

Short Video Creation for Dissemination of Guangxi Zhuang Ethnic Clothing Culture in the Context of Self-Media

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Abstract. With the development of the digital economy, the way cultural products are made and used by self-media has also changed. Short videos are short in length and have been popular in recent years, so now they are also being used to promote intangible cultural heritage and ethnic culture. Guangxi Zhuang ethnic clothing culture is a characteristic part of China's rich multi-ethnic culture and carries the accumulated wisdom, aesthetic sense and community identity of the Zhuang people over centuries. However, the current spread still faces some problems: Traditional transmission channels are geographically limited, younger generations have lost interest in traditional culture, there is a risk of losing the skills of craft inheritors, and the self-media environment contains many low-quality short videos with little cultural content. Based on the background information obtained from studies of traditional culture, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews have been conducted over the past few years to trace the development of Zhuang ethnic clothing culture from 1949 to the present; based on this, the distribution situation of top platform short-video content has been evaluated, problems in the content structure have been identified, and data-driven plans for new short-video creation for different consumer groups have finally been put forward. Based on the above analysis, under proper direction and a systematic plan for creative concepts, content targeting, promotion on various platforms, etc., short videos can be employed as main means to promote culture. This paper aims to provide both theoretical and practical support for the inheritance of living heritage in ethnic clothing culture in the era of self-media.

Keywords: Guangxi Zhuang ethnic clothing culture, short video creation, self-media dissemination, intangible cultural heritage, content creation strategy.

1. Introduction

The spread of digital media technology and the development of self-media ecosystems have fundamentally changed the environment of cultural communication in modern China. Among all the types of digital media, short videos are usually between 15 seconds and three minutes in length, and they have been very popular with all ages as a way for ordinary people to enjoy culture, entertainment and local information. Platforms such as Douyin (TikTok), Kuaishou, and WeChat Video Accounts have jointly established themselves as the main platforms for cultural spread and are now offering new chances for promoting and transmitting the living culture of ethnic minorities, which has historically been restricted in scope and has only been known by a small number of people [1].

Guangxi Zhuang ethnic clothing culture is one of the most characteristic cultural symbols of the large Zhuang ethnic group in China. The Zhuang people's population of over 18 million is concentrated in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, and over the centuries, they have developed a rich system of textile arts, such as Zhuang brocade (Zhuangjin), detailed embroidery, pleated skirt construction and symbolic pattern systems that contain cosmological beliefs, social status and community identity. Each component of the geometric patterns in Zhuang brocade and the various styles of headdresses among different sub-regional groups are also a way for Zhuang culture to transmit memory that cannot be captured in words or pictures [2].

However, the cultural life of this tradition has been gradually weakening. Current documentation shows that some exquisite production techniques are at risk of being lost due to a shortage of young artisans who can learn the skills for Zhuang brocade weaving and garment construction. Urbanisation has reduced people's daily wear of ethnic costumes, and with the influence of Western fashion, the aesthetic concepts of young people have changed in ways that are distant from tradition. The distance

between the cultural depth of Zhuang ethnic clothing heritage and its promotion in the public sphere through digital media is quite significant; most short video works only display the costumes superficially and lack in-depth cultural explanations [3].

Based on the above problem, this paper will study the history of Guangxi Zhuang ethnic clothing culture from 1949 to the present, analyze the current situation of short-video dissemination on major self-media platforms, find continuous creative deficiencies in the existing content, and develop an audience-oriented content creation strategy. Sections II and III of this paper will present the understanding of Zhuang clothing culture by the audience and their experience of the dissemination of short videos, respectively; semi-structured interviews have also been conducted with practitioners, such as inheritors, production teams and content creators, and through the combination of historical analysis, empirical research on audience behaviour and practitioners' insights, it is hoped that this paper will provide a systematic and practical framework for the creation of short videos that aligns with cultural authenticity and expands communication.

2. Historical Development of Guangxi Zhuang Ethnic Clothing Culture (1949–Present)

2.1 Social Background in Different Historical Periods

The development of Guangxi Zhuang ethnic clothing culture over the past seven decades cannot be studied in isolation from the changes in politics, the economy and society that have occurred in China since 1949. Four broad periods of history can be divided into, and each is different from the others in terms of social conditions that have affected the production, display and symbolism of Zhuang ethnic clothing.

