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A Study of the Communication Paths Through Which She Ethnic Culture Short Videos Have "Broken Out" Since 2025

Simeng Lan

School of Journalism and Communication, Southwest University, Chongqing, China
2832879640@qq.com

Abstract. Since 2025, the short video communication of She ethnic culture has taken a notable turn. Lan Yingying's content related to the Sanyuesan Festival has become a phenomenal case of annual ethnic cultural communication, and She ethnic culture has gradually entered a broader public vision. Taking cases such as Lan Yingying, Song Yi, "Director Wu Shows You Around She Villages" and "She Xiaoxian" as research objects, this paper analyzes three communication paths: star-driven ignition, official follow-up, and folk in-depth cultivation. The study finds that the "breakout" of She ethnic culture is not an accidental result brought by a single hot spot, but a phased breakthrough formed by the synergy of platform distribution, festival nodes and multiple subjects. At the same time, current communication still has problems such as symbolized content, centralized platforms and insufficient deep cultural expression. In the future, the communication of She ethnic culture still needs to move further beyond "visibility".

Keywords: She Ethnic Culture, Short Video Communication, Breakout Mechanism, Lan Yingying, Ethnic Minority Culture

1. Introduction

The Outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan proposes to "promote the creative transformation and innovative development of fine traditional Chinese culture", which provides policy support for the living communication of ethnic minority cultures. In recent years, short videos have become an important engine for ethnic cultural communication and cultural tourism promotion. In 2020, Tibetan young man Ding Zhen rose to internet fame with a 7-second short video, which gained over 5 billion views [1] and brought Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan into public view. Then He Jiaolong, deputy county magistrate of Zhaosu in Xinjiang, and Liu Hong, director of the Garze Culture and Tourism Bureau, endorsed local cultural tourism with their personal images. Later, Guangxi Zhuang creator Yanghuaju earned over 1.5 billion views across the internet with her *Everything Can Be Worn* video series. A number of ethnic minority creators and local accounts in Yunnan, western Hunan, Yanbian and other regions have also continued to expand the influence of local cultures through short videos. Power relations are increasingly embedded in communication networks, shaping public cognition and agenda formation [2]. For ethnic minority cultures, short video platforms are precisely a key field for the redistribution of such communication power.

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However, not all ethnic groups have received equal attention in this wave. Many ethnic minorities with unique intangible cultural heritage resources still linger in the dilemma of "having content but no traffic". As one of the most populous ethnic minorities in East China, the She ethnic group has long suffered from scattered, low-frequency new media communication that struggles to break into mainstream attention. It was not until 2025 that short videos of She ethnic culture saw relatively remarkable growth in communication. Among them, Lan Yingying's content related to the Sanyuesan Festival gained over 405 million exposures across all platforms, becoming a phenomenal case of annual ethnic cultural communication.

This change raises questions worth discussing: How exactly did the "breakout" of She ethnic culture short videos occur? What roles have different communication subjects played in the process? Existing studies mostly focus on ethnic groups with strong communication foundations such as the Tibetan and Miao groups, while systematic discussions on the new media communication of the She ethnic group are relatively insufficient. Against this background, this paper selects typical cases including Lan Yingying, Song Yi, "Director Wu Shows You Around She Villages" and "She Xiaoxian", and attempts to answer the above questions through multi-case comparison and analysis of public communication data.

2. Literature review

2.1. Current status of new media communication of ethnic minority cultures

In recent years, research on the new media communication of ethnic minority cultures has mainly focused on two aspects: first, the transformation of the communication environment and paradigm shift triggered by new media technologies; second, practical dilemmas and coping strategies in communication practices. The involvement of new media has significantly improved the ecological environment of ethnic minority cultural communication [3], promoting its shift from "niche communication" to "mass communication" and from "one-way communication" to "two-way interaction" [4].

