

Promotion of Local Cultural Distinctiveness for Rural Revitalization

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Abstract: *Local cultural distinctiveness, an amalgamation of practices and traditions evolving within diverse ethnic groups, permeates the geographical expanse of rural regions across China. This cultural tapestry represents a strategic asset within the framework of rural revitalization, emblematic of the socio-cultural bedrock upon which this resurgence is built. The resuscitation of rural culture stands as a pivotal facet in the comprehensive rejuvenation of these areas. As articulated, the imperative is to "transmit cultural legacies, fostering the development of aesthetically enriched townships steeped in historical memory, territorial uniqueness, and ethnic particularities." Concomitantly, the agrarian populace's mounting yearning for an enriched spiritual and cultural milieu underscores an exigent aspiration for the rekindling of rural cultural dynamism. Evidencing this symbiotic nexus is Lüyi Town, ensconced within the precincts of Binzhou City, Shandong Province, its cultural endowments underscoring the inexorable synergy between leveraging localized cultural affluence and propelling industrial proliferation, culminating in an ameliorated standard of living. Thus, an incisive comprehension of the intrinsic value of localized cultural distinctiveness within the context of rural revitalization galvanizes the delineation of superlative cultural bequests, the establishment of rural cultural edifices, thereby engendering a cultural renaissance integral to the resplendence of rural resurgence.*

Keywords: *localized cultural distinctiveness; rural revitalization; modernization; quandaries; strategic paradigms*

1. Introduction

The strategic implementation of rural revitalization underscores a significant edict resonating with the agrarian realm's tripartite core – agriculture, rural environs, and the farming populace. The yearning of countless farmers for an improved quality of life permeates as the central pivot upon which the effective resolution of agricultural and rural challenges in this new era depends. In the crucible of the rural revitalization strategy, harnessing the nuances inherent in local cultural patrimony, to forge innovative templates for rural advancement, connotes a nascent trajectory aligned with the imperatives of sustainable rural progression. ^[1]

2. Goal-oriented and empirical research on promoting local characteristic culture to promote rural revitalization

2.1 Objective Orientation and Empirical Research on Promoting Rural Revitalization through the Promotion of Local Cultural Heritage

Lüyi Town, with its profound historical heritage, stands as the birthplace of "Lü Opera," a distinctive regional theatrical form. Diligently practiced by numerous Lü Opera artisans, the genre has undergone extensive exploration and refinement encompassing political narratives, artistic styles, accompaniment techniques, and vocal renditions. Moreover, Lüyi Town bears the historical legacy of being a "revolutionary old area," with Gaodu Village embodying a repository of rich cultural resources and an unyielding revolutionary spirit.

Over the years, Lüyi Town has been dedicated to unearthing and leveraging its local cultural resources. Through the establishment of a cluster of local cultural industries, these cultural assets have been transformed into economic advantages, fostering the rural revitalization strategy. Adhering to the principles of "alleviating poverty by uplifting aspirations" and "eliminating poverty through knowledge," the effective integration of local cultural heritage into the "spiritual code" of local development becomes paramount. This integration allows the social benefits inherent in the area's rich cultural resources to be

translated into economic gains, creating a symbiotic connection between the promotion of local cultural heritage and the strategy for rural rejuvenation.

This study delves into the exploration of exceptional artistic and red cultural resources in Lüyi Town, seeking to operationalize these cultural assets within the context of rural revitalization. The local government has undertaken initiatives such as establishing the Gaodu Historical Revolution Memorial Hall, conducting red-themed educational programs, showcasing heroic tales of the past, and designating the town as a "National Lü Opera Cultural Village." These endeavors galvanize the populace's determination, encouraging them to face challenges with resilience and actively participate in the rural revitalization strategy.

However, challenges arise from the lack of relevant skills, limited knowledge dissemination, and the integration of local cultural heritage with the rural revitalization strategy. To address these issues, avenues such as knowledge service platforms and policy support are being established to offer diverse and targeted skill training to the local population. This training covers essential competencies including agricultural skills, tourism management, and new media marketing. Through these efforts, the populace gains proficiency in necessary skills and a comprehensive understanding of the excavation of cultural resources and the principles of rural revitalization strategy.

