

Research on the Overseas Path of Chinese Cultural Variety Shows from the Perspective of Cross-Cultural Communication

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Abstract. Against the backdrop of the requirement to enhance the communication power and influence of Chinese civilization, cultural variety shows have become an important carrier for telling China's stories well and promoting the overseas dissemination of Chinese culture. Taking intercultural communication theory as the core perspective, relying on three core theories—cultural discount, cultural dimensions, and glocalization—and following the analytical framework of "problem identification—cause analysis—path innovation", this paper systematically deconstructs the development status and evolution context of Chinese cultural variety shows going global, clarifies three core influencing factors: content expression, industrial support, and international environment, and addresses four core research questions: the cultural discount dilemma in the overseas dissemination of programs, differences in audience acceptance mechanisms in regional markets, paths to break intercultural communication barriers, and the reshaping effect of digital-intelligent technologies on the overseas path. On this basis, this paper refines and constructs the "Adaptation-Embedding-Symbiosis" analytical model, and proposes innovative paths for cultural variety shows going global from three dimensions: constructing an intercultural expression system, building an integrated industrial system, and establishing a two-way interactive international communication pattern. This study enriches the theoretical application scenarios of intercultural communication and international communication, and aims to provide theoretical support and practical reference for the high-quality overseas dissemination of Chinese cultural variety shows and the improvement of the international communication efficiency of Chinese culture.

Keywords: Intercultural Communication, Cultural Variety Shows, International Communication, Path Exploration, Digital-Intelligent Technology

1. Introduction

The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China emphasizes that we should "enhance the communication power and influence of Chinese civilization" and "accelerate the construction of China's discourse and narrative systems, tell China's stories well, spread China's voice well, and present a credible, lovely and respectable image of China" [1]. This provides

fundamental guidelines and strategic guidance for strengthening the construction of international communication capacity and enhancing the international influence of Chinese culture in the new era. Meanwhile, the rapid development of emerging media and digital-intelligent technologies has expanded international communication channels, making intercultural communication increasingly frequent. How to cross cultural differences, reduce cultural discount and achieve efficient international communication has become a key issue in enhancing national cultural soft power.

With the high-quality development of China's film and television industry, cultural variety shows represented by *National Treasure*, *Readers* and *Everlasting Classics* have continuously innovated narrative expressions. Leveraging the communication advantages of emotionalization, visualization and lightweight presentation, they have become an important carrier for showcasing a true, three-dimensional and comprehensive China. Promoting the overseas dissemination of cultural variety shows is not only a concrete practice to implement the national international communication strategy, but also a vital path for advancing Chinese civilization to the world. Therefore, systematically exploring the realistic status, influencing factors and innovative paths of Chinese cultural variety shows going global from an intercultural perspective can not only enrich the theoretical applications of intercultural communication and international communication, but also provide practical reference for the overseas dissemination of cultural products, boasting important theoretical value and practical significance.

Intercultural Communication theory originated from Edward Twitchell Hall Jr.'s classic work *The Silent Language* in the 1950s. Its core branches, such as high-context and low-context culture theory, cultural discount theory, cultural dimensions theory and cultural hybridity theory, provide mature theoretical analytical tools for research on the cross-border dissemination of cultural products. Although existing studies have extensively discussed the content and strategies of the overseas dissemination of Chinese cultural variety shows, most of them only describe the current situation of overseas dissemination, lack in-depth theoretical analysis supported by core theories, and insufficiently explore the innovative paths enabled by digital-intelligent technologies [2], failing to effectively respond to the practical needs of building international communication capacity in the digital-intelligent era. Against this background, this study adopts the intercultural communication theory perspective to explore the current situation and influencing factors of cultural variety shows going global, as well as how to reduce cultural discount and mitigate intercultural communication barriers through content and technological innovation. Relying on core theories, the study constructs the "Adaptation-Embedding-Symbiosis" model to explore differentiated innovative paths, providing theoretical support and practical reference for the overseas dissemination of cultural variety shows.

2. Literature review and research questions

This study is supported by core intercultural communication theories and follows the progressive analytical framework of "problem identification—cause analysis—path innovation". Among them, cultural discount theory serves as the logical starting point of this study, identifying the core communication dilemma of cultural variety shows going global; cultural dimensions theory deepens and refines the above analysis, dissecting the underlying causes of differences in cultural discount across regional markets; globalization theory provides the core operational logic for eliminating cultural discount and achieving effective intercultural communication.