Between 1949 and the late 1970s, the political environment of the early People's Republic led to some conflicts in the development of ethnic minority culture. On the one hand, the new government has introduced ethnic equality and cultural rights for ethnic minorities, and in 1958, it established the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region to formally acknowledge the Zhuang people's culture. At the same time, the ideological campaign of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) did not directly prohibit ethnic differences, but it interrupted the traditional informal inheritance channels of clothing knowledge among different generations. Weavers and embroiderers felt that their craft had been reduced in value, and in some circumstances, wearing the distinctive ethnic clothes was even discouraged due to the need for revolutionary uniformity.

From the late 1970s to the 1990s, during the period of reform and opening up, there was a strong resurgence and vitality in Zhuang clothing culture. Economic opening up led to the revival of folk craft markets, and with the development of tourism, external attention was once again drawn to ethnic aesthetics; at the same time, state cultural policies have increasingly promoted the inheritance and protection of ethnic minority culture. Zhuang brocade enterprises have been started in many counties, and the Zhuang 'March Third' cultural festival has created new situations for displaying traditional clothing. At this time, researchers began to document the clothes of different places and started to organise them in some ways [4].

From 2000 to about 2015, the integration of Zhuang clothing culture into the commercial and tourism sectors began to increase, and at the same time, people were starting to feel the risks brought by rapid modernisation. Research on the system of Zhuang clothing has been conducted by scholars, who have mapped the genealogical characteristics and historical origins of traditional garments in various dialect areas. At the same time, with the spread of the Internet, new ways for informal cultural transmission have begun to appear; however, these are still far from ideal.

Since about 2015, the appearance of mobile short video platforms has ushered in what researchers call the self-media era; it is a period where content creation has been democratised and daily life has been flooded with user-generated cultural materials. This change is both a great opportunity and a serious problem for Zhuang clothing culture: on the one hand, there is an unprecedented chance to

spread to all corners of the country and the world; on the other, we must avoid losing the depth, accuracy and cultural heritage of Zhuang clothing in the rush for popularity.

2.2 Style Characteristics and Cultural Connotations of Zhuang Costumes in Various Periods

Stylistically, the ethnic costumes of the Zhuang people in Guangxi have changed over time and also show the impact of cultural inheritance. Before the reform, traditional clothing in different areas had distinct characteristics: The northern part of Guangxi was worn dark blue indigo-dyed cotton clothes with beautiful collars and cuffs embroidered, and the southern coastal area had lighter fabric and rich woven patterns on the front. Pleated skirts and embroidered shoes are not only beautiful objects but also carry social messages that inform people of one's marital status, area of residence and other factors.

Zhuang brocade is the finest work of Zhuang textile art. Zhuang brocade is made using a special loom and is passed down through apprenticeship over many generations; it has a large number of intricate geometric patterns, such as frog patterns, flower grids, and directional wave patterns, each carrying symbolic meanings such as fertility, protection and cosmic order.⁷ Traditional brocade often uses rich red, black and yellow in natural cotton; it has formed its own visual language apart from that of nearby ethnic groups. Table 1 is a brief introduction to the main cultural features of Guangxi Zhuang ethnic costumes and how to present them in short videos.

Table 1. Cultural Elements of Guangxi Zhuang Ethnic Costumes and Short Video Visual Presentation Methods

Cultural Element	Historical/Symbolic Significance	Short Video Presentation Strategy
Zhuang Brocade (Zhuangjin) Patterns	Geometric motifs encoding cosmological beliefs, fertility, and communal protection; each pattern system associated with specific sub-regional tradition	Extreme close-up cinematography with voiceover explanation of symbolic meaning; split-screen comparisons of pattern variants
Embroidered Collar and Cuff Details	Embroidery density and motif selection signals social status, regional identity, and life-stage occasion	Time-lapse or slow-motion footage of embroidery process combined with cultural narrator commentary
Pleated Skirt Construction	Pleating technique varies by sub-group; functional design adapted to agricultural labor while preserving aesthetic convention	Demonstration video showing construction alongside wearable fashion styling for contemporary audiences
Color System and Dye Practices	Indigo and other plant-based dyes associated with specific ceremonial contexts; color combinations carry identity signifiers	Color palette visualization overlaid on garment images; comparison with contemporary synthetic color equivalents
Headdress Forms	Sub-regional and age-specific headdress styles encode identity information readable within Zhuang community	Documentary-style profile of headdress artisan with historical context narrative

From the 1980s, with the start of commercialisation, synthetic fibres and simplified weaving methods were introduced to lower production costs but reduced the original quality of materials. Contemporary Zhuang costumes for performance and festival use are often simplified compared to historical clothing; they have been standardized for mass production and stage performance rather than to meet the daily needs of the people. Researchers have observed that in the process of stylisation, there is a risk of breaking the original connections among components of the costume and their rich cultural connotations, thus making the Zhuang ethnic costume an emblem of ethnic identity that cannot convey the numerous cosmological and social ideas contained in traditional forms. Figure 1 shows the four stages of the development of Guangxi Zhuang ethnic clothing culture from 1949 to the present [5].