2.2 Empirical Research on Promoting Rural Revitalization through the Promotion of Local Cultural Heritage

The pursuit of rural revitalization encompasses both structural development and the forging of a distinctive identity. For Lüyi Town, with its rich historical heritage as the birthplace of "Lü Opera," also known as the "Hometown of Lü Opera," the imperative lies in unearthing this cultural legacy. By amplifying the advantages of local cultural resources, the town empowers the rural revitalization through cultural enrichment. From its historical agricultural roots to its prominence as a focal point for poverty alleviation efforts, Lüyi Town has embarked on a transformative journey, capitalizing on its distinctive local cultural resources in alignment with the rural revitalization strategy. Through effective goal planning, respect for local preferences, governmental policy support, and collaboration with major adjacent corporations, the town has devised a rural revitalization model termed "Agricultural Excellence, Farmer Prosperity, Rural Splendor."^[2] This evolution has seen Lüyi Town transition into a hub for agricultural innovation and a contented haven, forging the "Lüyi Model" that serves as a benchmark for Shandong's rural revitalization.

Within Lüyi Town, the Gaodu Village-based Gaodu Rural Revitalization Grassroots Cadre Training Institute pioneers a "Party Character Education + Party Member and Cadre Training + Formal Education" platform, the first of its kind in Binzhou City. Additionally, a substantial investment of over 60 million RMB has been directed towards a second-phase expansion project, establishing a comprehensive educational chain encompassing "Red Education + Cadre Training + Formal Education + Agricultural Popularization." This initiative elevates Gaodu Village's red cultural resource advantage into an industrial advantage.

To foster the red tourism and drive local economic development, the Jiaotong and Transportation Bureau of Boxing County has constructed two "Red-themed Pilgrimage Roads," named Yanxu Road and Erduo Road, on the south and north sides of Gaodu Village respectively. Spanning 14 kilometers in total, these roads incorporate red tourism characteristics into roadways, streetlights, bridges, landscape greening, and more. To further explore the red cultural resources and the historical legacy of Gaodu Village, it has been designated as a pilot village for creating a beautiful and livable environment, thus creating a new image of "Revolutionary Old Area, Red Gaodu."

In 2022, a 30 million RMB investment has been allocated to the establishment of the Qilu Agricultural History Museum in Gaodu Village. This endeavor aims to actively uncover the unique agrarian culture of Boxing County, further contributing to the comprehensive implementation of the rural revitalization strategy through the revival of rural culture.

Adjacent to Gaodu Village, Liu Guan Village is the birthplace of Lü Opera and is being developed into a "National Lü Opera Cultural Village." Lüyi Town is dedicated to promoting Lü Opera culture by constructing a Lü Opera museum and a grand stage. The "Village Troupe Initiative" has been implemented, nurturing 18 Lü Opera troupes and promoting the "Theatrical Sanctum, Lüyi Charm" brand. The town has also pioneered "Lü Opera in Schools" countywide, transforming the local traditional opera into a focal subject for student study. These initiatives collectively tap into the local cultural resources of Lüyi Town, consolidating the intrinsic energy driving rural revitalization.

3. The existing problems and causes of promoting local characteristic culture to promote rural revitalization

3.1 Lack of Farmer Cultural Construction Subject Awareness

Farmers constitute pivotal participants and builders in rural cultural development, possessing a profound and comprehensive understanding of local customs, traditions, and historical culture. However, the rapid development of industrialization and urbanization in recent years has led to an outflow of farmers from many areas of Lüyi Town. This loss of the construction subjects has resulted in an inadequate intrinsic drive for rural cultural development.^[3] Moreover, due to limited cultural knowledge and a constrained worldview, local farmers lack a proper understanding of rural cultural revitalization. They lack a scientific comprehension of their role in advancing rural cultural construction, leading to a deficiency in their subject awareness and weakening the intrinsic dynamism of rural cultural development.

