

Research on Short Video Communication Strategy of Live-Streaming Farmers in China's Rural Revitalization

-- Take "Dongbei Yujie" on Douyin APP as an Example

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Abstract. With the popularization and flourishing of rural We Media, Live-streaming farmers who use short videos to sufficiently present rural customs and landscapes have emerged. While reshaping the profile of rural areas and the identity of farmers, they have also facilitated the development of "Three Rural Issues", becoming "contributing farmers" which reflect and promote the construction of rural revitalization and digital design. This article conducts a "5W" communication mode on the released account "Dongbei Yujie" which has both personal creative characteristics and huge audience groups on the mainstream short video platform - Douyin. The purpose is to explore the media content production and communication strategies of the typical Live-streaming farmers, to provide innovative dimensions for the creation of short videos on "Three Rural Issues" and to help the sustainable development of the new formats in rural revitalization.

Keywords: "Live-streaming Farmers"; "Dongbei Yujie"; Communication Strategy.

1. Introduction

China achieved a comprehensive victory in the battle against poverty and entered a crucial year in promoting rural revitalization in 2022. The modernization of rural areas and the construction of digital countryside have met a new historical period. What's more, the new era breeds new talents and the new countryside calls for new forms of business. A group of Live-streaming farmers with advanced ideas and technology, who are experts in using the Internet and New media, appear in response to the times, actively exploring and rapidly growing.

By the end of April 30, 2023, the top 15 Live-streaming farmers' accounts in the total number of "likes" on the *Douyin* are diversified[1]. It can be seen that using rural We Media and county-level integrated media to shoot short and fast videos to record and promote the new rural customs, new farmer figures and new agricultural landscapes, echoing the big theme of digital rural areas with the small incision of local conditions, has become an effective method for Live-streaming farmers to contribute the rural undertakings. Live-streaming farmers have experienced market tests and constantly seek variation and innovation confronting opportunities. They have valuable communication value, such as reshaping the identity of farmers, inheriting local culture, supporting the development of rural affairs and reconstructing the urban-rural communication model[2], which embodies the driving force of China's rural society and the economic and technological transformation.

As of December 22, 2023, the topic of "New Farmers Plan 2023" on *Douyin* has reached 421.04 billion readers. A total of 176 million users have recorded the lives of farmers, including 796,00 creators with more than 10000 fans and 1.02 billion videos published on the platform, which has increased by 97% year on year. The short video platform represented by *Douyin* has become a gathering place for rural We Media and Live-streaming farmers, which has more considerable research samples and databases.

Among the top 15 Live-streaming farmers in terms of total “likes” mentioned above, "Dongbei Yujie" (“Dongbei” means three provinces in the northeast of China and “Yujie” means rainy sister) has a relatively short time of account establishing and a smaller number of video publishing. However, due to her real-life presentation, distinctively regional characteristics and harmonious family atmosphere, she stands out among numerous accounts in the creating direction of agriculture and countryside with high user “likes” and preferences. Since it entered the platform in February 2022, the account has had more than 18 million fans and 150 million “likes” by January 2024.

However, apart from the creators at the top with extraordinary content, a large number of the emerging Live-streaming farmers are generally limited by knowledge, technology and cultural connotations, resulting in issues such as lack of regulatory guidance, uneven content quality and the shortage of communication methods, which severely affects the thriving and sustainable development of rural We Media, thereby restricting its function in promoting rural revitalization.

In this regard, this article firstly selects "Dongbei Yujie", the post-80s creator of the Douyin as the research object of Live-streaming farmers, and secondly analyzes its unique communication strategies and then summarizes the experience that can be referenced and the path that can be optimized. The aim is to reflect Live-streaming farmers and rural We Media in terms of content creation, platform operation, etc., promoting the sustainable development of new forms of rural revitalization.

2. Research Design

2.1. Sample Selection

The first video of "Dongbei Yujie" was released on Douyin on February 18, 2022. By February 1, 2024, 214 short videos had been released. In addition, each short video sample is relatively independent without any correlation or exclusion and has consistent representativeness. The reliability of inference values can be objectively measured in a probabilistic manner. Therefore, the author selected 107 short videos published in odd months over 2 years as a sample.

2.2. Research Method

Content analysis method: Based on the “5W” communication mode and the characteristics of account content, this article divides 8 levels and 35 research categories from the macro level of communicator, communication content and communication methods for the data statistics of 107 video samples, to conduct an objective quantitative analysis.