2.1. Cultural discount theory and cultural variety shows

Cultural discount, also known as cultural depreciation, originated from a paper published by Colin Hoskins and R. Mirus in 1988. It refers to the reduction in the value of cultural products in the international market due to cultural background differences, which leads to their failure to be recognized or understood by audiences in other regions [3]. This concept is a core analytical tool in the fields of intercultural communication and international cultural trade research, and is widely used to explain the effect depreciation of cultural products in cross-border dissemination. As an important category of Chinese cultural products going global, the intercultural communication effect of cultural variety shows is also deeply constrained by this law.

Cultural variety shows refer to television programs that take fine traditional Chinese culture as the core, adopt modern variety forms as the carrier, and aim to promote fine traditional Chinese culture and meet users' spiritual and cultural needs [4]. They can not only stimulate the emotional identity of domestic audiences through concrete cultural symbols and diverse emotional expressions, but also serve as a channel for "soft diplomacy" amid the accelerated development of globalization [5]. However, restricted by the fundamental differences between Chinese and foreign cultures, the overseas dissemination of Chinese cultural variety shows inevitably faces the problem of cultural discount. This problem will not only directly reduce the attractiveness and completion rate of programs in overseas dissemination, but also hinder overseas audiences' accurate understanding of Chinese civilization, even generate negative stereotypes about the Chinese nation, and ultimately constrain the construction of China's international communication capacity.

Only by clarifying the specific manifestations of cultural discount in the overseas dissemination of cultural variety shows can we break intercultural communication barriers and improve international communication effects. Thus, this study proposes the first research question.

RQ1: What cultural discount problems do Chinese cultural variety shows encounter in overseas dissemination?

To further understand the communication effects and laws of cultural variety shows going global, provide theoretical and practical reference for industrial development, and realize the "adaptation" between fine traditional Chinese culture and the international market, this study explores the resolution mechanisms of such problems, and then puts forward the second research question.

RQ2: What paths and strategies should Chinese cultural variety shows adopt to effectively mitigate the negative impact of cultural discount in overseas dissemination?

2.2. Cultural dimensions theory and differences in overseas markets

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory originated from Geert Hofstede's questionnaire survey of 116,000 employees from 72 countries at IBM between 1967 and 1973, aiming to explain the work attitudes and behaviors of employees from different cultural backgrounds [6]. Through data analysis and subsequent research, he proposed six dimensions of the theory: power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term vs. short-term orientation, and indulgence vs. restraint. Its analysis of the role of cultural differences in international business and intercultural communication provides a theoretical tool for analyzing differences in audience acceptance mechanisms of Chinese cultural variety shows in different regional overseas markets.

Academic circles have generally verified that cultural distance is significantly negatively correlated with the export volume of cultural products. The greater the cultural distance, the higher the threshold for audience decoding, the stronger the cultural discount, and the worse the program

communication effect [7]. Meanwhile, existing studies point out that cultural variety shows take fine traditional Chinese culture as the core and are highly dependent on high-context cultural symbols, historical contexts and value expressions [8]. This makes their intercultural communication effects significantly more sensitive to differences in cultural dimensions between countries than other audio-visual content categories with low cultural context, such as entertainment variety shows and commercial film and television dramas, ultimately leading to a more pronounced differentiation in communication effects across overseas markets.

Clarifying differences in audience acceptance mechanisms in different regional markets and precisely "embedding" into various regional markets is a core prerequisite for breaking the market differentiation dilemma of cultural variety shows going global and achieving targeted and precise communication. Against this background, this study proposes the third research question.

RQ3: What differences exist in the audience acceptance mechanisms of Chinese cultural variety shows when disseminated to different regional overseas markets?

2.3. Glocalization theory and digital-intelligent technologies

The iterative development of media technologies has broken the temporal and spatial boundaries of cultural communication and accelerated the process of globalization. In the 1990s, scholar Roland Robertson attempted to interpret "globalization" from a cultural perspective, that is, the coexistence of diverse cultures [9]. In his view, there is no real "globalization". When absorbing foreign cultures and ideas, different countries and regions always make choices and transformations based on their own situations. Therefore, globalization manifests itself in the form of "glocalization"—a process of the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism, and an interpenetration of the global and the local [10].