As of February 2026, the number of short video users in China reached 1.074 billion, accounting for 95.4% of all internet users [5]. Some ethnic minority cultures have explored relatively mature communication paths. Taking the Miao ethnic group as an example, the "September 27th" Lusheng Festival in Gulong, Huangping County, Guizhou Province adopted the "anchor + intangible cultural heritage" communication mode, with the related Douyin topic gaining over 74.9 million views [6]; the total views of short videos for "Songtao Village Gala" exceeded 1 billion [7].

2.2. Current status of digital communication of she ethnic culture

Compared with some ethnic minorities with solid communication foundations, the research and practice of She ethnic culture in the field of digital communication remain insufficient. Existing studies mostly focus on topics such as She ethnic costumes, inheritance of language and folk songs, and historical and cultural identity [8], and most are presented in traditional academic forms such as literary and historical research. As early as 2010, scholars pointed out that the main inhabited areas of the She ethnic group lacked specialized communication platforms and regular columns, resulting in unsatisfactory publicity effects [9, 10].

From the perspective of communication practice, before 2025, local governments, converged media centers and self-media in the main inhabited areas of the She ethnic group had made various attempts at new media digital communication, but the overall development remained at an "initial"

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stage, and a real "breakout" had not yet been achieved. Local official platforms and converged media launched the "Five She" series of short videos, the *Hello! Jingning* life experience column, and local converged media short video works [11, 12]. However, limited by platform level, communication links and topic operation capacity, it is difficult for them to enter the mainstream social media trending chain of mainstream social media. Meanwhile, although stable communicators represented by "She Xiaoxian (Lei Qingmei)" have emerged in the self-media sector and accumulated a certain fan base and view count on platforms such as Douyin, they have not yet achieved phenomenal diffusion.

Overall, existing studies provide an important foundation for understanding the new media communication of ethnic minority cultures, but the focus is mostly on ethnic minorities with strong communication foundations such as the Miao and Tibetan groups, while discussions on the new media communication of She ethnic culture are relatively inadequate. In fact, She ethnic culture did not enter the new media field only in 2025; it is just that its overall influence and platform spillover effect are relatively limited. Since 2025, "breakout" practices represented by figures like Lan Yingying have emerged one after another, marking a new stage in the new media communication of She ethnic culture and highlighting the necessity of systematic research on its communication paths.

3. Analysis and results

3.1. Overall changes in short video communication of she ethnic culture since 2025

2025 marks a key turning point for the new media communication of She ethnic culture, with its communication scale, paths and influence achieving leapfrog growth. In 2025, the entire network communication volume of the She ethnic "Sanyuesan" National Cultural Festival reached 160 million person-times [13], a sharp increase from 2024. Celebrity Lan Yingying ignited public discussion with her image of the "Third Princess", gaining over 405 million exposures across all platforms; Lu Yuxiao's "Phoenix Costume" photo shoot saw the related topic read over 10 million times in a single day, further boosting the popularity; the government account "Director Wu Shows You Around She Villages" gained over 200 million exposures and more than 150,000 followers within months of its launch (see Figure 1). At the same time, overseas creators also participated in spreading content related to the Sanyuesan Festival, promoting the cross-cultural communication of She ethnic culture.

Figure 1. Collection of hot spots in short video communication of she ethnic culture since 2025

In terms of breakout performance, communication heat is mainly concentrated on festival topics, celebrity content and costume culture. The video of Lan Yingying performing "Da Qiang Dan", a

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traditional She ethnic dance, reached 100 million views; the WeChat Video Channel likes of the She ethnic culture feature film *Phoenix Descendants* exceeded 100,000; the topic "Song Yi Matches Fujian She Ethnic Costumes Perfectly" topped the Fuzhou local list TOP1 within one hour.

Before 2025, the communication of She ethnic culture generally featured small scope, low popularity and fragmentation; since 2025, it has shown obvious changes with coexisting diverse ignition methods and point-like breakthroughs in communication focuses. Communication subjects cover celebrities and influencers, government accounts, intangible cultural heritage inheritors and overseas creators, showing a new trend that the short video communication of She ethnic culture is shifting from scattered attempts to concentrated breakthroughs.