Text analysis method: according to the content analysis and data results, this article interprets the short videos sampled by "Dongbei Yujie" from the three macro levels of communication content, audio-visual language and communication methods and effect. What’s more, it explores the design intent and connotation of short videos, summarizing the unique communication strategies, then pointing out the existing communication deficiencies and proposing the corresponding measures.

2.3. Reliability Analysis

The data statistics are independently compiled by co-authors, followed by reliability analysis to guarantee the stability and consistency of the study indicators and collected results.

3. Communicator Study

3.1. The Subject for Study

3.1.1. Communication Subject: Mainly Rural Family Relationships

Table 1. Characters and appearances of *Douyin* sample videos of "Dongbei Yujie"

Character	Personality	Number of Appearances (Times)	Appearing Frequency (%)
Yu Jie	Tough, capable	107	100
Lao Kuai	Lazy	106	99
Da Baobei	Industrious	55	51
Cui Hua	Gluttonous	45	42.4
Liang Zi	Honest, willing	27	25.4
Pei Si	“Fire God”	24	22.6
Da Hua	honest, Assiduous	23	21.5
Qiang Zi	Kind, upright	14	13
Gai Lianzi	Hardworking	11	10.2
Lao Er	gluttonous and lazy	11	10.2
Da Qiao	Skilled in cooking	7	6.5

As shown in Table 1, "Dongbei Yujie" is a big team. In addition to “Yu Jie” and her husband "Lao Kuai" as the core members, "disciples" from all over the country who come to visit Yu Jie are quite eye-catching: Da Baobei, Cui Hua, Liang Zi, Pei Si, Da Hua and other roles, with unique and pleasing people and high appearance rate, have become key roles; Especially Pei Si, who quickly became popular due to Yu Jie's phrase "Pei Si Ignites the Fire", became a team iconic symbol and evolved into a "meme culture". The diversity of team members further drives the widespread dissemination and social interaction of accounts.

3.1.2. Tagged Personal Image

Table 2. Video length classification of the sample videos of "Dongbei Yujie"

Number of Characters (Person)	Frequency (Piece)	Percent (%)
<5	43	40
5-10	44	41
>10	20	19
Total	107	100

As shown in Table 2, the number of characters in the video content of the "Dongbei Yujie" is mostly no more than 10, emphasizing the rural relationship network with family as the core and relatives, friends and neighbors as the link, which shows a vivid scene of agricultural production and life.

Table 3. The number of characters appearing in sample videos of "Dongbei Yujie"

Video Type	Video Length (Minute)	Frequency (Piece)
Long video	0-10	106
Medium video	10-30	1
Short video	>30	0
Total		107

At present, the academic community has a clear definition of video length: short videos are usually controlled within 10 minutes, long videos usually exceed 30 minutes, and new medium videos refer

to 10 to 30 minutes [3]. As shown in Table 3, "Dongbei Yujie" releases short videos within 10 minutes, mostly 6-9 minutes, which Meets the demand for fragmented propagation on mobile devices.

3.1.3. Character Image and Situation Deepening

"Dongbei Yujie" focuses on depicting delicate movements and details, forming a distinct human design. As shown in Table 1, which enriches the character image and context depth. In particular, the contrast between her own life and that of her husband hit many audiences. From daily household chores to busy farming, Yu Jie has taken care of everything. As a result, many netizen joked that "Lao Kuai has married the right person in his life" and "Lao Kuai is like a little daughter-in-law and Yu Jie is like a man", which has become a long-term hot comment.

3.2. Communication Content

The team of "Dongbei Yujie" is huge, with a simple image, common language, positive emotions and rich local characteristics. At the end of the video, Yu Jie ends up the video with a loud voice, "This is life in the countryside, a simple four-dish meal, enjoy it", continuously enhancing the audience's sense of regional identity and gradually forming a distinct label for the account.