The overseas dissemination of cultural variety shows is essentially the localization of Chinese civilization overseas. Existing studies show that glocalization is one of the core operational logics for Chinese cultural variety shows going global. Through localized narrative reconstruction of content and lightweight translation of cultural symbols, Chinese cultural variety shows attempt to adapt to audience preferences in different regional markets while adhering to the core of Chinese culture [11]. Digital-intelligent technologies, with algorithmic recommendation and glocalized platforms as the core, are becoming an important carrier for cultural variety shows to achieve glocalized communication, providing new possibilities for breaking communication barriers and realizing localized adaptation for different audiences.

Analyzing the role of digital-intelligent technologies in the overseas dissemination of cultural variety shows is key to responding to the new demands of international communication in the digital-intelligent era and exploring innovative paths for cultural variety shows going global. Only by relying on digital-intelligent technologies to empower intercultural communication practices and promote the deep integration of Chinese cultural content creation and localized communication scenarios can we achieve the in-depth "symbiosis" between Chinese civilization and diverse world cultures. Against this background, this study proposes the fourth research question.

RQ4: How do digital-intelligent technologies reshape the overseas path of cultural variety shows?

3. Deconstruction of the realistic status of Chinese cultural variety shows going global

Based on the above theoretical sorting and research questions, this study starts with the deconstruction of the realistic status, clarifies the development status, core characteristics and

evolution context of Chinese cultural variety shows going global, and provides a solid realistic basis for subsequent analysis of influencing mechanisms and exploration of innovative paths.

3.1. Overseas scale: from sporadic export to diversified layout

The overseas dissemination of Chinese cultural variety shows is undergoing a transformation from sporadic trials of single programs and single regions to large-scale communication of diverse categories and multiple regions. In April 2018, nine outstanding original Chinese programs, including *Readers*, *The Sound and King cross*, collectively debuted on the main stage of the Cannes Spring Television Festival in France for the first time. Program creators introduced China's original program formats to international peers and format buyers in English throughout the "WISDOM in CHINA" promotion conference [12]. Since then, the overseas dissemination process of original Chinese cultural variety shows has advanced rapidly.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan period, China's export volume of radio, television and audiovisual programs and services increased by more than 40% [13]. The types of exported cultural variety shows have also expanded simultaneously, gradually extending from classic cultural variety categories such as cultural relics and poetry represented by National Treasure and Everlasting Classics to new tracks such as festival folk customs, intangible cultural heritage inheritance, national style life and Chinese stories. As original programs featuring "culture" and "national style", Mango TV's documentary reality show *The Day I Ran China* focuses on the theme of "changes in people's lives brought by technological development in the context of the Internet", leading foreign youth to experience China's professional and technological development achievements, and has become a key display content on the homepage of Mango TV International Edition. Infinite Sound·Chinese Wave Season takes music as a medium, travels to places with Chinese communities around the world, tells Chinese stories and spreads Chinese wave culture, linking the emotions of Chinese people worldwide with classic melodies, outlining a touching picture of Chinese wave narrative and cross-regional emotional resonance.

Table 1. Overview of cultural variety shows going global

Program	Genre	Production Company	Overseas Copyright Ownership
National Treasure	Cultural and Historical Exploration	China Media Group CCTV Documentary International Media Co., Ltd.	[Netherlands] Endemol Shine
Everlasting Classics	Culture and Music	CCTV-1 CCTV Creation Media Co.Ltd.	CCTV Creation Media Co., Ltd.
"Chinese Festival" Series	Festival Culture	Henan Media Group	Henan Media Group
The Culture Sit-down with Wang Xiaohui	In-Depth Interview Series	China Internet Information Center Jiangsu Satellite TV	China Internet Information Center
Glory is Back	Panoramic Cultural Exploration Series	iQIYI Luoyang Cultural Heritage Protection Group Luoyang Radio and Television Media Group	Beijing iQIYI Technology Co., Ltd.

Table 1. (continued)

A Journey of Arts and Culture	Arts and Culture Category	Culture and Tourism Department of Henan Province Henan Satellite TV Urban Channel Organizing Committee of the "Art in Bloom" Group, Urban Channel Arts Education Alliance	Henan Media Group
Heroes	Cultural Documentary and Field Research Category	Shanghai Media Group	Shanghai Media Group
Dance Through the Millennia	Cultural Drama and Dance Series	Bilibili Henan Satellite TV Huanwei Digital	Bilibili Henan Satellite TV