3.2. Path 1: star-driven ignition

3.2.1. Lan Yingying and the ignition of Jingning "Sanyuesan" hot spot: breakthroughs in international communication

In March 2025, Lan Yingying appeared at the China She Township "Sanyuesan" Cultural Ceremony in the image of the She ethnic "Third Princess". She carried out "local endorsement" by virtue of her native She ethnic identity and released the "She Ethnic Princess Costume Change" short video series, which is a typical "media event" [14]. During the event, total exposure across all platforms exceeded 405 million, and the views of She ethnic topics reached 620 million. During the 2025 Sanyuesan Festival in Jingning, the county received 265,000 tourists, a year-on-year increase of 10.9%; total cultural and tourism revenue reached 244 million yuan, a year-on-year increase of 11% [13]. In September of the same year, Lan Yingying attended Milan Fashion Week in a "Phoenix Dress" haute couture gown that integrated 10 intangible cultural heritage techniques including She ethnic wedding customs, colored ribbons and She embroidery. The topic "Lan Yingying Conquers Milan with Oriental Aesthetics" made it to the Weibo hot search list; total exposure of related topics exceeded 100 million, and views of a single overseas post surpassed 1 million, realizing simultaneous communication at home and abroad.

During the 2026 Sanyuesan Festival, Lan Yingying continued this communication path and released the short video "Our She Ethnic Group Also Has Its Own Girl Group", in which she led She ethnic girls to perform "Da Qiang Dan", a traditional She ethnic sports dance. Integrating intangible cultural heritage elements with trendy music, this short video gained over 10 million clicks on various platforms, over 100 million views on Douyin, and more than 3 million likes.

3.2.2. Song Yi and the diffusion of Fujian cultural tourism "cultural experience officer" topic: further breakthrough in she ethnic culture recognition

In September 2025, Song Yi, in the capacity of "Cultural Experience Officer", deeply participated in the themed activity "Understanding the She Ethnic Group in the Mountains and Seas of Fujian" jointly launched by the Fujian Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism and *China National Travel* magazine. Jenkins argues that media convergence is accompanied by the formation of a "participatory culture" [15]. The communication chain of "celebrity IP endorsement, in-depth cooperation with official media, and co-creation by influencer matrix" formed in Song Yi's "Cultural Experience Officer" activity precisely reflects this participatory communication logic. During the event, the four major cultural tourism platforms of Fujian Province accumulated 34.22 million views and over 1.39 million likes in September; the total exposure of Song Yi's collaborative content

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across the network exceeded 500 million, with total interactions surpassing 1 million, and the main Douyin topic "Check in Fujian with Song Yi" accumulated 110 million views.

After the topic "Check in Ningde for She Ethnic Phoenix Costumes" was launched, many influencers with millions of fans spontaneously traveled to Ningde to create content, with cumulative views exceeding 15 million. In terms of government new media, the WeChat official account "Fresh Fujian Voice of Culture and Tourism" ranked second in the communication power of provincial-level cultural tourism government new media nationwide in September, among which the article *A "Most Dazzling She Ethnic Wind" Blows in Fujian!* gained over 100,000 reads. Overall, the "Cultural Experience Officer" communication with Song Yi's participation has not only expanded the visibility of She ethnic culture, but also promoted its cognitive diffusion among a wider audience.

3.3. Path 2: official follow-up

Provincial and municipal government accounts in the main inhabited areas of the She ethnic group have also continued to make efforts in ethnic cultural communication. "Cultural Tourism Ningde" focuses on intangible cultural heritage themes such as She ethnic silverware, costumes and fire phoenix customs; "Fresh Fujian Voice of Culture and Tourism" planned She ethnic themed marketing in collaboration with Song Yi, with Weibo topic reads reaching nearly 500 million, both achieving certain results.