3.2.1. Local Creation Theme

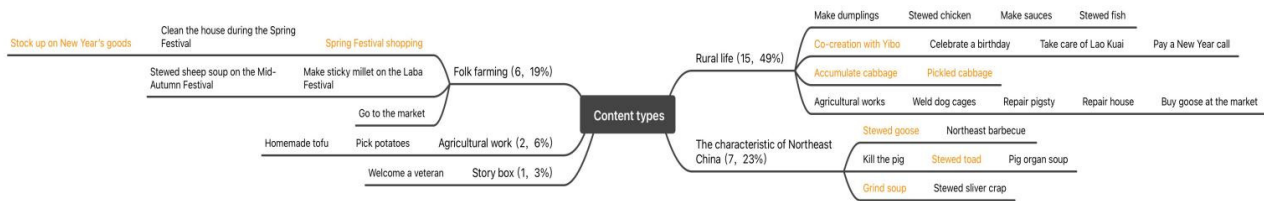


Fig 1. The video content types with more than 1 million “likes” of "Dongbei Yujie"

As shown in Figure 1, this article listed 33 works of "Dongbei Yujie" with more than 1 million “likes” and summarized five types of the characteristics of Northeast China, rural life, folk farming, story box and knowledge communication, including 9 videos (orange words) with more than 2 million “likes”. It can be seen that the high click ratio videos focus on the topics of local culture, adhering to a simple pastoral visual style and maintaining a fixed design in theme to improve user stickiness.

3.2.2. Positive Emotional Value

Table 4. The classification of emotional types of the sample videos of "Dongbei Yujie"

Emotional Types	Frequency (Piece)	Percent (%)
Joyful and boisterous	102	95.3
Fun and lively	3	2.8
Warm and touching	2	1.9
Total	107	100.0

This article arranges the emotional types of sample works of "Dongbei Yujie", which is mainly joyful, boisterous and lively, providing the audience with positive moods with the Northeast characteristics while reducing the difficulty of understanding video content. Audiences can just visually follow her to work together to achieve “the extension of body”, which opens a window away from urban noise and returns to local countryside life.

The emotional transmission is bi-directional. With the powerful interaction mode of Douyin, the comment area of "Dongbei Yujie" is also full of positive emotions and fans have created many humorous “meme culture”. The top hot remarks of most sample videos are mainly concentrated on

admiring the execution ability of Yu Jie, envying her husband Lao Kuai, "Li Ziqi (the edition of Wolf Warrior)", "Fire Man Peisi" and other exclusive hot memes, which solidifies the distinct characters and promotes the secondary creation of video content in emotional rendering.

3.2.3. Simplified Screen Packaging

Since the first launch of short videos in February 2022, "Dongbei Yujie" has maintained a relatively simple image design. In the cover design, the center is the working characters as the background, and 2-5 summary words are used as titles, with a white border and blue artistic words placed below the main characters in the images, which not only highlights the central position, but also displays the core information.

On the video copyrighting, the cover image displays summary words, accompanied by strong attribute tags such as "Rural Cuisine", "Record My Rural Life" and "New Farmer Plan 2024". Moreover, it is combined with an unvarying copyrighting "Dongbei Yujie takes everyone to understand daily life in Northeast China, telling local customs" with a unified and concise format.

In terms of content presentation, the video always keeps its authentic rural appearance, with minimal changes in color tones and special effect settings, which has the visual healing effect; meanwhile, advertising endorsements are rarely inserted with the principle on storytelling and character shaping to ensure high dissemination and fans retention.

3.3. Visual-Audio Language

3.3.1. Diverse Shot Size

Table 5. Shot size of the sample videos of "Dongbei Yujie"

Shot Size	Frequency (Piece)	Percent (%)
Extreme Long Shot	3	2.8
Long Shot	25	23.3
Full Shot	101	94.3
Medium Long Shot	93	86.9
Medium Shot	82	76.6
Medium Close Shot	74	66.3
Close Shot	107	100.0
Close-Up	106	99.0
Extreme Close-Up	75	70.0

The reasonable change of shot size can reflect the psychological transition of roles and plots, bringing a high-quality visual experience to the audience [4], which is vividly reflected in "Dongbei Yujie". As presented in Table 5, the number of shot sizes exceeded 5 in the 33 videos with over 1 million "likes" and they were skillfully used with fixed modes.

when shooting local cuisine and the Northeast specialties, Close-Up and Extreme Close-up Shots emphasize the production details and expressly display the texture. Close Shots and Medium Shots showcase the expressions and lifestyle habits of the characters, making their personalities and relationships more dramatic and authentic. Long Shots and Full Shots are commonly used to present living scenes and rural landscapes, accommodating a wide range of external environmental factors and creating an immersive visual experience in all aspects.