Analysis of Table 1 shows that China's overseas cultural variety shows feature diverse types, varied production entities and flexible copyright ownership, fully demonstrating their diversified exploration and layout in overseas dissemination. Meanwhile, the overseas dissemination scope of cultural variety shows continues to expand, steadily extending from neighboring markets in the Confucian cultural circle such as Southeast Asia to culturally heterogeneous regions such as Europe, America and Africa. The production team of *Everlasting Classics* took the ancient poem *On the Strok Tower* to Austria. Translated by Mr. Xu Yuanchong, the work was sung by the Vienna Boys Choir on the banks of the Danube. The timeless verses transcending language and national boundaries touched people's hearts, allowing audiences at home and abroad to truly appreciate the enduring charm of fine traditional Chinese culture. *National Treasure* has completed official translation and production in 8 languages, and been launched in more than 30 countries and regions relying on China Media Group's global communication matrix, receiving widespread acclaim from audiences worldwide.

It can be seen that the overseas dissemination of Chinese cultural variety shows has achieved a diversified layout in categories and scope. However, it is worth noting that their overall communication still shows significant regional imbalance. Most programs have not broken through the superficial output of cultural symbols, lack cross-context content adaptation, and the cultural discount problem has not been effectively resolved.

3.2. Overseas model: from direct content export to joint co-creation

"Direct content export" is the basic form of domestic cultural variety shows going global, referring to translating and producing mature domestic cultural variety works, then directly launching them on overseas platforms for content export. The deep integration of digital-intelligent technologies and new media technologies has made this basic overseas model more efficient, cost-effective and accurate. On February 28, 2025, China Media Group released the *China Media Group Artificial Intelligence Development White Paper* (2025 Edition), emphasizing the accelerated deployment and application of generative artificial intelligence within the group. Subsequently, the group built an "AI-driven international communication intelligent matrix". Relying on technologies such as multilingual intelligent translation and adaptive rewriting of cultural contexts, it has successfully helped high-quality content such as *National Treasure* and *China in the Classics* achieve simultaneous distribution in 43 languages, increasing overseas communication reach by 3 times compared with traditional models, setting a benchmark for digital-intelligent technology-enabled cultural going global [14].

In addition, the production and broadcasting models of some cultural variety shows have also gained high recognition from the international market, and "format licensing" has become another core form of overseas dissemination. The program format of *National Treasure*, which combines documentary and variety techniques, was acquired by Endemol Shine, the world's largest independent program production group. The two parties jointly developed an international version and promoted it globally. As an original benchmark debuting at the Cannes Spring Television Festival, *Readers* has had its program format and accompanying books ordered by German publishers and presented at the Frankfurt International Book Fair, expanding the international communication channels of Chinese variety shows through the dual form of "format export + book export".

With the in-depth development of film and television industry globalization, carrying out international cooperation and joint co-creation has become an important path for cultural variety shows to improve overseas communication efficiency and mitigate cultural discount. The production team of *National Treasure* collaborated with BBC World News Channel and British production company Wild Blue Media to co-produce the humanistic and historical documentary *China's Greatest Treasures* [15]. China International Communications Center, together with National Geographic and British production company Wild Blue Media, produced the archaeological documentary *Ancient China From Above* [16]. Both works interpret Chinese culture from an international perspective and tell Chinese stories with universal narrative logic of human society, emphasizing the unique cultural identity of the Chinese nation while focusing on emotional resonance with overseas audiences, effectively promoting the beauty of fine traditional Chinese culture and art to a broader stage.

Although China's cultural variety shows have built a multi-form overseas model system, most models still remain at the shallow level of content translation and copyright sales. Localization depth in international joint co-creation is insufficient, failing to achieve precise embedding for audience acceptance mechanisms in different regional markets, and the professional and systematic support for global industrial operation remains weak.

3.3. Overseas platform: from "borrowing ships to sail" to "building ships to sail"

Overseas platforms are the core carrier for the cross-cultural communication of cultural variety shows. From relying on overseas platforms for communication ("borrowing ships to sail") to building independent international platforms ("building ships to sail"), China has gradually constructed a multi-dimensional and all-round overseas communication matrix. By relying on mature media platforms in other countries, cultural variety shows are broadcast across regions to widely reach overseas audiences. In 2017, *The Chinese Poetry Competition* was broadcast on Singtel in Singapore and 8TV & NTV7 in Malaysia. In 2026, its French edited version was aired on Mandarin TV in France [17]. While the screening on online media platforms has achieved large-scale implementation, offline exhibitions and conferences are also thriving. Following *Readers*, cultural variety shows such as Beijing Satellite TV's *There is something new in the Palace Museum* and Dragon TV's *Heroes* have appeared at the Cannes Television Festival in France. In October 2024, Henan Satellite TV's *Art in Bloom* held a Sino-French friendly cultural and art exchange exhibition at the Louvre Museum in Paris, France, displaying more than 400 representative works of Chinese culture and art, comprehensively and three-dimensionally showcasing China's contemporary artistic achievements and the latest developments in cultural variety shows [18]. Leveraging the credibility and global communication potential of world-famous television festivals