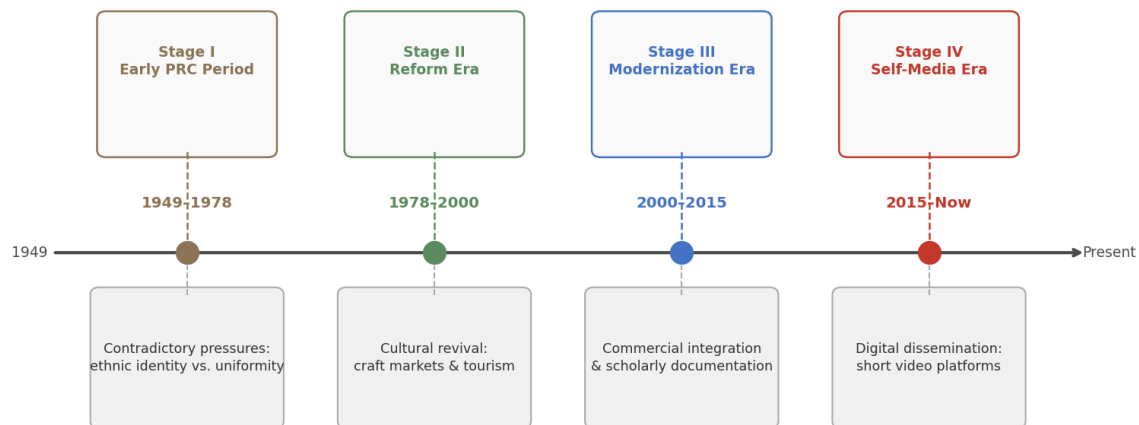


Figure 1. Development Stages of Guangxi Zhuang Ethnic Clothing Culture (1949-Present)

3. Current Status of Short Video Dissemination of Guangxi Zhuang Clothing Culture

3.1 Distribution of Communication Platforms

Currently, the three main platforms of the short video ecosystem in China are Douyin, Kuaishou and WeChat Video Accounts; together, they make up a large proportion of the total consumption of short videos. These platforms have gradually formed a new force in the spread of culture, and through their algorithm-based recommendation systems, all kinds of cultural content can be presented to users based on their behaviour and location data. Creators who focus on the culture of Guangxi Zhuang ethnic clothing have attracted the attention of people outside of Guangxi due to the huge number of users on Douyin, and Kuaishou has shown an upward trend in the proportion of content created by actual inheritors and practitioners, especially in rural areas and other peripheral regions [6]. WeChat Video Accounts are connected to the social relationship graph of WeChat and have drawn content with strong interpersonal sharing behaviour; thus, they are suitable for the community construction of specialised cultural topics.

As shown in Section II, Item 2 of the questionnaire distributed in this study, respondents were asked how they learn about Guangxi Zhuang clothing culture. The results show that the largest proportion of people aged 19-35 reported being influenced by short-video platforms, significantly more than museums, books and social media posts. Thus, it can be concluded that short video platforms have become the main source of cultural knowledge for young people, and therefore, a content strategy at the platform level is required to promote the inheritance and inheritance of Zhuang clothing culture.

3.2 Analysis of Existing Short Video Content

A systematic review of the current short-video content related to Guangxi Zhuang ethnic clothing shows that it is concentrated in a few kinds. Costume showcase videos are the most popular type of observed content; they simply present clothes and combinations of model outfits. Cultural interpretation videos try to show the history or symbolic meaning of some items in clothing; they are relatively rare and are not promoted by the algorithm much because of their long average length and lower immediate entertainment value. Production technique videos that show the making process of weaving, embroidery and other clothes are a relatively new kind of content.