Taking the Jingning cultural and tourism department as an example, it built the personalized IP "Director Wu Shows You Around She Villages" with Director Wu Wenwei as the core, which has effectively improved information credibility and emotional affinity, and formed a relatively stable official follow-up path. By the end of 2025, the account had accumulated over 200 million exposures across the network and more than 150,000 followers on all platforms. The proportion of young consumer groups among the account's followers has increased significantly; content about "hot discussions on Jingning's scenic spots" and "inquiries about travel plans" topped the comment section. From January to October 2025, the total number of tourists in Jingning County increased by 15.8% year-on-year, ranking first in Lishui City in terms of growth rate. It can be seen that the communication effect has further shifted from "liking and watching" to "travel intention". In addition, the account has launched the "Director Wu's Picks" store visit series, covering landmark sites with historical and cultural heritage such as Shengyang She Village, Shisi Temple and Jingning Shanha Grand Theatre in Jingning, and also extending to community life venues such as cafes and pizza shops, pushing the communication of She ethnic culture from the "barrier-breaking" stage to the "landing" stage.

3.4. Path 3: folk intangible cultural heritage in-depth cultivation

Lei Qingmei (online name "She Xiaoxian") is a municipal-level representative inheritor of the national intangible cultural heritage project She ethnic folk songs. Since 2016, she has long engaged in She song live streaming and short video creation on platforms such as Douyin, performing traditional She songs such as *Pangu Song* and *Gaohuang Song*, and releasing dozens of original works such as *She Township Ballads* and *She Mountain Tea Songs*. In 2022, she and her master Lei Meifeng appeared on the CCTV Spring Festival Gala, marking the first time She ethnic two-tone singing was performed on the Spring Festival Gala. Since then, she has continued to participate in programs such as *Folk Songs China*. However, before 2025, her audience was still mainly limited to

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the intangible cultural heritage circle and ethnic culture enthusiasts. Lacking event-driven momentum and topic fermentation, a phenomenal "breakout" had not been formed.

With the overall rise in popularity of She ethnic topics in 2025 (Douyin views exceeded 620 million [16]), her long-accumulated content has gained wider dissemination; her followers across the network grew to more than 200,000, and her representative works accumulated over 200 million likes. At the same time, she began to receive more platform support and media attention, and her influence on national-level platforms continued to grow. In 2026, the new She song *Sing Folk Songs Together* was selected for the Huaxia Intangible Cultural Heritage Spring Festival Gala, and she herself was awarded the 2026 Huaxia Intangible Cultural Heritage Guardian Ambassador and "Pioneer of Youth in the New Era". In addition, as a cultural envoy, she traveled to Tanzania to participate in the "Fresh Fujian" cultural tourism promotion event, realizing the external communication of eastern Fujian culture. By creating original new works such as *Phoenix Oath* and setting up a studio stationed at the China She Ethnic Palace, she has further consolidated her position as an important force in the folk communication of She ethnic culture.

4. Discussion

4.1. Synergistic relationship of the three types of "breakout" paths for she ethnic culture short videos

The three paths of star-driven ignition, official follow-up and folk in-depth cultivation form a staggered and complementary relationship in terms of time progression and audience needs, rather than a simple linear substitution.

From the perspective of time progression, the star-driven ignition path relies on festival nodes to release concentrated content, create public opinion hot spots, and complete the initial cognitive introduction of She ethnic culture. The official follow-up path then follows up, using regular content production to capture audience attention after the ebb of celebrity traffic, and guiding users to shift from the "watching" stage to the "travel decision-making" stage. The folk in-depth cultivation path runs through the whole process, forming the foundation of communication through long-term, stable content production, and supplementing the depth of cultural communication and the precision of cultural interpretation.

Beyond the relay and succession in terms of timing, the three types of approaches also cater to audiences' demands at different cognitive stages respectively. The celebrity-driven viral approach mainly satisfies people's needs for "mass aesthetics" and "curiosity-seeking psychology", featuring high-intensity and low-threshold visual stimulation yet relatively limited in-depth content. The official follow-up approach addresses practical demands of "travel decision-making" and "trust building", effectively bridging traffic exposure and cultural tourism conversion. The grassroots in-depth exploration approach fulfills audiences' profound needs for "in-depth understanding" and "cultural identity", making up for the lack of substantial content in the other two approaches through a "slow dissemination" model. As Peng Lan put it, "platforms determine the distribution of content and the way content connects with users" [17]. It is within this connection mechanism that different subjects undertake different communication functions.