and museums, China's practice of "borrowing ships to sail" for cultural variety shows is advancing to a higher level.

Based on the practice of "borrowing ships to sail", overseas branches of domestic platforms such as Mango TV International APP, iQIYI International Edition, Youku International Edition, Tencent Video's overseas version WeTV and Bilibili International Edition have further developed [19], promoting the overseas dissemination of Chinese cultural variety shows into a new stage of independent communication through "building ships to sail". As of October 2025, Mango TV International Edition has accumulated 271 million downloads, supporting free switching between 9 interface languages and 17 subtitle languages, covering 195 countries and regions. Such platforms not only open exclusive display windows for cultural variety shows such as *Glory is Back*, *There is something new in the Palace Museum* and *Dance Through the Millennia* to realize the independent export of high-quality cultural content, but also rely on algorithmic recommendation and multilingual intelligent translation technologies to achieve precise matching between content and overseas audiences, promoting overseas operation from extensive distribution to targeted and precise reach, and firmly grasping the initiative and discourse power of content communication.

Meanwhile, with the continuous iterative upgrading of overseas new media social platforms, platforms such as YouTube, TikTok and Instagram provide convenient channels for secondary dissemination, lightweight reach and audience interactive participation of programs. Taking National Treasure as an example, the program implants cultural relic collections into TikTok in the form of 15-second highlight clips and national style cosplay templates. Leveraging algorithmic recommendation and topic aggregation with hashtags such as #ChinaTreasures and #ChinaCulture, it drives overseas users to create imitations and emotional expressions, forming decentralized reproduction of cross-cultural meaning. The above practices are deeply integrated with China Media Group's AI-driven international communication intelligent matrix and Mango TV International Edition's multilingual distribution and other digital-intelligent infrastructure, together weaving a full-link "digital-intelligent Chinese wave" system covering production, translation, distribution and interaction. This promotes cultural variety shows from one-way export to user co-creation, from content going global to ecological going global, and realizes the flexible embedding and cross-community flow of Chinese cultural symbols in heterogeneous circles.

At present, China has built a multi-level overseas platform system with both "borrowing ships to sail" and "building ships to sail". However, most platforms still suffer from disconnection with local audience needs, weak localized secondary creation and community operation on social platforms, making it difficult to build a long-term communication ecosystem.

4. Analysis of influencing factors for Chinese cultural variety shows going global

On the basis of clarifying the realistic status and core dilemmas of cultural variety shows going global, this section systematically analyzes the influencing factors for the overseas dissemination of cultural variety shows combined with the intercultural communication theory system.

4.1. Content expression: adaptive integration of cultural foundation and communication form

Cultural variety shows are audio-visual content categories that take fine traditional Chinese culture as the spiritual core and adopt modern variety modes as the presentation carrier, boasting both cultural inheritance missions and mass entertainment attributes. For this reason, their connotation features irreplaceable national cultural uniqueness, and content expression is highly dependent on high-context historical allusions, value expressions and cultural symbols. Compared with the cross-

cultural communication of other variety categories, they are more sensitive to localized content adaptation and more prone to the cultural discount phenomenon. For example, the early overseas dissemination of *China in the Classics* only had English-subtitled versions released on the official YouTube account, resulting in communication content touching overseas users only in the form of "cultural spectacles" rather than conveying the deep core of Chinese culture. To resolve this dilemma, it is necessary to create program highlights that integrate cultural uniqueness and universal values. On the premise of adhering to the core of fine traditional Chinese culture, we should anchor universal value narratives and emotional resonance shared globally to complete the translation and adaptation of high-context cultural content.