Zhuang brocade weaving is a manual operation that requires selecting threads, preparing looms, arranging patterns, etc., and it is not suitable for the sub-three-minute format the platform is used to; therefore, the camera operators need good technical skills to obtain good material. Questionnaire survey (Section III, Item 4) listed the shortcomings of existing short videos, and among them, "superficial content, lacking cultural depth" was chosen most frequently, and "monotonous subject

matter, lacking innovation" and "inaccurate interpretation, misleading the audience" were also relatively common. Figure 2 shows the distribution of audience preferences for different types of short video content on Guangxi Zhuang ethnic clothing according to the survey in Section III of the questionnaire.

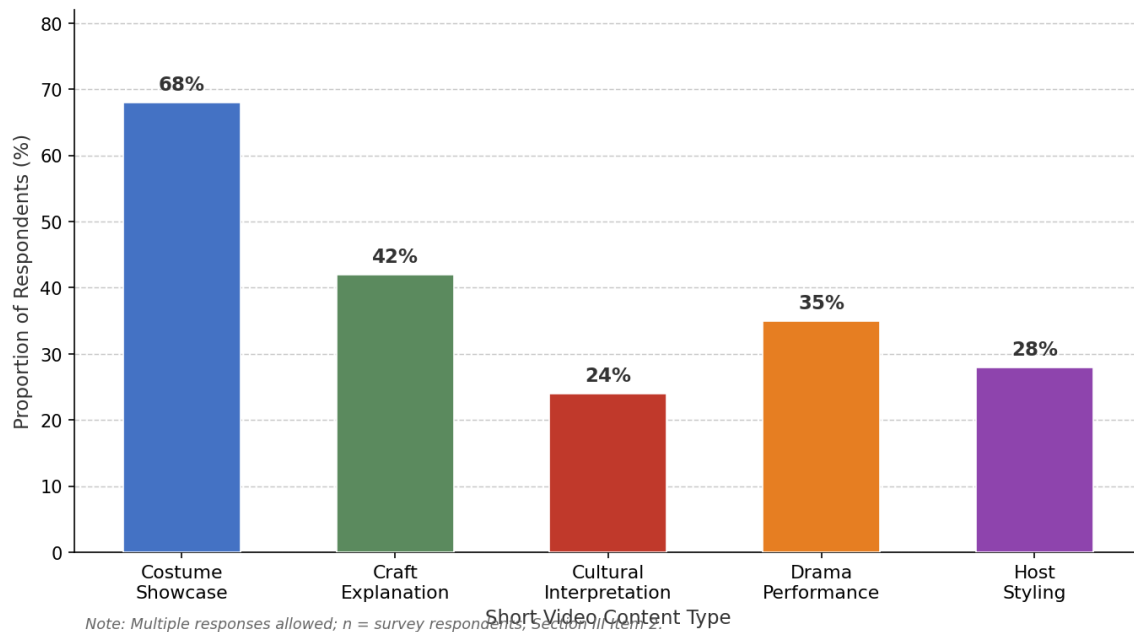


Figure 2. Audience Preferences for Guangxi Zhuang Clothing Short Video Content Types (Survey, Section III)

3.3 Preliminary Observation of Communication Effects

Based on the first observation of engagement indicators for Guangxi Zhuang clothing short videos, reach and depth are significantly different. High-reach videos often show the visual effects of costume exhibitions or dramatic performances of ethnic costumes that are popular in terms of aesthetics and entertainment according to the algorithm [7]. As shown in the survey data in Section III (Item 7), although most respondents believe that short videos can promote the culture of the Zhuang people's clothing, a relatively large number of them think that the actual communication effect is 'average' or lower; that is to say, there is a gap between visibility and true cultural understanding.

The lack of wide dissemination and profound understanding for the inheritance of culture is also due to the scattered consumption patterns of short videos: most users only view a few videos from a certain creator and do not engage in continuous learning through accumulated knowledge from multiple videos. The Structure of short videos is limited; therefore, in terms of content design, one needs to intentionally arrange the sequence, narrative support and topic grouping of the work.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Qualitative Research Methods

The structure of this paper is divided into the following sections: Literature review, questionnaire survey, semi-structured interview and case study. Given the difficulty of the research problem, both the structure of cultural heritage systems and how they are used in society by means of media will be studied using qualitative methods. Qualitatively, we can learn about the detailed ideas and circumstances that are often overlooked in quantitative research.