3.3.2. Fixed Shooting Mode

Short videos are usually played on mobile phones within 7 inches, with corresponding shooting angles and camera movements, which depend on the theme and audience[5]. Analyzing the shooting rules of the sample videos of "Dongbei Yujie", we can get:

In the beginning, "Dongbei Yujie" appears first, explaining the content verbally or with Jump-Cut. Therefore, a Still Shot and a shooting angle of eye level and a Cowboy Shot are adopted. Secondly, in the key plots, unlike the normal setting of the Live-streaming farmers' short video where one person cooks, "Dongbei Yujie" collaborates with a large number of people, with an average of 5 people and a maximum of 16 people working together. However, chiefly due to the skillful use of camera language, the multi-character theme has no sense of confinement. Through Close-Up of shoulder level and the high and low angles emphasized actions, combined with panning, sliding and tracking movements to form Long take, it constructs the division of roles and the spatial position relationship. Finally, during the cooking process, the dishes are served by everyone on a round table. The summary is often done through Zoom In and Zoom Out from "Dongbei Yujie" to everyone and delicacies, creating a joyful atmosphere and leaving a warm impression of the countryside in Northeast China.

3.3.3. Natural Composition and Lighting

In agricultural and rural videos, reducing professional composition and lighting changes can make the psychological distance between the audience closer. Videos are mostly composed of the common central composition (102,95.3%) and the Rule of Thirds composition (98,91.5%) as shown in Figure 4, which emphasizes the character in the visual center and weakens the commercial texture. In addition to the need for night shooting, the video advocates natural light and original colors to maximize the restoration of rural working scenery and natural cultural atmosphere.

3.3.4. Realistic Auditory Design

Sound is an inseparable narrative section of short videos related to "Three Rural Issues". Through the first and second person, dialogue and monologue, "Dongbei Yujie" regards the audience as face-to-face listeners and makes the Northeast accent and skilled working style more attractive. At the same time, the synchronous sound of detailed actions such as opening the door, splashing water and lifting the lid of pot all amplify auditory elements, effectively enhancing audience engagement and immersion.

Table 6. Background music of the sample videos of "Dongbei Yujie"

Background Music	Frequency (Piece)	Percentage (%)
<i>My Hometown in Northeast China</i>	101	94.4
Popular music	3	2.8
<i>My Hometown in Northeast China</i> and Popular music	3	2.8
Total	107	100.0

In terms of background music settings, "Dongbei Yujie" simplifies the complexity and always ends with a festive folk song *My Hometown in Northeast China*, making the song a sign that not only enhances emotions but also forms a consistent narrative style, further deepening "the extension of human senses".

3.4. Communication Methods and Effects

3.4.1. Creating an Operational Account Matrix

Table 7. Matrix Account Number of "Dongbei Yujie" (as of February 14, 2024)

Account Name	First Published Time	Number of Fans (Thousand)	Number of Published Content (Piece)
"Dongbei Yujie"	February 18, 2022	20077.0	212
"Yujie's Dabaobei"	April 17, 2022	713.0	84
"Yujie's Cuihua"	May 2, 2022	222.0	80
"Yujie's Daqiao"	May 22, 2022	1233.0	133
"Yujie's Peisi"	July 17, 2022	235.0	57
"Yujie's Daliang"	July 19, 2022	733.0	100
"Yujie's Shimaο"	November 24, 2022	82.0	25
"Yujie's Dahua"	July 20, 2023	578.0	27
"Yujie's Gailianzi"	November 11, 2023	251.0	12

After achieving the initial scale and stable clicks ratio in 2023, "Dongbei Yujie" applies the matrix management theory to new media operations, gathering innovative knowledge and technologies and forming many functional departments[6], which gradually expands more than 9 official accounts and an "all-star lineup" of "everyone is the protagonist". For example, in addition to sharing the daily interaction with "Dongbei Yujie", the account of "Yujie's Dahua" focuses on introducing its tofu shop, handcrafting and selling tofu through the local streets to the audience, which is intended to show the rural people's hard-working, down-to-earth and diligent virtues. Through the data analysis and algorithm push, the new media matrix will continue to be pushed to the audience who follow "Dongbei Yujie", deepening their comprehensive understanding of various protagonists.