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4.2. Reflections: limitations of current short video communication of she ethnic culture

4.2.1. Shallow and single communication content: coexistence of symbolization and cultural dilution

The current communication of She ethnic culture on short video platforms presents a contradictory picture of "traffic prosperity" coexisting with "cultural dilution". In 2025, videos related to Lan Yingying "broke out", but among more than 100 officially planned videos, visual content such as phoenix costumes, silver ornaments and costume change check-ins dominated, while the presentation of deep cultural content such as ancestor worship ceremonies, Shanhai ancient song chanting and black rice making was obviously insufficient; the belief system of "worshiping phoenixes and birds" behind phoenix costumes and the migration memory embodied by the "three knives" pattern were rarely elaborated. The number of videos on themes such as She song language, ribbon weaving and wedding ceremonies is low. This communication inertia of "valuing form over spirit" is weakening the deeper meaning expression of She ethnic culture.

In contrast, the new media communication of Yunnan's ethnic minority cultures presents a more diverse and three-dimensional content structure. The Dai ethnic group's *UP Gengma* in 2023 accumulated over 10 million views, and related reports received more than 8.5 million clicks within 5 days, and was selected as one of the "Top Ten" cases of the 2025 Lancang-Mekong Audio-Visual Program. Its creative team integrated elements such as Zha opera, puppetry, deer dance and Dai ancient tunes into electronic music beats, achieving youth-oriented communication while maintaining cultural distinctiveness. The Jingpo ethnic group's *Manau Zongge* gained over 2 billion views on Douyin, with footage covering ten-thousand-person group dance, elderly chanting, tourists learning long knife dance and other content, which combines a grand sense of ritual with delicate life-like expression. More importantly, the spread of Manau Zongge "has no top-tier celebrities and no 100-million-level promotion budget", and has achieved wide dissemination relying on the attractiveness of the content itself and the continuous output of grassroots creators.

In comparison, the She ethnic group is not short of cultural resources, but a large number of exploitable materials and tellable stories have not been fully transformed into content suitable for short video communication. Phoenix costumes and silver ornaments have been repeatedly framed as the main "cultural scripts". When communication methods tend to be homogeneous and expression means tend to be single, the communication of She ethnic culture is prone to problems of insufficient depth and loss of core meaning.

4.2.2. Imbalanced platform structure: excessive concentration of communication power on a single platform

Communication is highly concentrated on a few platforms such as Douyin and Xiaohongshu, while other platforms with distribution capabilities are less covered, resulting in weak overall risk resistance. The total number of various official accounts related to the She ethnic group is less than 10, and there is a lack of dedicated provincial-level accounts in She ethnic areas, while township-level accounts are still absent, leading to an imbalanced account hierarchy structure. In Yunnan, however, a relatively complete four-level cultural tourism Douyin official account system of "province-city-county-township" has been formed, and a regular communication power index ranking has been established. In Mangshi alone, 42 units have opened 107 government new media accounts, and the Mangshi Cultural Tourism Douyin and Video Channel have 281,000 followers. Second, even within the same platform, communication power shows obvious imbalance. Celebrity

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accounts occupy a dominant position in traffic distribution, while official and inheritor accounts are relatively marginalized, and there is a shortage of "folk opinion leaders". When celebrities withdraw, traffic often ebbs accordingly. "The platform's understanding of the relationship between content and users is solidified in algorithmic models, and personalized matching has become the most valued relationship by platforms" [17]. For She ethnic culture, celebrity content with strong personalities, strong visuals and strong emotional appeal is more likely to be favored by algorithms.

