

# **The Role of Social Media Platforms in the Dissemination of Traditional Chinese Culture**

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**Abstract:** Recently, social media has been a key part of individual's lives, greatly changing the way and speed of information dissemination. Compared with traditional media, social media breaks through the limitations of time and space, and attracts considerable users due to its interactive and diverse forms. This paper analyses the function of mass media in propagating traditional Chinese culture and explores how to use these platforms to more effectively boost the innovation and advancement of traditional culture. The research shows that mass media enlarges the range of traditional culture propagation, and draws attention of youngsters through innovative content forms. This article proposes countermeasures such as strengthening the production of creative content, building a professional cultural communication team, and promoting cooperation between the government and enterprises, so as to improve the communication effect of traditional Chinese culture on social media.

**Keywords:** Social Media; Traditional Culture; Cultural Communication; Innovative Inheritance; Content Creation.

## **1. Introduction**

Traditional Chinese culture as a precious asset, has been built up during thousands of years of China's history. It includes a wealth of philosophical thought, artistic expression, and historical heritage, as well as wisdom from daily life like etiquette and customs. From the benevolence and propriety of Confucianism, to the nature and inaction of Taoism, to conventional Chinese art forms such as calligraphy, Beijing opera, and Chinese poetry, they are all representatives of traditional Chinese culture. These cultural features provide Chinese society with ethical and behavioural norms, and even become an important part of the diversity of world culture. With the

acceleration of the modernization process, traditional culture gradually faces the risk of disappearing or being distorted under the influence of globalization and modern technology. Therefore, how to effectively inherit and promote traditional Chinese culture in contemporary society has become an urgent problem which should be tackled.

Mass media platforms have rapidly emerged in recent years as a core tool for modern information transmission, profoundly altering the way people communicate and access information. Platforms like Weibo, WeChat, TikTok, and Kwai connect billions of users around the world, and provide a brand new way for disseminating traditional culture. Social media is characterized by its rapid dissemination, strong interactivity, and diversity. It makes traditional culture break through the space-time limit and spread quickly and widely on a global scale [1]. Young people in particular, as the main user group of mass media, are deeply affected by the content on these platforms in terms of their cultural identity and values. Social media is a technological tool, and also a vital vector for cultural communication and innovation.

## **2. Features and Development of Social Media Platforms**

### **2.1 Definition and Classification of Social Media**

Social media means online platforms making users formulate, share the content and communicate through internet technology. Mass media is not just a platform for information exchange, it also provides various functions such as interaction, entertainment and education. In fact, new media validly blocks, construes, mines, and forecasts substantial information to ameliorate content innovation and accuracy. Moreover, it uses texts, pictures, audio, videos, etc., to process data and information, enabling charming and efficacious forms of interactions

[2]. Social media platforms can be divided into content-sharing social media, interest-based and community-based social media, and short video and live broadcast social media, relying on their functions and content. The first type, such as Weibo and WeChat official accounts, maintains user relationships through information push and sharing. The second type social platforms are based on interest and community collection, such as Zhihu and Douban. These platforms emphasise discussion and information exchange between members. The third type platforms contain short videos and live broadcasts as the main form, including TikTok and Kwai. These platforms attract a substantial young users through short videos and interactive live broadcasts to meet the demand for instant entertainment. Different types of social media platforms have different communication features and functions, and their roles in cultural dissemination also differs.

## **2.2 Functions and Features of Major Social Media Platforms**

Social media has extensive functions and features. One of its distinctive features is just interactivity. Users can interact with other users not only by posting, commenting and giving likes, but also through live broadcasts and question and answer forms for instant communication. Social media has a powerful ability to disseminate information [3]. Through social media platforms, information transmission can quickly expand, achieving an almost instantaneous communication effect. For example, Weibo's trending search list and TikTok's short video recommendation algorithm greatly facilitate the dissemination information and culture. The personalised recommendation mechanism of mass media contributes to making precise pushes on the grounds of clients' interests and actions, so that users can be exposed to content that better suits their interests, increasing the efficiency of information delivery. The characteristics of different platforms profoundly affect the way and cultural dissemination. Weibo as a platform, is mainly text-based and suitable for the swift release and discussion of information; TikTok is biased towards video content, which is visually strong and suitable for culture dissemination in a short and concise format [4]; platforms such as Zhihu place more emphases on in-depth discussions and are appropriate for

in-depth analysis and culture propagation.