3.4.2. Expanding Monetization Matrix

After accumulating enough attention, "Dongbei Yujie" uses on-live to achieve monetization of traffic, rather than inserting advertising endorsements one by one in the released videos. In the 107 sampled videos, only 5 are implanted with advertisements, belonging to categories such as apps, food, home furnishings and entrepreneurship. Her on-live sales emphasize the unity of quality controlling and account positioning, with endorsement products mostly agricultural, sideline and maternal and child products, further strengthening the label of the middle-aged women.

Table 8. Business accounts of "Dongbei Yujie" (as of February 14, 2024)

Account Name	Number of Fans (Thousand)	Number of Published Content (Piece)	Total "likes" (Thousand)
"Liaoning Yujie business official account"	741.0	32	5350.0
"Yujie (Goods store)"	482.0	2497	6179.0
"Yujie's selected good items"	434.0	22	2591.0
"Yujie's selected good things"	317.0	209	411.0
"Yujie's live return selection"	217.0	354	2225.0
"Yujie's selected good Items (Authorized Store)"	191.0	27	1851.0
"Yujie's live exciting replay"	82.0	192	160.0

As shown in Table 8, the "Dongbei Yujie" team has set up 7 commercial sub-accounts: the "Liaoning Yujie business official account" established in February 2023 is used to connect and release endorsement activities and intersperse titbit to increase the exposure of team members. The "Yujie's live return selection" and "Yujie's live exciting replay" accounts are responsible for screening exciting segments and high-quality products for sales, and then completing the secondary production of live content. The "Yujie's selected good items" and other good product category accounts summarize on-live products, making it convenient for consumers to search and purchase targeted products.

3.4.3. Co-Creative Topic Selection and Creation

To retain the existing click ratio and achieve traffic sharing, Douyin created a "co-creation" mode for video publishers and "Dongbei Yujie" followed the trend. On the one hand, by using signs such as food to represent and interact with Northeastern villagers such as "Chengye", "Fu Niuniu" and "Yibo", user groups can form regional identity and carry out 1+1>2 communication effects. On the other hand, she internalizes hot topics such as customs and festivals into contemporary co-created materials, such as collaborating with celebrities such as Du Haitao, Zhao Liying, Lei Jiayin and bloggers such as "B Tai" on the eve of the Chinese New Year in 2024, continuously releasing 8 videos highlighting folk customs such as killing the pig, the oil refining and going to the big local market. The "likes" and other effects data continuously increase, empowering cultural communication and tourism development.

3.4.4. Stably Rising Data Transmission

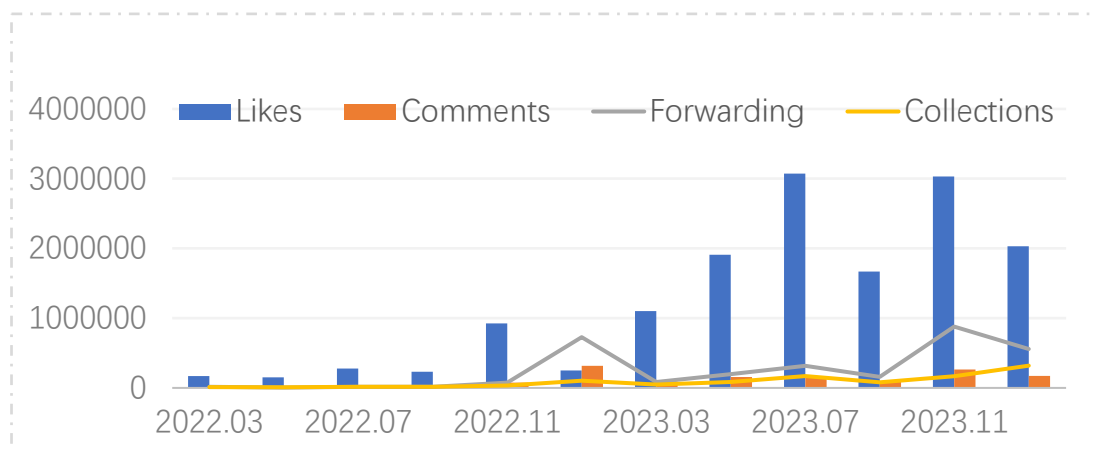


Fig 2. The maximum value of "Dongbei Yujie" to "likes", comments, forwarding and collections

As shown in Figure 2, since the account establishment two years ago, the maximum value of "Dongbei Yujie"'s "likes", comments, forwarding, collections and other data has shown a steady growth trend in regular fluctuations. Especially after May 2023, with the support of team matrix, business matrix and content co-creation, "Dongbei Yujie" continuously optimizes content production and finds novel scenes and events such as catching toads in the toad pond and controlling sticky Xiaomi on the 8th day of the 12th lunar month, which constantly captures audiences' interest and promotes the popular topic productions.

