

The Reshaping and Dissemination Mechanism of Traditional Culture by Digital Technology: A Case Study of Chinese Cultural Variety Shows

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Abstract. This study investigates the transformative impact of digital technologies on the presentation and dissemination of traditional Chinese culture through the lens of popular cultural TV shows. By analyzing programs such as *Chinese Poetry Conference* and *National Treasure*, we explore how digital technologies reshape cultural content, alter transmission mechanisms, and influence audience engagement with traditional culture. Employing a mixed-method approach, including case studies, content analysis, and audience surveys, this research reveals that digital technologies significantly enhance the accessibility and appeal of traditional culture, particularly among younger demographics. The study finds that augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and interactive platforms create immersive cultural experiences, fostering deeper cultural understanding and identification. However, it also highlights challenges in balancing technological innovation with cultural authenticity. This research contributes to the understanding of cultural heritage preservation in the digital age and offers practical insights for the cultural creative industry.

1 Introduction

In recent years, China has witnessed a surge in popularity of cultural TV shows that ingeniously blend traditional cultural elements with cutting-edge digital technologies. Programs like *Chinese Poetry Conference* (中国诗词大会), *The Story of China* (故事里的中国), *National Treasure* (国家宝藏), and *Everlasting Classics* (经典咏流传) have captured the attention of millions, especially among the younger generation. This phenomenon raises intriguing questions about the role of digital technology in reshaping and transmitting traditional culture in the contemporary era. This study aims to unravel the complex mechanisms through which digital technologies transform the presentation of traditional Chinese culture and alter its transmission pathways and shed light on the evolving landscape of cultural transmission in the digital age. The research is particularly timely given the increasing emphasis on cultural confidence and heritage preservation in China, coupled with the rapid advancement of digital technologies.

Chinese Poetry Conference is a cultural quiz show that tests contestants' knowledge of classical Chinese poetry. Questions cover various aspects of Chinese poetry, including recitation, interpretation, and historical context. The application of digital technology in the

program includes an interactive quiz system, an audience participation system, and visual aids. *The Story of China* is a documentary-style series that narrates significant events and stories from Chinese history. It combines historical reenactments with expert commentary and modern storytelling techniques. Incorporates advanced visual effects to recreate historical scenes and explain complex concepts. The application of digital technology in the program includes CGI reconstruction, animated timelines, interactive maps, and Virtual Studio green screen technology. *National Treasure* is a cultural program that showcases important artifacts from China's museums. It combines historical education with celebrity involvement and cutting-edge technology to make cultural relics more accessible and interesting to the general public. The application of digital technology in the program includes Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), Holographic Projections, and Digital Restoration. *Everlasting Classics* is a music performance show that aims to breathe new life into classical Chinese poetry by setting it to modern music. The application of digital technology in the program includes Digital Music Production, Interactive Lyrics Display, Audience Voting System, and Social Media Integration.



Fig. 1. Chinese Cultural Variety Shows Pictures (top left:*Chinese Poetry Conference*, top right:*The Story of China*, bottom left:*National Treasure*, bottom right:*Everlasting Classics*)

2 Literature Review

The intersection of digital technology and cultural heritage has become a growing area of scholarly interest, particularly regarding how digital tools are used to preserve and transmit cultural traditions. While much of the research has focused on the digitization of cultural artifacts (Cameron & Kenderdine, 2007), less attention has been given to how digital technologies reshape intangible cultural heritage, especially within media contexts like television. UNESCO's concept of "digital heritage" (2003) provides a useful framework for understanding how digital technologies can preserve and promote culture, yet its application to television programming, particularly in China, remains underexplored. While some studies have examined the popularity of cultural quiz shows in China (Zhang & Fung, 2014), these works have not fully addressed the technological aspects that enhance cultural transmission.

The theory of "remediation" (Bolter & Grusin, 1999) offers a useful lens for understanding how new media technologies transform older media forms. In the context of Chinese cultural variety shows, this concept can explain how traditional cultural content is reinterpreted through modern technologies like augmented reality and interactive features. Additionally, the concept of "participatory culture" (Jenkins, 2006) helps us understand how digital technologies foster active audience engagement. In Chinese cultural variety shows, interactive elements like live voting, social media integration, and audience-driven content allow viewers to participate actively, thus reshaping the viewing experience from passive consumption to interactive co-creation. This shift is particularly relevant as younger

audiences increasingly consume media through digital platforms (Bennett et al., 2009). International examples provide further insight into the global trend of digital preservation. Projects like the EU’s "Europeana" initiative and Japan's integration of digital technologies in preserving traditional arts, such as kabuki theater, show how digital tools can make cultural heritage more accessible while engaging younger, tech-savvy audiences (European Commission, 2018; Ishii, 2017).

Despite these insights, there is still a gap in understanding how digital technologies specifically reshape traditional culture in Chinese television programming.

3 Method

This study employs a mixed-method approach to comprehensively examine the impact of digital technologies on the reshaping and transmission of traditional Chinese culture through cultural TV shows. The research design incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methods, research methods included case studies, content analysis, audience surveys, and expert interviews.

This study conducted a case analysis of the four aforementioned Chinese renowned cultural television programs. These cases were selected based on their popularity, diversity of cultural content, and innovative use of digital technologies. Case study involves a detailed examination of the show's format, technological features, and cultural content presentation. An online survey is conducted with a sample of 1000 viewers of these cultural TV shows, stratified by age, education level, and viewing frequency. The survey aims to gauge audience perceptions of the shows' effectiveness in cultural transmission, the impact of digital elements on their engagement and understanding, and changes in their interest in traditional culture. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with 20 experts, including TV producers, cultural scholars, digital technology specialists, and policymakers in the field of cultural preservation. These interviews provide insights into the production processes, technological challenges, and cultural considerations involved in creating these shows.