3.2 Scarcity of Professional Talent

The development of distinctive cultural industries in Lüyi Town has been slow, and the remuneration for related positions is relatively low. As a result, the recruitment of professional talent has proven challenging. At present, there is a scarcity of individuals with educational backgrounds in cultural disciplines actively participating in local rural cultural development. This dearth of talent has led to a lack of professionalism and innovation in the local rural cultural construction.^[4] Currently, individuals engaging in rural cultural development are primarily local government employees with insufficient specialization in cultural construction. Their involvement is primarily based on daily life experience, which, to some extent, constrains the high-quality development of rural culture. Additionally, the limited number of local residents participating in related cultural construction makes it difficult to drive the development and innovation of local cultural distinctiveness.

3.3 Relatively Lagging Basic Public Cultural Service Construction

Cultural service facilities serve as vital platforms for villagers to engage in cultural activities and enrich their spiritual world, and both the quantity and quality of these facilities influence the progress of rural cultural development. Currently, public cultural facilities in Lüyi Town are not yet fully developed. While efforts have been made, such as the establishment of the Gaodu Revolutionary Historical Memorial Hall and the Lü Opera Museum, to satisfy the practical needs of some residents and achieve certain progress in rural cultural construction, there remain residents who struggle to access comprehensive rural cultural services. Disparities between urban and rural cultural service facilities are also substantial, with many rural cultural construction carriers not fully developed, limiting the availability of cultural activities for residents.

Cultural construction demands significant financial investment. However, in terms of the actual impact of Lüyi Town's policy investments, the majority of funding for rural cultural construction primarily comes from government sources, with a relatively small proportion from private and social capital. This approach hinders the continuous driving force of rural cultural development and poses challenges to the construction of cultural facilities in Lüyi Town. Furthermore, during the process of promoting rural cultural construction in Lüyi Town, some areas prioritize the completion of work targets without specific rural cultural construction organizational structures. As a result, their understanding of the real cultural needs of the farming population is insufficient. While cultural service places have been established, their utilization rates are exceedingly low, rendering them idle resources. This leads to a disconnect between the content of public cultural construction and reality, resulting in weak enthusiasm among farmers to participate in cultural activities and a lack of alignment between the supply and demand of public cultural services.

4. Countermeasures and suggestions for promoting local characteristic culture to promote rural revitalization

4.1 Enhancing Farmer Engagement

The development of rural cultural endeavors relies on active engagement from villagers, whose practical experiences and wisdom serve as the wellspring of cultural innovation and development. Firstly, rural cultural construction must prioritize the direction of rural areas and the rural population, respecting

the pivotal role of farmers and nurturing their awareness of being cultural construction subjects. By inspiring their enthusiasm, sense of responsibility, and belief in contributing to rural cultural construction, a robust intrinsic drive for their involvement can be established. Secondly, hosting rural cultural activities should be a priority, enriching farmers' leisure lives. Lüyi Town should promote local red culture and Lü Opera culture, leveraging governmental leadership and community wisdom to organize relevant cultural activities. Lastly, efforts should be focused on steering local residents away from outdated material-centric mindsets, helping them recognize the equal importance of intellectual and material wealth. Highlighting the significance of enhancing the quality of spiritual and cultural life in daily production and living will foster an environment where increasing spiritual and cultural demands stimulate farmers' enthusiasm for participating in rural cultural construction, enhancing their cultural awareness.