## **2.3 Differences in the Impact of Different Platforms on Cultural Dissemination**

The influence of discrepant mass media platforms upon cultural communication differs significantly. Taking Weibo and TikTok as examples, Weibo is more based on text and information spreading, which is suitable for fast-paced cultural exchange, such as news events and the propagation of festive culture. As an instance, TikTok incorporates traditional culture with modern entertainment through short videos, and utilises its powerful algorithm recommendation system to make elements of traditional culture be communicated more vividly and interactively [5]. This difference reflects the technical features of disparate platforms and the demands of their user groups. TikTok's short videos attract vast numbers of young users with their highly entertaining nature. They are exposed to traditional culture via light-hearted and interesting content, forming a tendency of incorporating traditional culture into modern life. In contrast, platforms such as Zhihu focus more on in-depth exploration and rational discussion of culture, which plays a more academic and in-depth role in the traditional culture's inheritance and promotion. Different positioning of platforms determines their functions and audiences in cultural communication, and also affects the presentation and acceptance of cultural content.

## **2.4 The Development and Trends of Social Media Platforms**

Social media platforms have gone through several developmental stages, from the initial single communication function to the current diversified social ecological system. The earliest social platforms, such as blogs and forums, mainly used texts and pictures as the carrier, making room for user communication. As the Internet technology advances, mass media has gradually developed into a highly interactive integrated platform, including various functions such as video sharing, social networking, and information fusion. Social media first emerged in 1944, referring to Tokyo's online media environment based on electronic commerce [6]. As information technology develops fast, Facebook was published in Feb. 2004, created by Mark Zuckerberg and colleagues, kicking off the era

of social media [7]. They have changed the way people interact, and also promoted the global flow of information and the spread of culture. In the 21st century, with the popularity of smart phones, social media has started to shift towards mobile. China's mobile social media platforms represented by WeChat and TikTok have rapidly risen to become mainstream platforms, and the way of interaction and cultural dissemination have undergone fundamental variations. The trends on social media are increasingly focused on immediacy, interactivity, and entertainment. The future development of social media will further strengthen technology applications, like augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), etc., promoting immersive experiences for users with cultural content [8]. Especially in terms of cultural communication, social media will emphasize the localized and diversified content production to reach the demand of discrepant areas and cultural backgrounds.

## **2.5 The Popularity and Current Development of Social Media Platforms in China**

Social media has become widespread and developed rapidly in China. Since 2005, the emergence of platforms such as Sina Weibo and Tencent QQ has marked the era of mass media in China. Mass media, like WeChat, QQ, and Weibo, have a wide impact in China, and even play a critical part worldwide. As an irreplaceable part of everyday lives of Chinese people, WeChat is a real-time communication tool, and even has functionalities, like payment, life services, etc. Another media platform, Weibo brings together vast celebrities and ordinary Internet users, here, users can convey their standpoints while attaining current affairs information and communicating [9]. Among youngsters, the use of social media covers almost all areas of life, from communication and entertainment to shopping and learning. Mass media has been a key channel for cultural spread. With continuous technological innovation, China's social media platforms are also showing a trend of personalization and diversification, and competition between platforms is becoming increasingly fierce. In the future, China's mass media will continuously expand their influence in the domestic market, and are expected to further expand into the international market while

traditional Chinese culture internationally via cross-cultural dissemination.

