. Through virtual tour and consumption behavior, consumers form the perception of rural regional image and the direct experience of local scenery. With the increasingly extensive penetration of this model into the daily life experience of urban and rural residents, it also provides a new research perspective and analysis path for us to explore rural development and rural regional image communication in the digital society. Under the above background, this study takes the bamboo shoot e-commerce activities of D village in Anhui province as a case study, and through qualitative research, explores the logic of rural regional image communication implied in the e-commerce practice of agricultural products.

2. Literature Review

This study intends to start from the concept of "disembedding" to understand the communication

logic in the practice of agricultural products e-commerce. The concept of "disembedding" derived from British sociologist Anthony Giddens' *The Consequences of Modernity*, refers to "the 'disengagement' of social relations from the geographical associations of their interactions with each other, from the associations reconstructed through infinite travel through uncertain time [1]." A considerable number of domestic studies focus on rural governance and urban-rural relations. The phenomenon of cultural disembedding brought about by the intensified flow of urban and rural population and the continuous development of Internet information technology in rural areas has attracted much academic attention. For example, Wang Yilan and Liu Yang (2022) discussed the disembedding of rural social relations and cultural memory caused by population outflow and invasion of foreign cultures.

Some scholars mainly discussed the inheritance of traditional culture and intangible cultural heritage. Yu Juan (2022) described how short video platforms affected the process of intangible cultural heritage disembedding and re-embedding. Yu Insi and Chen Changfeng (2022) believe that the realization of "disembedding" dissemination of traditional culture needs to meet the internal requirements of "out of time domain" and "out of field domain". All these studies provide a good research direction and theoretical background for the spread of local culture and local regional influence.

The sales of agricultural products on e-commerce platforms cannot be separated from the support of consumers. How the online sales practices of e-commerce affect the audience's consumption behavior is also the focus of this study. With reference to previous domestic studies, Hu Xiao (2016) analyzed how the disembedding mechanism of consumption space brought about the global convergence of consumption patterns from the perspective of spatial relationship changes.

To sum up, agricultural products e-commerce, as an important driving force to promote rural social change and cultural "disembedding" in recent years, has not received enough attention. Therefore, this paper focuses on the media practice of agricultural products e-commerce to discuss the relationship between the process of rural culture "disembedding" and rural regional image communication.

3. Research Design

This paper mainly adopts the methods of participatory observation and informed interviews to master the media practice process of product promotion and commodity sales by the e-commerce platform and social media of agricultural products. This paper analyzes the behavioral motivation of consumers to buy agricultural products when browsing social media and e-commerce platforms based on the disembedding theory, and explores the internal connection between consumers' perception and communication of rural regional image in this process. The specific design is as follows.

3.1 Sample Source

D Village located in Xinhua Township, Huangshan District, southern Anhui Province, with a total area of 12.2 square kilometers. The villagers' income is mainly from the cultivation industry, and bamboo shoots are the local characteristic industry. About 15,000 mu of bamboo forest are connected with neighboring villages, and the local economic level is stable in the middle and upper reaches of Huangshan District. The local live e-commerce project was established at the end of 2022, and targeted assistance was carried out in D village to achieve local industrial upgrading guided by live e-commerce.

3.2 Research Methods

Researchers watched short videos, live broadcasts and promotion documents related to agricultural and sideline products on the e-commerce platform of Tiktok and wechat. The researchers understand the interactive model, content style and symbolic metaphor of agricultural products e-commerce in online sales.

The researchers conducted unstructured interviews with the internal employees of agricultural products e-commerce enterprises in Xinhua Township, Anhui Province, to understand how the enterprises integrated local resources and how to persuade villagers to live broadcast. This study realizes the transformation and upgrading of rural characteristic industries, so as to enhance the regional communication power and premium space of agricultural products brands.

4. See the Countryside: Rural Scenes Out of the Domain, Embedded in the Media Space

With the promotion of the rural revitalization strategy, 5G network has begun to be popularized in the vast number of villages, and the e-commerce of agricultural products has put the rural landscape at the front of the exhibition by means of live broadcasting and short video release. With the help of the communication practice in the mobile media space, the rural scene has been separated from the original regional connection, and the local nature has been given the power to enter the field of public life. All kinds of local landscapes gradually move into the public domain and become public landscapes, and have obtained a wide range of publicity.