4.2 Data Collection Tools

The two principal goals of the research and the corresponding collection instruments in this paper were established: the public's perception of Guangxi Zhuang ethnic group clothing culture and the

experiences of the public after being exposed to this culture via short videos. The four parts of the questionnaire were as follows: (I) Respondent's basic information; (II) Survey on cognition of Guangxi Zhuang ethnic clothing culture; (III) Survey on dissemination of Guangxi Zhuang ethnic costume culture via short videos; (IV) Suggestions for short video creation. The tool was spread through self-media, and people from all over the country were contacted to obtain a large number of participants.

A semi-structured interview guide was also developed to add some details that could not be included in the questionnaire. The four groups of interviewees are: (1) Experts in Zhuang costume design and inheritance, such as artists, craft masters, registered inheritors, etc.; (2) Short-video production teams that have directly filmed ethnic culture programs; (3) Short-video content creators with a large audience for Zhuang costume content; and (4) Domestic and foreign tourists who have experienced Zhuang clothing culture in person or online.

4.3 Questionnaire Survey Design: Sections II and III

Section II of the questionnaire studied audience familiarity and conceptual knowledge of Guangxi Zhuang ethnic clothing culture. The first set of indicators is a measure of how well people know Zhuang clothing, its production technology, history and inheritance, etc.; this will be used as a reference to determine how far short-video content can narrow the cultural gap. Section III: Targeted Short Video Consumption Behaviour - Frequency of exposure to Zhuang clothing short videos, type of content preference, perceived quality of current content, willingness to engage (share, like, comment) and suggestions for improvement. Sections II and III together present different aspects of the demand side of the cultural communication problem: what audiences currently know, what they are currently exposed to through existing short video content, and the difference between the two.

4.4 Interview Data Collection and Analysis

Semi-structured interviews were held with the people at the production and spread ends to collect some qualitative materials. According to the interview data from inheritors and craft experts, there is a conflict between the communication requirements of short videos (brevity, visual dynamism, immediate emotional appeal) and the complexity of Zhuang clothing knowledge; that is to say, contextual explanations needed for understanding cannot be omitted in short forms without distortion. The production team found that capturing the detailed weaving process is technically difficult, and they have been unable to find a performer willing to show off their skill on camera. Data from interviews with content creators show that they are uncertain how to balance the need for entertainment with the accuracy of culture; many creators have reduced or removed technically demanding elements due to concerns that they will not be popular among viewers.

4.5 Data Processing and Analysis

The standard method for processing and analysing the categorical data was employed to calculate the frequency distribution of each item and cross-tabulate to find associations between the demographic variables—age group, area of residence, frequency of contact with Zhuang clothing materials—and the substantive answers. Analysis showed that there were significant differences in all respects in the age group of general knowledge about Zhuang ethnic clothing culture and interest in short video content. The oldest group of respondents was 36-45 years old, and among the younger group, those aged 19-25 preferred dramatic stories and aesthetic displays more.

Four groups of practitioners were interviewed, and then thematic coding was employed to extract general characteristics. The main problems are as follows: (1) Existing short video content lacks sufficient representational depth; (2) There is no systematic production guideline for cultural content; (3) There is a contradiction between the algorithmic logic of platforms and the goals of cultural communication; and (4) The demand for content that can combine entertainment value with authentic cultural inheritance has not been met. The above topics formed the foundation of the construction of the content creation strategy framework in Section 6.

5. Problems in Short Video Dissemination of Zhuang Clothing Culture

5.1 Insufficient Depth of Cultural Communication

The first and most prominent structural problem of the current spread of Guangxi Zhuang ethnic clothing culture on short video platforms is a lack of cultural depth. Currently, most of the published works focus only on the surface appearance and fashion styling of the garments and performances, ignoring the deeper culture contained in the clothes [8]. Zhuang clothing is not only for showing off; there are specific geometric patterns and colours in different clothes, as well as other designs, that all have a rich culture and require people to learn how to understand them.

The commercial incentive system of the short-video platform has made the problem more severe, and now it is favoured to create content with strong visual effects, humour and emotional appeal rather than deep ideas. With the development of algorithm-based distribution, creators have felt pressure to produce costume showcase content and have had to reduce in-depth cultural explanations, although they are well-versed in such knowledge. As a result, there is a systematic market failure in which the form most suitable for the dissemination of mass culture systematically fails to perform the function of cultural inheritance.

5.2 Lack of Systematic Creative Methods

The second problem that has been discovered in the research is that there is no systematic creative method for short-video creators who work in the field of Zhuang ethnic clothing culture. Short video creation in this area is not organized according to the conventional system of professional documentary filmmaking; instead, creators' own unique ways of doing things have developed out of necessity and are not easy to spread widely or regulate for quality control. As a result, the quality of existing works varies greatly, cultural interpretations often contain errors, and there is no unified theme across the collection of these videos.