## **3. The Role of Social Media Platforms in the Dissemination of Traditional Chinese Culture**

### **3.1 Digital Presentation of Traditional Cultural Elements**

As technology develops, the digital representation of traditional culture has been a pivotal method of culture dissemination on mass media. Various forms, like text, picture, and video, are widely applied to social media, which has promoted the modern dissemination of traditional culture. As one of the most basic forms of traditional culture dissemination, tests can effectively disseminate the content of traditional cultural classics, poems, historical stories, etc, to extensive users through platforms, encompassing WeChat and Weibo official accounts. In addition, pictures and videos can more lively and vividly demonstrate the artistic charm of traditional culture. Many platforms enable users to visually experience the aesthetics and historical heritage of traditional culture through photo release and short videos of classical buildings, traditional handicrafts, and festivals. Short videos are especially popular with young people. In addition, technologies, encompassing internet technology, 3D modelling, and virtual reality have been introduced into traditional culture museums. The "virtual travel" museum has been a tourism trend in the era after the pandemic. Visitors are no longer limited by time and space, and can experience the charm of cultural museums [10]. Traditional culture-related content can be shown more vividly and creatively via mass media, like Kwai and TikTok. This has significantly increased the attention and sentiment of identity of traditional culture. Social media lays a foundation for digitally inheriting traditional culture, which makes traditional cultural content be reflected in a more modernized and diversified format and even brings unprecedented outcomes in interactivity and reach.

At present, short videos have been a key highlight of mass media and a critical shape of spreading traditional culture. Short videos have captivated numerous young users owing to their convenient and intuitive propagation. They have become a key way of transmitting

traditional culture [11]. Through algorithm-based recommendations, platforms such as TikTok and Kwai can quickly push traditional culture-associated video content to big crowd, so that cultural dissemination is not confined to a small group of people, but reaches a wider social group. Through short videos, the transmission of traditional culture is not confined to traditional written or verbal methods of dissemination any longer, but through vivid visual expressions, cultural elements, like Chinese calligraphy, Beijing opera, and traditional festivals are shown to the fullest. Some short videos showing traditional culture as the theme, combined with modern music, creative editing, and humorous elements, have successfully drawn the attention of a large audience. The format of short videos breaks the space-time limit, making traditional culture be disseminated more easily and enjoyably, thus attracting the youngster's interest and discussion and enabling traditional cultural content to be widely disseminated in a shorter period of time.

### **3.2 Social Media Platforms as Carriers of Cultural Innovation**

Social media platforms are not only channels for spreading traditional culture, they have also become carriers of cultural innovation. Via the social nature and interactivity of the platforms, traditional culture is being innovated and recreated in the digital age. Creators on social media platforms can create the content by incorporating combining modern technology into traditional culture. Some elements of traditional culture have been integrated with modern art forms to formulate new innovative cultural products which captivate a large audience, like propagating red culture [12]. The dissemination effect of social media has made these cultural innovations be quickly promoted and recognized across the globe. In addition, social media platforms have provided great freedom and creative space for traditional culture innovation. Many traditional cultural content could be presented in various ways, including live broadcasts, interactive question and answer sessions, and virtual experiences. These forms provide traditional culture with the new vitality, and boost interaction and integration between different cultures.

Modern elements such as modern music, fashionable design and pop culture can often be combined with traditional cultural elements to

create cultural expressions with a sense of the times. Through creation and sharing on the platform, traditional culture can be reinterpreted in a new context. At presently, novel forms of media for China's external dissemination are emerging in an endless stream. More and more unofficial self-media individuals are using short videos on YouTube to tell unique Chinese stories. Ziqi Li uses Chinese ancient-style food as an entry point, pastoral life as a carrier, and combines it with traditional Chinese culture. She has gained 16.7 million fans on YouTube (data as of February 20, 2022) [13]. These innovative cultural forms of integration not only attract young people, they also breathe new life and significance into traditional culture. The openness and interactivity of mass media have made it possible for these innovations to spread rapidly across the globe, promoting cultural exchange and diversity.

### **3.3 The Role of Internet Celebrities in Promoting Traditional Culture**

In recent years, Internet celebrities have played an increasingly important role on social media platforms, and their influence cannot be ignored, especially in promoting traditional culture. Many Internet celebrities have become disseminators of traditional culture by combining their personal characteristics with traditional culture. The connection between them and their fans can make the audience a more active participant in the process of cultural dissemination. Some traditional cultural knowledge bloggers use short videos to show Chinese traditional food, folk art, historical stories, and other content to the audience in a humorous and creative way, which has triggered widespread attention and discussion [14]. The influence of Internet celebrities has enabled them to promote traditional cultural content to the public in a short period of time, and they have had a profound impact, especially among young people. These Internet celebrities are not only disseminators of traditional culture, but also promoters of cultural innovation. They breathe new life into traditional culture by combining it with modern trends in innovative ways. Through social media platforms, Internet celebrities opens up new channels for disseminating traditional culture and breaks the boundaries of cultural dissemination, while promoting the widespread popularization and multi-dimensional display of traditional culture



under the influence of mass media among young people large fan base.