4.1 E-commerce Media Practices Enhance Rural Visibility

In the era of traditional media, the countryside and its specific image have always been marginalized, and the public can only see the imagination of the rural community constructed by others through books, newspapers and television, and the real rural landscape has always been absent in the public's cognition. The media practice of e-commerce makes the countryside shift from "the other" to obtain the power of self-expression, making the originally sheltered countryside gain some visibility.

4.1.1 Use short video and live broadcast for performance

Giddens believes that there are two types of disembedding mechanism, the first is the generation of symbolic tokens. Symbolic symbols are "mutual communication media" that enable information to be transmitted out of the regional space and away from any face-to-face interaction [1]. The e-commerce of agricultural products uses the mode of short video + live broadcast to sell agricultural products, separating the previous trading activities from the physical space and embedding them into the media space. People belonging to different geographical Spaces can communicate through the medium of short video without facing each other.

"First of all, we need to persuade villagers to do live broadcasting, change farmers' sales thinking, rely on the village scene as the background of live broadcasting or short videos, and invite township heads to tell stories and other ways." Xinhua Township Lei bamboo sales e-commerce WH told the behavioral logic of the work in the interview, "The local interpersonal relations are almost iron, it is difficult to integrate", for this reason, the local agricultural products e-commerce through "high price to receive goods, establish trust relationship, avoid risk" and other measures to pull villagers together to live show and other media practice.

The short video shows the farming scene of farmers' production, their hardworking and simple way of life, and the image of farmers themselves as the main body of communication. For example,

Xinhua Township E-commerce Chamber of Agricultural Products released some scenes of villagers quietly peeling bamboo shoots in their yards, which makes the rural landscape break away from the original regional connection and enter the flowing media space. With the intervention of short videos, the physical space barrier has been reconnected, and the rural groups and rural features that used to be at the edge of the Internet have changed from invisible to visible.

4.1.2 Build a sales network of e-commerce platform

The expert system is another type of disembedding, which refers to "a system of technical achievements and professional teams that influence every aspect of an operation in a continuous manner [1]." Before the e-commerce of agricultural products gradually sinks in remote areas, many farmers have not received professional marketing training, do not know and do not trust the use of Internet tools to sell products, and use passive sales models such as door-to-door acquisition when selling agricultural products, coupled with poor information to meet market demand, which eventually lead to product backlog and meager income.

After the intervention of agricultural products e-commerce, it brings advanced information technology and professional sales experience into the countryside, creates a professional online sales model, promotes the effective integration between social platforms, e-commerce and mobile networks, makes the transformation and upgrading of local industrial belts, and improves the visibility and influence of agricultural products. Yu Guoming pointed out that algorithm, as a medium in a higher sense, connects, matches and ADAPTS value relations through a series of judgment structures, shapes cognition, constructs relations and integrates society [2]. 5 G era background, with the help of algorithm mechanism and platform recommendation, agricultural products e-commerce will accurately connect villages, villagers, agricultural products and market demand, and achieve a balance between supply and demand from "people looking for goods" to "goods looking for people". Netizens can get knowledge of local agricultural products and landscapes on various e-commerce platforms, short video platforms and social media. Local scattered small brands are also effectively unified under the guidance of e-commerce, D village e-commerce staff said, "Objectively speaking, the local brand is funded by the government, we are mainly responsible for unifying these scattered small brands to create regional public brands, for promotion." Building a unified brand plays a great role in promoting the influence and data of the brand on social media. It can not only enhance the influence and communication power on social media, but also help to improve the communication power of the local region while building a big brand.

4.2 Transformation of Rural Landscape into Public Landscape

"A village is a kind of field, with openness, generation and construction [3]." The integration and interaction between media practice and rural scene has become an effective force to construct rural media space.

In modern society, as an intermediary and institution, with the help of the strategic discourse and market forces of rural revitalization, the promotion and popularization of agricultural products e-commerce has shown an unprecedented momentum of development in rural areas, becoming an important force to promote the transformation and change of rural society. Under the influence of Internet technology, rural areas are also involved in the entire communication environment and become an important part of the industrial chain. Take the bamboo forest chicken project in the village of D as an example, bamboo shoot e-commerce is mainly responsible for the link, "For example, some people who do chicken farming in other places will take the initiative to contact us after watching our live broadcast, and want to set up a bamboo forest chicken project in our place,

they are optimistic about the breeding site and give farmers to raise chickens." WH said that this can not only extend the industrial chain, but also attract potential consumers, "Such walking chickens can be adopted remotely, live broadcast their life status, and develop into a variety of leisure agriculture potential, attracting consumers to come directly to experience."