4. Limitations and Inspirations of Rural Videos

4.1. Limitations

4.1.1. Content Creation

Rural theme We media accounts have grown rapidly, but there are common situations such as narrative convergence and single material, as is the case with "Dongbei Yujie". Especially, the

narrative process of themes such as team collaborative cooking is fixed, solidifying personal style, or the lack of diverse creativity leads to a decline in audience interest, affecting the stickiness of fans.

4.1.2. Interactive Dissemination

Table 9. The number of comments of "Dongbei Yujie"

Number of Comments (Thousand)	Frequency (Piece)	Percent(%)
<10	31	29.0
10-100	14	13.0
>100	62	58.0
Total	107	100.0

The interaction between producers and audiences of We Media content is not only the key to maintaining the relationship between transmission and receiving, but also a means to improve the communication effect. As shown in Table 9, more than half of the sample videos of "Dongbei Yujie" have as many as 100,000 comments, which confirms the audience's love for the account and enthusiasm for interactive creation. However, Yu Jie's interaction can only be reflected in the enthusiastic shouts at the end of the video, with few replies, and it is relatively weak in maintaining feelings and co-creating communication and receiving.

4.1.3. Matrix Operation

The matrix layout and commercial operation are advanced in rural short video accounts. According to the data, each account has developed healthily, but there are also problems such as uneven content quality, too many dazzling quantities, unequal resource allocation and follow-up development, which restrict the overall image and operational efficiency.

4.2. Inspirations

Industrial prosperity is the key point. Government should steer policies, workers fulfill their roles, and media platforms offer support. Local governments should cultivate industries tailored to their conditions, upgrade agricultural sectors, and supply first-hand materials to new media to benefit farmers. Mainstream media's attention and reports, access to county-level financial media, and short video platform initiatives will boost traffic and train rural revitalization content creators, enhancing volume and quality, driving industry growth and profits.

Talent is crucial, combining local nurturing with external recruitment. Farmers, the backbone of rural short videos, face limitations in cultural level and understanding of professional production. Grassroots governments and organizations must tap into technological talents and youth potential, strengthening farmers' training in agricultural production, online marketing, and other skills. Digital transformation of government agencies is also key to ensuring officials' understanding and utilization of new media. Preferential policies and industrial advantages can attract professionals to rural entrepreneurship, collaborating with live-streaming farmers to enhance rural short video content and technological innovation.

Rural culture is the essence, requiring both content deepening and cultural inheritance. Leveraging Liaoning's geographical advantages, "Dongbei Yujie" explores rural landscapes and pastoral charm, conveying positivity and hometown sentiment, and showcasing a new rural face. Emphasizing the preservation of non-material cultural heritage through new media will broaden rural culture's appeal.

Organizations across levels are crucial links, requiring mature cooperation mechanisms and focus on local branding. By joining forces, including government, rural cooperatives, workers, and communication producers, we can innovate online and offline activities, creating rural brands like festivals and product fairs, to promote comprehensive rural revitalization.

Key players in rural revitalization, live-streaming farmers, should respond to policies and leverage short video platforms for rural development. Exploring rural cultural heritage, and integrating traditions and stories in videos showcases rural charm and passes on cultural values. Focusing on content innovation, learning advanced techniques, and improving video quality is essential. Boosting audience engagement and emotional connections requires interactive methods like online activities and giveaways, and responding promptly to comments and feedback.

5. Summary

A group of Live-streaming farmers represented by the "Dongbei Yujie" are born in time, adding the vitality of "being seen, being heard and being concerned" for rural revitalization. What's more, they have personalized and innovative development in the aspects of people setting, content production, audio-visual design, communication means and effects, but there are also limited difficulties such as content solidification, single interaction and matrix imbalance. Only by multi-party linkage, taking advantage of the trend, making good use of new media and breeding Live-streaming farmers can we promote the government, social organizations, all kinds of media and the vast number of rural workers to jointly serve and benefit from the great practice of rural revitalization.

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