### **3.4 The Influence of Social Media Platforms among Young People**

Social media could be an origin of social connection for those who cannot form real world social connections and receive social support, and it can be a place where young people seek advice and news [15]. Through social media, young people have more opportunities to access traditional culture through these platforms. Social media platforms allow young people to understand and learn about traditional culture in a short period of time, and they can also make traditional cultural content more acceptable to young people through fragmentary and enjoyable dissemination methods. YouTube has been proven to be an inclusive and efficient platform for teaching social expression, as demonstrated by research by Raj et al [16]. Short videos, live broadcasts and text-image information on platforms have made the dissemination of traditional culture more diverse and flexible. Young people can gain an intuitive experience of traditional culture by watching content such as traditional festivals, craft demonstrations and classical music performances. Many social media platforms also combine modern popular elements with traditional culture for innovative content, like incorporating conventional poetry into modern music or using street culture to interpret traditional etiquette, which greatly attracts the interest of young people.

The reason why traditional cultural content is able to attract the younger generation is that social media platforms provide entertaining and interactive communication methods. Compared with traditional cultural communication methods, social media can better satisfy the demands of youngsters for personalization and interaction. Many traditional cultural contents combine humour and innovative expressions with modern popular culture to present styles that young people like. Young people's sense of identity with traditional culture on mass media often originates in the progress of cultural confidence and national emotion. Through social media, young people can more easily access and learn the essence of traditional culture, which further inspires their identification with and love for their own culture. In addition to live broadcasts, short

videos make traditional culture propagation not boring, improving young individuals' sense of interest and engagement.

Social media affects youngsters' viewpoint of traditional culture, and plays a vital player in emotional identification. Indeed, young individuals can clearly comprehend the significance of traditional culture on online platforms while progressively developing a sentiment of cultural identity. The interactive nature of social media allows young people to discuss, comment and share their understanding and feelings about traditional culture with others on these platforms, thus deepening their emotional resonance with traditional culture in collective communication. The speed and breadth of communication on mass media allows youngsters to see more diverse cultural expressions, which helps them better understand and accept traditional culture. Cultural identity and emotional identification on the platform enhance youngsters' respect for traditional culture, but also help develop their culture self-confidence and stimulate them to participate in the inheritance and progress of traditional culture.

### **3.5 The Role of Social Media in the Protection and Inheritance of Traditional Culture**

Social media platforms are key players in defending endangered traditional cultural heritage. After the China issued the Notice on Further Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage, a total of 1,028 items of intangible heritage were selected for the national intangible heritage index after two applications, and 4,315 items were included in the provincial intangible heritage index. However, most of the intangible heritage is actually on the verge of extinction [17]. Through social media, many traditional cultural heritages that were originally difficult to reach the public have received widespread attention. Traditional handicrafts and folk art in some places have been recorded and spread via mass media, contributing to sustaining and inheriting traditional cultural heritage. Mass media platforms can showcase these endangered traditional cultures to the world through multimedia formats such as videos, pictures, and text, so that more people can learn about and pay attention to them. Social media platforms provide a convenient communication

platform for culture lovers and experts, allowing the forces to protect traditional cultural heritage to rally. Through online fundraising and collaborative projects, social media can also support the conservation and restoration of endangered culture heritage.