4 Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the multifaceted role of digital technologies in the reshaping of traditional Chinese culture through popular television programming. The analysis reveals several crucial themes that contribute to our understanding of how digital tools influence both the engagement with and transmission of cultural heritage.

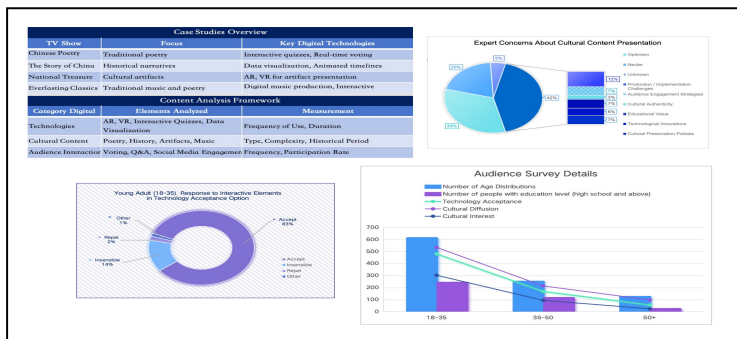


Fig. 2. Study Data Visualizations

4.1 Enhanced Engagement through Immersive Technologies

The integration of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) in programs such as National Treasure has proven to significantly enhance audience engagement with cultural artifacts. Survey data indicates that 84% of viewers report a heightened appreciation for historical relics when presented through these immersive technologies. This suggests that AR and VR provide an effective means of bridging the temporal and spatial divide that often separates modern audiences from traditional culture. The long-term impact of such technologies could lead to a more sustained public interest in cultural heritage and an enduring transformation in how cultural narratives are consumed. Furthermore, A strong correlation between interactive features and increased retention of cultural knowledge, 83% of viewers aged 18-35 reported that the interactive elements motivated them to further explore traditional poetry outside the context of the show.

4.2 Challenges of Oversimplification and Generational Differences in Reception

While digital technologies undoubtedly enhance engagement with traditional culture, they also raise concerns about the oversimplification of complex cultural concepts. More than 40% of cultural experts interviewed for this study expressed concern that the demand for entertainment-driven content may result in the trivialization of cultural knowledge. These concerns emphasize the need for a balanced approach that preserves the integrity of cultural narratives while adapting them to the entertainment and educational needs of contemporary audiences. This survey findings reveal a generational divide in how audiences respond to digitally enhanced cultural content. Younger viewers (under 35) tend to engage more actively with technologically innovative formats.

4.3 Redefining Cultural Transmission in the Digital Age

The success of these shows in attracting younger audiences suggests a fundamental shift in the mechanisms of cultural transmission. Traditional top-down models of cultural education are increasingly being supplemented. It is crucial to explore the long-term impact of rapidly advancing technologies on the preservation and transmission of culture. Future research should focus on understanding how technologies like AR, VR, and AI can be integrated into cultural preservation efforts, ensuring that they contribute to both the safeguarding of cultural heritage and its evolution in the digital age. Additionally, the exploration of how digital tools can be used to preserve intangible cultural heritage, such as oral traditions, rituals, and customs, remains an area of significant potential.

4.4 Economic 、 Soft Power Implications and Enhancing Global Soft Power through Digital Cultural Initiatives

Beyond cultural significance, these programs have become key elements of China's broader soft power strategy. By blending advanced digital technologies with traditional cultural narratives, they showcase China's technological capabilities while promoting its cultural heritage on the global stage. The global popularity of these shows highlights the potential of digital cultural initiatives to enhance national influence and foster cultural exchange. Future research could examine how digital cultural projects contribute to the enhancement of soft power, offering a model for other nations seeking to leverage digital technologies in their cultural diplomacy efforts. As traditional cultural forms increasingly intersect with cutting-edge technologies, countries can utilize digital platforms to promote their cultural values

and heritage worldwide. In this regard, future research could investigate the efficacy of digital cultural exports in fostering international cultural exchange, enhancing national prestige, and strengthening diplomatic ties. By exploring the global reach of digitally enhanced cultural content, this line of inquiry could offer valuable insights into how digital media can be used to amplify a nation's cultural influence and contribute to its soft power strategy.

5 Conclusion

This study demonstrate that digital technologies are fundamentally reshaping the presentation and transmission of traditional Chinese culture through the medium of popular TV shows. The integration of AR, VR, interactive platforms, and innovative storytelling techniques has created new pathways for cultural engagement. These technological innovations not only enhance the accessibility and appeal of traditional culture but also foster a more participatory and immersive cultural experience, points to their potential as catalysts for broader cultural revival movements. However, this digital transformation of cultural transmission is not without challenges. While digital technologies offer powerful tools for reimagining traditional culture for contemporary audiences, their application must be guided by a deep respect for cultural integrity and a nuanced understanding of the complexities of cultural heritage.

Looking ahead, further research is needed to explore the long-term impact of these digitally enhanced cultural experiences on cultural preservation and national identity formation. Additionally, comparative studies with similar phenomena in other cultural contexts could provide valuable insights into global trends in digital cultural transmission. As China continues to navigate its path between tradition and modernity, these technology-enhanced cultural TV shows represent a promising model for cultural transmission in the digital age, offering valuable lessons for cultural preservationists and media innovators worldwide.

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