From a specific perspective, efforts can be initiated in the following ways: Awareness Propagation and Education, Utilize activities like promotional events, cultural exhibitions, and symposiums to convey to farmers the significance and value of local cultural heritage.^[5] Local residents are empowered to recognize the positive impact of cultural traditions on rural development. They actively participate in the decision-making process, involving farmers in the planning and decision-making of local cultural projects, further soliciting their opinions and suggestions, giving them a sense of being listened to and giving them the opportunity to shape the direction of cultural initiatives; Cultural Experiential Activities, Organize diverse cultural experiential events, including traditional festivals, exhibitions of traditional craftsmanship, cultural competitions, etc. These activities allow farmers to immerse themselves and truly feel the allure of local cultural uniqueness, thereby heightening their interest and involvement; Training and Education, Provide relevant training and education opportunities for farmers to help them gain knowledge and skills related to local cultural heritage. Training could encompass traditional skills, cultural history, performing arts, etc. This approach allows farmers to contribute to cultural heritage and feel a sense of ownership; Incentive Mechanisms, Establish reward systems to motivate farmers actively participating in local cultural activities. These incentives might include honorary titles, monetary rewards, or other tangible recognitions to stimulate their enthusiasm and creativity; Economic Advantages: Establish connections between local cultural heritage and the economic interests of farmers. For example, the role of cultural tourism and the sale of cultural products in promoting economic development. Community Engagement: Create community cultural activity centers or cultural exchange platforms. These provide farmers with platforms to engage in cultural interactions, showcase their talents, fostering a sense of belonging and honor; Interactive Communication, Develop regular interaction channels with farmers, listen to their feedback and suggestions, and address issues. This approach helps them perceive their role and value in local cultural initiatives.

These strategies, targeting different aspects, can collectively enhance the promotion of local cultural heritage to drive rural revitalization.

4.2 Attracting Talent Accumulation

Exceptional talents play a crucial role in rural cultural construction. Firstly, the significance of local talents should be acknowledged. In Lüyi Town's rural revitalization strategy, the emphasis should be on identifying appropriate local talents, as these individuals can disseminate local culture widely, highlighting the charm of Lüyi Town's distinct culture. Secondly, all forms of talents should be attracted to participate in rural cultural endeavors. By exploring the economic potential of Lüyi Town's distinctive cultural industry, more employment opportunities can be generated along with the creation of broader platforms. Moreover, the town's government should enhance policies for attracting talent, improve the salary and benefits for professional talents, and enhance support policies for rural revitalization. This will create an environment conducive to truly attracting and retaining talents, providing robust talent support and intellectual backing for promoting rural cultural construction and implementing the rural revitalization strategy. Lastly, efforts should focus on enhancing the professional quality of grassroots cultural teams through training and other means.

4.3 Elevating Rural Public Cultural Services

Innovative cultural programs should be implemented to strengthen the construction of grassroots cultural and sports facilities, such as comprehensive cultural centers in towns and villages, and cultural and sports squares.^[6] Firstly, Lüyi Town needs to further refine the infrastructure for rural public cultural services. The local government should recognize that public cultural service infrastructure constitutes a crucial platform for rural cultural revitalization. It should establish specialized locations, enrich cultural activity carriers, optimize the internal environment of these sites, provide a favorable cultural

dissemination atmosphere for residents, and assemble a professional cultural talent team. This team will build capacity and be dedicated to rural cultural revitalization, ensuring the availability of human resources for realizing rural revitalization and development. Secondly, rural cultural development efforts should be pragmatic and results-oriented, with an emphasis on matching cultural supply with demand. The town's government must enhance interaction with local residents throughout the process of promoting rural cultural revitalization. By accurately identifying local residents' demands for public culture and encouraging their active participation in promoting local cultural activities, a sense of public cultural service satisfaction can be enhanced. Lastly, tangible progress should be made, positioning Lüyi Town's rural cultural construction as equally important as rural economic development and executing the work with diligence.

5. Conclusions

The key to rural revitalization is to boost and stimulate the confidence and strength of farmers. Only by strengthening the revitalization of rural culture can we help farmers build confidence in development, inspire spirit, generate passion, and inject strong spiritual impetus into rural revitalization. It is necessary to give play to the role of culture in uniting people's hearts, strengthening confidence, and guiding villagers, boosting spirit, and stimulating the enthusiasm and initiative of the vast number of farmers to devote themselves to rural revitalization. Traditional rural culture has its inheritance, essence and intrinsic value, and gives contemporary significance, and it is a strong pillar of rural revitalization.

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