The inheritance of intangible culture heritage has always faced the challenges of changing times and changing people's perceptions, and social media platforms provide a solution to this problem. Through the interactivity and communication power of social media, such intangible heritage could be more widely noticed and inherited worldwide. Traditional dances, operas, handicrafts, etc., have appealed to numerous users to learn and pay attention through video tutorials, live broadcasts, creator sharing, etc. The interactive functions on social media platforms have made the inheritance of traditional culture be no longer a one-way spread, yet a dynamic inheritance mechanism which could be created through the proactive engagement, innovation, and feedback of young people. Many intangible cultural heritage programs and activities have attained strong promotional power through social media, helping more individuals recognise and inherit these cultural heritages. Mass media offers the younger generation with a way of engaging in the protection and inheritance of intangible culture heritage, in order that they could further improve their sense of belonging and responsibility for these cultures by means of interaction and creation, thus effectively boosting the inheritance of intangible culture heritage.

#### **4. Challenges and Problems of Social Media Platforms in the Dissemination of Traditional Chinese Culture**

##### **4.1 Authenticity and Accuracy of Information**

With the widespread adoption of social media platforms, roughly 500 million tweets are transmitted, and 4.3 billion Facebook messages are posted each day. Further, over 200 million emails are sent and about two million new blog posts are formulated every day. Moreover, roughly 15 billion texts are delivered every minute worldwide [18]. The dissemination of traditional culture is confronted with challenges associated with the credibility of information. On account of the fast pace of content updates

on mass media, user-produced content often lacks rigorous review and regulation, leading to potential misinterpretation or distortion of traditional cultural knowledge and information during dissemination. Some interpretations of traditional festival customs, historical events, and even folk art may be distorted or inaccurate due to a lack of professional background knowledge or for entertainment purposes, thereby affecting the public's accurate comprehension of traditional culture. Under the circumstances, the spread of traditional culture may be misguided or distorted, even affecting the younger generation's understanding and emotional attachment to culture. Therefore, ensuring the authenticity and accuracy of traditional cultural content disseminated on social media platforms has become a critical issue that needs to be addressed urgently.

##### **4.2 Balancing Commercialization and Cultural Transmission**

Commercialization is a major driving force behind social media platforms, and the progress of media has also caused an increase of the fan economy. New media generates novel cultural consumption patterns, with social media increasingly leaning towards commercialization [19], but excessive commercialization often conflicts with cultural communication. Social media platforms generate revenue through advertising and monetizing traffic, leading to an imbalance between the dissemination of cultural content and commercial interests. The dissemination of many traditional cultural contents is often simplified or entertained to cater to the consumption needs of platform users and market trends, thereby deviating from the original essence of traditional culture. Traditional festivals, folk crafts, or opera art forms are often repackaged on social media as entertaining short videos or commercially oriented marketing campaigns. While such "vulgarized" or "superficial" cultural content may attract high user engagement, it does not facilitate further diffusion of traditional cultural values. The commercialization of cultural content on social media platforms might also trigger some cultural forms with high commercial value gaining more exposure, while those that are less popular or niche traditional cultural forms are marginalized and fail to receive the attention they deserve. Finding a balance between commercialization and cultural

transmission is a major challenge for social media platforms in terms of disseminating traditional culture.

#### **4.3 Cultural Conflict and Clash of Values**

As a global information exchange platform, social media platforms not only provide traditional cultures with more channels for dissemination, but also make the conflicts and integration between traditional and modern cultures an issue that cannot be ignored. Mass media can function as a platform for propagating traditional cultures. Nonetheless, it might produce the conflict between traditional and modern cultures. Usually, traditional culture centers upon historical heritage and cultural roots, whereas modern culture highlights individual freedom and innovation. Such difference in cultural values is highly evident on social media. In traditional culture, some feudal gender conceptions and family conceptions might clash with the modern societal conception of equality. In addition, the openness and liberty of mass media have aggravated the conflict of values. Under the globalization, social media makes cultures from the entire world communicate and integrate. On the contrary, differences in values, lifestyles, and other dimensions between cultures may cause the misinterpretation of traditional Chinese culture. This impacts the efficacy of China's traditional culture propagation and even negatively affects cultural identity and confidence. Therefore, when spreading traditional culture on mass media, there exists an urgent problem how to tackle culture conflicts, fulfill cultural integration, and avoid misinterpretations.