Leveraging advanced digital technologies to complete the international translation of program content is an important means to help cultural variety shows cross cultural barriers. Affected by cultural background differences, audiences in different regions have significant differences in decoding logic for the same cultural symbol. Only by constructing a shared symbol system can we effectively reduce decoding deviations among overseas audiences. As the most basic cognitive elements of humans, audio-visual symbols can present information content in the most superficial way and reduce understanding difficulty. China Media Group's program *Encountering Civilizations* (Season 2) uses high-definition photography to display details of cultural relics and historic sites, and innovatively adopts AR technology such as "ripples of civilization" to vividly and intuitively present "mutually appreciative cultural relics" to the audience. While fully preserving the unique features of cultural relics, the program transforms ancient books and historic sites that were originally difficult to understand into audio-visual language, building a universal cross-cultural cognitive carrier. In addition, the program adopts a dual narrative of "cultural relic presentation + modern expression". When telling the global dissemination history of *Tao Te Ching*, it not only presents the original German translation collected by Einstein, but also includes modern interpretations of "supreme goodness is like water" and "governing by non-interference" by guest interviewees, American sinologists. This allows audiences to feel both the profound historical weight of Chinese culture and its contemporary significance transcending national boundaries [20].

4.2. Industrial support: embedded layout of industrial system and global market

Differences in regional cultural backgrounds lead to different value orientations among audiences in various countries across the six dimensions of culture, which in turn affect the industrial layout logic of cultural variety shows going global. At present, China's overseas dissemination industry of cultural variety shows still faces problems such as single industrial cooperation, passive communication channels and extensive operation services. Although classic variety shows such as *Readers* and *National Treasure* have had their copyrights purchased by European and American countries in previous seasons, they have never been recreated and broadcast by partners. Emerging variety shows such as *Heroes* have been exhibited and promoted at international television festivals, but lack stable international platform operation and continuous distribution, making it difficult to effectively reach mainstream overseas audiences. Most overseas variety shows generally lack professional talents with both Chinese cultural literacy, international vision and cross-cultural communication skills, failing to carry out systematic overseas copyright operation, precise market promotion and communication effect evaluation, and only staying at the shallow level of one-time promotion. It can be seen that building a cooperative, independent and professional industrial system is the primary prerequisite for supporting the cross-regional dissemination of cultural variety shows and ultimately deeply embedding into the global market.

In the process of cultural products going global, content providers should not only attach importance to expression and presentation on the export side, but also strengthen localized adaptation on the import side. Local cultural media institutions have a deep understanding of regional audience needs and acceptance habits, and can provide precise localized transformation and communication adaptation for foreign cultural products. The collaboration between the production team of *National Treasure* and BBC to produce *China's Greatest Treasures* is a typical example of deepening transnational joint production and collaboration with local institutions, successfully promoting the transformation from copyright procurement to joint research and development and co-production. Meanwhile, firmly grasping the initiative of international communication is the basic guarantee for the large-scale overseas dissemination of cultural variety shows. Head platforms such as Mango TV and Tencent Video have built stable and controllable global communication matrices relying on their overseas independent versions, continuously strengthening platform brand influence and promoting regular distribution and refined operation of content. In addition, accelerating the cultivation of interdisciplinary talents with both cultural literacy, international vision and cross-cultural communication skills is equally important. Replacing one-time promotion with full-process and professional operation can truly promote cultural variety shows from shallow export to deep embedding into the global market.

4.3. International environment: matching symbiosis between product export and communication system

The rapid development of the digital economy has profoundly reshaped the international communication landscape and comprehensively reconstructed the path for cultural products going global. Data elements, algorithmic recommendation, digital platforms, digital payment and digital-intelligent production tools are comprehensively transforming the entire industrial process of cultural products from content production and cross-cultural distribution to commercial monetization and iterative upgrading. The traditional extensive overseas model of one-way content export and one-time copyright sales no longer has advantages. Against this background, deeply understanding and grasping the new characteristics and development trends of the international communication landscape, and actively adapting to the media industry rules, digital market ecology and decentralized communication logic of the digital era in various countries, is an inevitable requirement for the sustainable development of cultural variety shows relying on the digital economy and their matching and symbiosis with the global communication ecosystem.