The sales of agricultural and sideline products are no longer limited to the surrounding areas. Networking, marketization and globalization have accelerated the process of rural disembedding and connected and embedded an open and inclusive media space. The sales channels of agricultural products have been further expanded in the media space, and they can be sold all over the country with the help of e-commerce platforms and social media, and the influence of media space even radiates to the whole world. Residents all over the world can use the media space to understand the customs and specialties of Chinese villages, build consensus in the process of communication, and reach regional image identification of rural areas, so as to further understand Chinese villages.

In the agricultural products promotion platform, the audience can see all kinds of scenery from rural areas, the interview e-commerce WH said that they are not just purely selling goods, "Sometimes they will be directed to do some live broadcast related to rural natural scenery, such as when the bamboo season will broadcast some local bamboo forests and so on, is to highlight the quality of this thing with a good natural environment." The rural image flows in the virtual space in a fragmented form and becomes a public landscape. The disembedding mechanism provides a guarantee for the cross-time extension of the situation, and realizes the time and space extension of the rural scene.

4.3 Identity Reconstruction of the Communication Subject

In the e-commerce practice we investigated, the communication subject breaks away from the previous stable meaning at the level of identity construction and enters the field of fragmentation and mobility. As a cultural symbol, people are incorporated into the social form of consumerism or "landscape society" in the process of information communication, forming a "brand-new signifier system [4]".

4.3.1 Change of Identity of Local Farmers: Producer - Spokesperson

With the introduction of e-commerce to the countryside, rural areas have the possibility to participate in the marketization process. However, in the process of online sales of agricultural products, farmers, as the main body of communication, are not always in a dominant and passive position. Agricultural producers know their products better, so their live delivery is more convincing than celebrity endorsement in many cases, and they can interact with potential consumers more smoothly on online live broadcast platforms. To obtain more sales opportunities, the future live e-commerce has gradually become the new identity of many villagers. In the media space, the character image also has unique economic value, which enables the image to create a new visual culture industry. Many consumers are more willing to watch short videos with strong local flavor and pay for the agricultural products recommended by local farmers.

In a short video of farmers digging for bamboo shoots in village D, the disseminator's rough and bandaged hands attract more attention than agricultural products, "Just for this hand, I will decisively praise the video, which is basically not praised" and "labor hands" reflect the audience's consumption behavior is more inclined to pay attention to agricultural products spokesmen themselves. In this process, farmers are transformed from producers of traditional villages into spokesmen for local characteristic agricultural products. They not only guarantee the quality of local agricultural products, but also promote the spread of rural regional image to a certain extent.

4.3.2 The transformation of the identity of agricultural products e-commerce: enterprise organization-the driver of rural revitalization

Agricultural products e-commerce has accurately connected rural advantageous resources, customs and customs with the market, and promoted local specialties to the whole country through the "short video + live broadcast" sales method, which has stimulated the enthusiasm of local farmers for innovation and entrepreneurship, promoted the industrial transformation and upgrading of local agricultural products, and realized the rapid growth of rural economy. Agricultural products e-commerce has also achieved identity reconstruction in this process, transforming from an enterprise organization to a booster of rural revitalization. The township government staff of village D affirmed the benefits brought by bamboo shoots e-commerce, "They are still quite obvious in terms of output value enhancement, and the original two or three dollars per cattles of bamboo shoots have been mentioned to five or six dollars per cattles. This core link is to transform the original inherent industry of the countryside, that is, the primary industry and the secondary industry to the tertiary industry through the new media." The ultimate goal is to increase the income of farmers, and we are willing to find such partners when doing business."