### **5. Strategies for Promoting the Dissemination of Traditional Chinese Culture through Social Media Platforms**

#### **5.1 Enhance the Creativity and Diversity of Traditional Cultural Content**

As modernization speeds up, the space for traditional culture is becoming excessively restricted, which is an unavoidable tendency in the socio-economic and cultural progress of society. After society opens up, the emergence or disappearance of traditional culture is invariably affected by the mainstream society [20]. To facilitate traditional Chinese culture, mass media should stimulate creators to

formulate the content showing local cultural features. Through innovative methods, creators express the nature of traditional culture. This makes such culture more appealing to audiences. With traditional cultural elements incorporated into modern technology and art forms, creative contents are generated which combines elements, like traditional festivals, classical literature, folk art, etc. This can draw the attention of more young users. The platform should intensify its content review systems to safeguard the reliability of uploaded cultural contents. Through a specialized cultural review team, it can guarantee that content corresponds to the core values of traditional culture and eludes misinformation. Hence, the quality of traditional culture propagation will be enhanced.

#### **5.2 Establish the Professional Team for the Dissemination of Traditional Culture**

To propagate Chinese tradition culture more effectively, mass media should reinforce their specialized teams in cultural exchange. Such specialized teams should contain cultural creators, content producers, scholars, and specialists showing extensive knowledge of traditional culture. Having built teams with academic backgrounds and professional knowledge, platforms can excellently comprehend and express the far-reaching implications of traditional culture. Concurrently, platforms should intensify collaboration with cultural institutions, academic teams, and specialists to boost the professional culture propagation. Such cooperation guarantees that traditional culture propagation is more stringent and accurate and even assist platforms in formulating more cultural products appropriate to discrepant user teams. Hence, the lively diffusion of traditional culture is facilitated in the contemporary society.

#### **5.3 Promote Cooperation between Government and Enterprises**

In facilitating traditional Chinese culture, it is exceedingly important incorporate traditional culture into the high-level ideological and political education. Traditional culture, as a pivotal vehicle for the Chinese national spirit, embodies a far-reaching value system and cultural wisdom, and plays an excessively critical part in forming the correct worldview, view of life, and values of contemporary youngsters [21]. The government should

employ associated policies to encourage and back up social media platforms to promote traditional culture content. The government is capable of offering financial support, policy guidance, and cultural project cooperation to assist platforms in creating the content with traditional cultural features and promote it broadly on social media. Schools should also actively assume social responsibility and combine cultural heritage with ideology and politics in advanced education. In this process, schools can enhance students' cultural identity and promote the revitalization of traditional culture by creating and disseminating traditional cultural content, thus cultivating young university students who are responsible, idealistic, and capable [22]. Through collective efforts between the government and schools, it is possible to formulate a synergy that will forge a more favourable atmosphere and conditions for propagating traditional Chinese culture.

## 6. Conclusion

Due to fast development, social media becomes one of the primary channels for cultural diffusion in the contemporary society. In the era of extremely rapid and wide information transmission, social media platforms have been a positive player in boosting the spread of traditional Chinese culture.

Mass media should strengthen the creativity and diversity of traditional cultural content. Through innovative content creation, platforms can attract more young people to focus on traditional culture, thereby boosting its inheritance in the modern society. Concurrently, platforms should also strengthen content review mechanisms to safeguard the reliability of cultural content and elude misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Building a professional cultural exchange team is another key measure. Social media platforms should collect creative content creators, and even attract cultural specialists and scholars to increase the platform's authority and professionalism in traditional culture propagation. Via in-depth cooperation with cultural institutions and scholars, platforms can guarantee the accurate communication of culture connotations during content creation and dissemination, while safeguarding cultural diversity and richness. Synchronously, the combination of government policy support and corporate social

responsibility can offer a powerful driving force to cultural exchange on mass media. Through policy guidance and financial support, the government can stimulate platforms to create more content showing local cultural features; while corporations can collaborate with platforms to undertake the social responsibility of inheriting traditional culture, ameliorating their brand image and contributing to the inheritance of culture.

In the future, due to further advancement of social media platforms and continuous improvement of culture dissemination mechanisms, traditional Chinese culture is participated to revitalize the world and become a cultural symbol exerting extensive influences.

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