As the European and American streaming media markets become saturated, Southeast Asia, with a population of 670 million and rapidly growing internet penetration, has become a core incremental market contested by global streaming media platforms. Statista data shows that by 2030, the scale of the Southeast Asian streaming media market will grow by 49%, exceeding 6.8 billion US dollars [21]. In response to this trend, major Chinese streaming media platforms such as iQIYI and Youku have successfully entered markets in Thailand, Malaysia and other countries, achieving a key transformation from "going out" to "integrating in". It can be seen that deepening cultivation in the Southeast Asian market is an inevitable trend for the overseas dissemination of cultural variety shows in the future. However, in-depth cultivation of a regional market must be based on an accurate grasp of local industrial rules. On the premise of complying with market access requirements, Chinese platforms have quickly entered the market by launching low-cost packages of 2-3 US dollars per month, accessing mainstream local payment methods such as e-wallets and mobile phone bill deductions, directly competing with Western streaming media platforms such as Netflix. In addition, leveraging UGC secondary creation to realize content fission and launching

topic challenges on overseas platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, Instagram and Meta to encourage global audience participation are not only effective ways for cultural variety shows to break through Chinese circles and reach mainstream Southeast Asian audiences, but also feasible methods for promoting exchanges and integration between Chinese culture and other cultures, realizing the harmonious coexistence of diverse civilizations.

5. Exploration of innovative paths for Chinese cultural variety shows going global

Based on the above analysis, this study constructs the "Adaptation-Embedding-Symbiosis" model and proposes three innovative paths for the overseas dissemination of Chinese cultural variety shows within this framework.

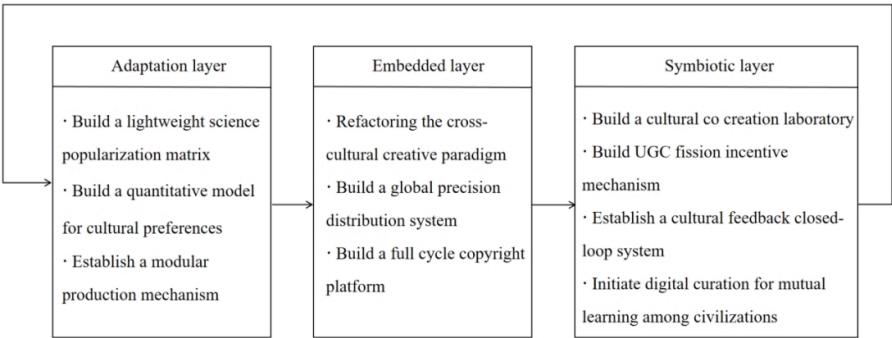


Figure 1. Schematic diagram of the "adaptation-embedding-symbiosis" model

5.1. Anchor core cultural values and build a hierarchically adaptive intercultural expression system

The primary dilemma for cultural variety shows going global lies in cross-cultural decoding barriers of high-context cultural symbols. The solution is not to "cut one's feet to fit the shoes", but to build a hierarchically adaptive intercultural expression system while adhering to the core values of fine traditional Chinese culture.

Specifically, first, we can build a lightweight interesting popular science supporting communication matrix. Targeting the pain point of overseas audiences' lack of background knowledge about Chinese culture, we produce a series of lightweight content such as short videos and graphic analyses around the main program, supplement historical and cultural contexts with interesting narratives, and effectively reduce the decoding threshold of intercultural communication. Second, we can construct a regional audience cultural preference quantitative model relying on Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory, quantitatively assess the cultural distance between target markets and China, build a large language model-driven hierarchical semantic translation system for high-context cultural symbols, and automatically generate differentiated narrative versions adapted to different regions. Finally, we can establish a modular production mechanism of "constant core values + adapted localized shells". While firmly safeguarding the core value genes of Chinese culture, we flexibly adapt presentation-layer elements such as character prototypes, social etiquette, humor styles and emotional expressions for different markets, realizing the organic unity of cultural core and localized expression. When exporting format copyright of Sisters Who Make Waves to Vietnam, Mango TV followed this logic to complete localized adaptation of competition systems,

stage designs and guest lineups. After broadcast, it consistently topped the weekly ratings list of Vietnamese TV stations, and the total views of related online topics exceeded 22 billion times, strongly verifying the practical effectiveness of this intercultural expression system.

5.2. Focus on digital-intelligent technology development and build an internationally embedded integrated industrial system

Digital-intelligent technologies are reshaping the overseas path of cultural variety shows from multiple aspects such as content production, distribution and communication, and industrial ecology, providing technical support for reducing cultural discount, improving communication efficiency and ensuring cross-border transaction security. Specifically, leveraging digital-intelligent technologies to assist the overseas dissemination of cultural variety shows can be carried out from the following aspects.