5. "Symbol Consumption": Local Culture Out of the Domain, Embedded in the Modern Urban Consumption Space

With the blessing of big data and e-commerce platforms, rural cultural resources enter the public eye by means of short videos and live broadcasts, which break away from the original rural geographical environment and become embedded in the urban consumption space, becoming an effective way for urban residents to recall the imprint of their hometown, dispel survival anxiety and alleviate food safety anxiety. At this time, the countryside is not only a cultural space, but also a consumption space. The realization of rural culture "out of domain" communication is not only so simple as to let the cultural resources of rural society leave its birthplace to obtain a wider range of geographical communication space, but also contains the inherent requirements of "out of time domain" and "out of field domain" in essence.

5.1 "Out of Time Domain": Traditional Culture Embedded in Modern Cultural Space

"Out of the time domain" means that a culture is separated from the historical background of its birth and embedded in a new era environment [5]. Product excess caused by productivity improvement, the implementation of loan system and the impact of accelerating times. Urban residents, modern lifestyle, crowded and cramped urban living environment and symbolic consumption mode jointly build a new era environment and form an urban consumption space with distinctive characteristics of The Times. However, material wealth cannot fill the lack of spiritual emotion. People try to satisfy their yearning and demand for traditional communication and lifestyle through e-commerce platforms and social media.

Local culture, which was born in the agricultural economy of ancient China, has a fixed regional culture and transmission carrier, and has become a symbol of the era and regional characteristics. The hot sale of agricultural products on the e-commerce platform is related to the history and culture of villages in the process of formation and development. The layout and site selection of rural buildings presented in the short video reflect the organic integration of the local environment and the mainstream culture of villages, and the dribs and DBS of village life repeatedly arouse the audience's yearning for a beautiful rural life. When it comes to the local pace of life and daily work, the interviewed e-commerce staff said that there has not been much change compared with before the e-commerce went to the countryside, "Everyone still works in accordance with the traditional

work and rest." In the process of livestreaming, we will look for some everyday things, such as the sights and sounds of the village, to satisfy consumers' curiosity and imagination of the rural lifestyle." What consumers consume in the process of watching and buying is not only the local characteristic agricultural products, but also a kind of symbol consumption. Like many post-modern symbols, agricultural products and the rural life and local culture reflected behind them satisfy people, especially urban residents, who try to seek the subjective experience of pre-modern society as simple, plain, natural and lazy.

Moreover, the successful embedding of local culture and regional image into modern consumption space with agricultural products as the carrier is inseparable from the development of digital technology and the improvement of modern logistics system. Digital technology has provided technical dividends to rural development, and agricultural products e-commerce uses modern information technology to transform the whole chain of traditional industries, which improves the added value of agricultural products while tapping a variety of market demands. Logistics is the key to the final entry of agricultural products into the consumer market, mature logistics system makes agricultural products in the process of preservation, transportation and other services more professional.

5.2 "Out of Field Domain": Rural Culture Extends to Urban Space

"Out of the field" refers to the transfer of culture from the "cultural field" held by a specific social circle and group to the "cultural field" shared by a wider range of social groups [5].

5.2.1 Communication and consumption of public brands in rural areas

The short videos with local characteristics released by the e-commerce of agricultural products reassemble rural groups scattered in various regions to build a common meaning space and collective memory, providing possible materials for modern people who have lost the connection and attachment of traditional local communities to reconstruct their identity in an "out-of-domain" space and form a new "out-of-domain community" in a "flowing space". Both local people and rural people living in cities can have a strong sense of value in watching, commenting, sharing and buying.

In order to establish a more precise connection with the market and consumer segments, agricultural products e-commerce adopts "nostalgia" and "emotions" as the central themes in its visual materials and copywriting, while utilizing rural names as labels and account names, such as: "Hometown Zhenping" etc, provide opportunities for native groups who migrate to other places for employment, business and work to contact and buy hometown agricultural products. The e-commerce WH of D village bamboo shoots has its own interpretation of the significance of the "Zhufu Xinhua" trademark, "A lot of local agricultural products have their own trademarks, with the location of the geographical indication and the name of their local region, what we have to do is to help them to promote, the brand premium space to bring up."

In particular, for the local people in a foreign land, agricultural products in the original ecological scene, as a highly recognizable cultural symbol, carry profound national emotions, wisdom and rich collective memory, and provide the imagination of the original hometown for the modern people living in the "floating" in the "liquid modernity", triggering local feelings and emotional identification.