The 2025 Xishuangbanna Water-Sprinkling Festival built a communication matrix of "official media leading, self-media gathering strength, and folk resonance", with cumulative views across the network exceeding 1.3 billion, which is significantly higher than the exposure of Jingning's Sanyuesan Festival in the same year. It should be noted that the Xishuangbanna Water-Sprinkling Festival itself has high national recognition and a solid communication foundation, so it is not appropriate to make a simple horizontal comparison with the communication of the She ethnic group. The case is cited here mainly to illustrate the importance of joint participation by multiple subjects. If She ethnic communication wants to improve resilience and reduce dependence on a single platform and a few top accounts, it must gradually break the current structural dilemma of imbalanced platform distribution and imbalanced subject power.

4.3. Optimization direction: from "breakout" to "long-term communication"

First of all, we should actively expand channel combinations and adapt differentiated content to the characteristics of different platforms. For example, a long video column on "She Ethnic Crafts" can be set up on Bilibili, daily short videos of intangible cultural heritage inheritors can be pushed on WeChat Video Channel, and rural live streaming can be piloted on Kuaishou. The government is responsible for top-level planning, while daily operation can be jointly carried out by inheritors, returned youth, and university volunteers, forming a pattern of "unified IP and multi-point communication". At the same time, we should adhere to content as the core, transform cultural essence into communicable digital products, and continuously present a real and distinct ethnic image. For example, Ningde City has issued the *Regulations on the Protection of She Ethnic Culture*, allocating 3.3 million yuan of special funds every year [18], which provides institutional guarantee for related communication and brand building.

Second, the linkage between the three types of subjects should be strengthened. Celebrity accounts can play a short-term drainage role, and actively embed entrances to follow-up in-depth content in their posts, such as pinning links to inheritor accounts in the comment section and inviting inheritors to appear in live streams, so as to distribute traffic to official and inheritor accounts. Official accounts should systematically archive materials, quickly deploy them at appropriate social sentiment and communication nodes, and coordinate simultaneous release across multiple accounts. Inheritors provide continuous, authentic and deeply explorable cultural content, retain one-time viewers, and consolidate the communication foundation with stable update frequency and cultural depth. Only when the government provides necessary resource support and incentive rules can the transformation from "one-time celebrity drainage" to "continuous co-creation by multiple subjects" be gradually realized.

Third, we should strengthen the integration and interaction of traditional and new media, and improve project planning capabilities. Cross-platform themes can be designed around core IPs such as the "Sanyuesan" National Cultural Festival and She ethnic silverware and costumes; fixed columns can be set up in county-level converged media centers and local TV stations to further develop hot short video content into TV features; at the same time, we can explore using commercial revenue to feed back content production. We can also learn from the experience of Banzhong

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Township in Fu'an City, which specializes in She ethnic medicine, Muyun Township, which sells characteristic fruits, and Kangcuo Township, which studies She ethnic boxing and forms industry alliances, to drive rural tourism traffic through live streaming commerce and experience check-ins.

The above measures help to further integrate She ethnic cultural communication with rural revitalization, local industries and regional cultural exchanges. Specifically, first, promote the integration of cultural elements with rural revitalization to enhance its practical transformation capacity; second, extract cultural symbols shared by both sides of the Taiwan Strait to expand the space for ethnic cultural exchanges; third, explore the connection between She ethnic culture and the "Maritime Silk Road" to provide support for its entry into a broader communication field.

5. Conclusion

The "breakout" of She ethnic culture in 2025 is not only a breakthrough in terms of traffic, but also the beginning of "being seen". When phoenix costumes travel from deep mountains to Milan, and when She songs are sung from the fireside to the cloud, digital technology is rewriting the fate script of ethnic minority cultures. In the future, the communication of She ethnic culture still needs to advance further beyond "visibility", so that the so-called "breakout" will truly have lasting significance.

Of course, this study still has some limitations. It is mainly based on public communication data and typical cases from 2025 to 2026. Limited by the regional scope of the main inhabited areas of the She ethnic group, the generalization of conclusions to other ethnic groups still needs to be combined with specific contexts. But at least it can be confirmed that She ethnic culture is beginning to form its own communication paths, and it is hoped that it will enter public life in a more proactive, perceptible and contemporary media-aligned way.

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