On the content production side, we can use digital-intelligent technologies represented by AI and XR to reconstruct the cross-cultural creative paradigm and solve the translation problem of high-context cultural symbols. For example, *Colorful China*, jointly produced by the China Television Artists Committee and Tianjin Haihe Media Center, uses AIGC and virtual production to transform high-context cultural symbols into universal audio-visual language. Centered on the aesthetics of "five colors", it integrates dance drama narratives, cinematic situational performances and XR technologies. On the distribution and communication side, we can build a global precise distribution system relying on cloud infrastructure and intelligent algorithms. For example, Mango TV leverages Alibaba Cloud's global CDN nodes to achieve millisecond-level distribution. Its international APP supports 9 interface languages and 17 subtitle languages, covering 195 countries and regions, with cumulative global downloads exceeding 295 million. Relying on a big data platform, it conducts user behavior analysis and personalized recommendation, promoting overseas operation from extensive distribution to targeted and precise reach. On the industrial ecology side, we can build a full-life-cycle copyright management platform relying on blockchain and Web3.0, realizing the integration of right confirmation, evidence storage, transaction and revenue sharing. Meanwhile, we promote IP asset operation and smart contract automatic revenue sharing, building a sustainable development system from one-time copyright transactions to global industrial collaboration.

5.3. Promote sino-foreign cultural symbiosis and build a two-way interactive international communication pattern

The ultimate goal of cultural variety shows going global is not one-way export, but in-depth symbiosis with the culture of target markets. To this end, efforts can be made from the following aspects.

First, build a "cultural symbiosis and co-creation laboratory", collaborating with local creators, MCN institutions and fan communities in target markets to jointly participate in localized adaptation of programs, development of derivative content and IP extension, realizing a paradigm shift from "export" to "co-creation". Second, construct a UGC fission and creator incentive mechanism. For example, Yawen Communication has built the world's largest Chinese wave social matrix covering more than 20 overseas platforms such as YouTube and TikTok, with 210 million subscribers, 60% of whom are non-Chinese users. Through AI translation, multilingual dubbing and localized operation teams, it enables variety shows to achieve "localized rebirth" around the world, forming a decentralized self-communication ecosystem. Third, establish a two-way cultural feedback closed-loop system. Through in-depth mining of audience behavior data, emotional tendencies and

interactive comments, we feed back insights to the domestic content production end to guide cultural adaptation and model innovation of subsequent programs, forming a continuous optimization cycle of "communication-feedback-iteration", truly realizing a paradigm leap from one-way transmission to two-way dialogue. Finally, launch a "mutual learning among civilizations" digital curation initiative and increase offline publicity efforts. Using VR/AR technologies, we build immersive cross-cultural virtual exhibition spaces, jointly display cultural variety show IP with local cultural elements such as intangible cultural heritage and festivals in target markets, and construct a symbiotic model of "online content + offline experience", allowing cultural variety shows to truly enter the lives of overseas audiences.

6. Conclusion

Based on the intercultural communication theory perspective, this study systematically deconstructs the development status and evolution context of Chinese cultural variety shows going global, clarifies three core influencing factors: content expression, industrial support and international environment, addresses four core research questions: development characteristics of overseas dissemination, causes of dilemmas, paths to break intercultural barriers and digital-intelligent transformation directions, constructs the "Adaptation-Embedding-Symbiosis" analytical model, and builds a systematic innovative path for the overseas dissemination of cultural variety shows, providing theoretical reference for the development of related industries. Meanwhile, this study has certain research limitations: first, it is dominated by qualitative analysis, lacking quantitative comparison of communication effects of different overseas models; second, it has insufficient differentiated analysis of overseas paths for different types of cultural variety shows, failing to fully reflect the communication characteristics of various subcategories of cultural variety shows. Future research can introduce quantitative research methods, conduct empirical analysis combined with platform data, and quantitatively compare the effects of various overseas models. At the same time, special discussions can be carried out by subcategories such as cultural relics, poetry and intangible cultural heritage to improve the accuracy and practical guiding value of conclusions.

Looking ahead, the overseas dissemination of cultural variety shows should always adhere to the stance of Chinese culture, firmly grasp the development opportunities of the digital-intelligent era, deepen localized adaptation in the global market, replace one-way content export with two-way dialogue of mutual learning among civilizations, and present a credible, lovely and respectable image of China to the world in the vivid practice of telling China's stories well and spreading China's voice well. This will inject an inexhaustible impetus into enhancing national cultural soft power and promoting exchanges and integration between Chinese and foreign civilizations.

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