5.2.2 Dissemination and consumption of original ecological culture

From the perspective of reality and practical application, the concept of "original ecological culture" refers to "cultural forms that are less impacted by modern civilization or maintain more

primitive living customs or folk customs in the context of modern and contemporary society and culture [6]. And "original ecology" has also become the symbol and selling point of rural agricultural products.

In the current food safety anxiety, spring bamboo shoot e-commerce in D village conforms to the demand of "symbol consumption", marking a series of labels for local rural characteristic products. The promotion copy of the e-commerce platform is also mainly around "natural green food", "zero agricultural residues, pollution-free" and other aspects. In addition, e-commerce will live broadcast the scene of bamboo shoot farmers in the bamboo shoot season. The origin and processing process of bamboo shoots are reproduced. "Consumers pay attention to the quality of this thing, so it is necessary to show this place, this planting environment to them, consumers will because I have seen this place, I know that this place is good, even some irrelevant live content can make them buy this thing." For the core logic of local development of live streaming e-commerce, the interviewed government staff is positive, "Live streaming can bring a value to people, just like culture."

With the rapid development of urbanization and modernization, individuals living in the city are faced with the survival dilemma of lack of cultural value and loss of thought and emotion. The short video media practice of agricultural products e-commerce presents the remote rural life style, culture and specific production mode in the form of video language or other information texts. At this time, the local culture is separated from the specific rural scene and embedded in the urban cultural space, realizing the transformation of cultural space and space. "You will see grandma or rural cats in the video, why do you like it, because it sooth everyone's anxiety, people are willing to consume your healing content, willing to pay for your content, this is a shining point in the countryside, forming a new era of narrative logic and narrative system." In the interview, WH mentioned that the "idyllic" rural lifestyle and local conditions provide a "peach garden" imagination for individuals living in the busy and alienated city, temporarily escaping the pressure of modern culture and urban life. Starting from the pure and simple mode of rural production, e-commerce echoes consumers' resistance consciousness in daily life, evokes consumers' rural imagination, and creates public recognition to promote the purchase of agricultural products. It not only provides safe and healthy agricultural products for urban residents, but also plays a role in spreading the local image of the region.

6. Conclusion

In short, the sinking of e-commerce has indeed injected new vitality into the development of rural economy and the sales of agricultural products. Local culture and rural regional image also cater to the trend of modern consumer culture in the process of disembedding and embedding, constantly presenting and circulating in the media space, having wide visibility and publicity, and deepening the public's cognition and recognition of rural regional image. Of course, there are still some shortcomings in this study. First, the sample selected is from a village in Anhui Province, which cannot accurately summarize the practice of rural e-commerce in China. Second, the logical mechanism between the e-commerce practice of agricultural products and the image dissemination of rural areas has not been deeply and comprehensively discussed. With the further advancement of the research, the author will conduct a more systematic and in-depth analysis.

References

- [1] Giddens. *The Consequences of Modernity [M]*. Tian He, trans. Nanjing: Nanjing Yilin Publishing House, 2000, p. 18-24.
- [2] Yu Guoming, Geng Xiaomeng. *Algorithm namely media: paradigm of media logical reconstruction*. *Friends of the editor*, 2020 (7): 45-51. DOI: 10.13786/j.carol carroll nki cn14-1066/g2.2020.7.007.
- [3] Zhuang Kongshao, Zhao Xudong, He Xuefeng, Tong Zhihui, Lu Huilin, Lin Juren, Feng Xiaoshuang, Wu

Chungking, Wen Jun, Pan Shouyong, Liu Cuixia. *Thirty years of rural research in China*. *Open Times*, 2008, (06): 5-21.

[4] Cui Penghao, Yu Xiaozhi. "Stem" and "hip hop" and "barrage": the theory of network context of subculture "lu xun image" of the "domain" off. *Journal of lu xun study monthly*, 2022 (8): 69-78 + 96. DOI: 10.15945 / j.carol carroll nki cn11-2722 / i. 2022.08.008.

[5] Yu Si, Chen Changfeng. *From ubiquitous to Off-domain: Media Convergence and Innovation of traditional cultural programs*. *China Radio and Television Journal*, 2022(10):105-108.

[6] Shi Yilong. *Discussion on some problems in the protection of traditional national culture*. *Journal of Minzu University of China (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 2005, (1).