There is no system for creative methods, and thus there is a risk of cultural misrepresentation. Due to the lack of a standard system to verify the accuracy of the cultural information, there has been no coordination with the well-known inheritors of Zhuang culture to confirm the historical origins and symbols of Zhuang clothing; thus, individual creators may spread inaccuracies that will be endorsed by the recommendation algorithm and become part of the public's understanding of Zhuang culture. The risk that culturally inaccurate content will reach a large number of people is not only a quality issue but also a significant threat to the cultural heritage itself.

6. Content Creation Strategy for Short Videos on Guangxi Zhuang Clothing Culture

6.1 Creative Approaches Based on Case Analysis

Based on the analysis of high-performing short video content for Zhuang ethnic clothing culture and practitioner interviews, it has been determined that two main creative directions can be adopted based on different audiences and communication goals. The first is the 'cultural deepening' way, which focuses on the substance of the culture rather than entertainment and is best suited to attract people who are motivated by culture and already have an interest in ethnic heritage when entering the content ecosystem. Therefore, this way of doing things emphasizes the background of history, technical details and the view of practitioners; it is used primarily to demonstrate and provide evidence for claims rather than to create independent aesthetic pleasure through short videos.

The second way is called 'mass adaptation'; it is adjusted to suit the audience's entertainment needs and has been spread widely to more people who have never learned about Zhuang culture before. Generally speaking, the style of mass adaptation has large-scale design that is rich in narrative power; it follows the aesthetic norms of major platforms and adds cultural colour, but adding colour is not its primary reason. The two ways should not be regarded as opposed; a large number of archives can

be used to achieve mass adaptation for the first stage, attracting the public; then, cultural-enriching methods can be applied to the follow-up content to incentivize continued participation.

6.2 Integration of Cultural Connotation and Short Video Form

Based on the analysis of cases and interviews with practitioners, three main ways have been developed to integrate cultural connotations with the short-video format. The first way is to use an extreme close-up shot and voiceover narration to show some of the small features of Zhuang textiles that people don't know about. Close-up shots of Zhuang brocade patterns, embroidery stitches or details in garment construction can be combined with narrative explanations of the cultural symbolism they contain to form an interesting combination of visuals and words that can convey the cultural depth of Zhuang culture while also having appeal as images [9].

The second way is to have a structured sequence of stories, and the individual short videos are not independent works but rather parts of a whole. Series organisation can be used to explore the cultural topics in depth, and over several episodes, people can be introduced to them one by one, just as in an educational podcast. This way overcomes the intrinsic depth constraint of individual short videos and still has the convenience of the short video format [10]. The third way of integration is dramatised narration; that is to say, a fictional or semi-fictional story is created in which Zhuang clothing is a cultural symbol rather than the object of the explanation itself. Drama formats can help the cultural content be perceived by the audience in an emotional way and remembered longer.

6.3 Audience-Oriented Content Creation Strategy

To design a good content-creation plan for Guangxi Zhuang ethnic group clothing culture, one should first study its audience to differentiate the content plan and select appropriate distribution platforms and spread methods accordingly. According to the questionnaire survey (Section III), there are many groups of users with different demands for content. Most of the audience is more interested in the aesthetic aspects of Zhuang costumes and, as such, prefers well-produced exhibition materials with exquisite filming and music. Audience members interested in culture and ethnicity expect richness in thought, thus tending to be interested in materials that are both useful and have a story. The general public will pay more attention to Zhuang clothing content if it is visually attractive or emotionally touching, so a combination of entertainment and cultural education in the hybrid format is likely to become popular.

In addition, a plan will also be put forward to spread it through various channels. Topic Linkage: to expand the reach of content beyond the original follower group, it is necessary to associate Zhuang clothing information with popular topics and hashtag communities. Cultural Q&A in the comment area, viewer challenges and collaborative content with other creators have formed an interested group that can continue to support the development of the audience. Accurate Positioning: Create a distinct and obvious content identity for Zhuang clothing culture accounts, which is separate from general fashion and travel content, so it can be more easily recognised by algorithms and attract users interested in culture.

Figure 3 is the short video content creation framework that has been established according to the research above, which integrates creative ideas, combination techniques and audience focus to create an actual production workflow for creators of content about Guangxi Zhuang ethnic clothing culture.

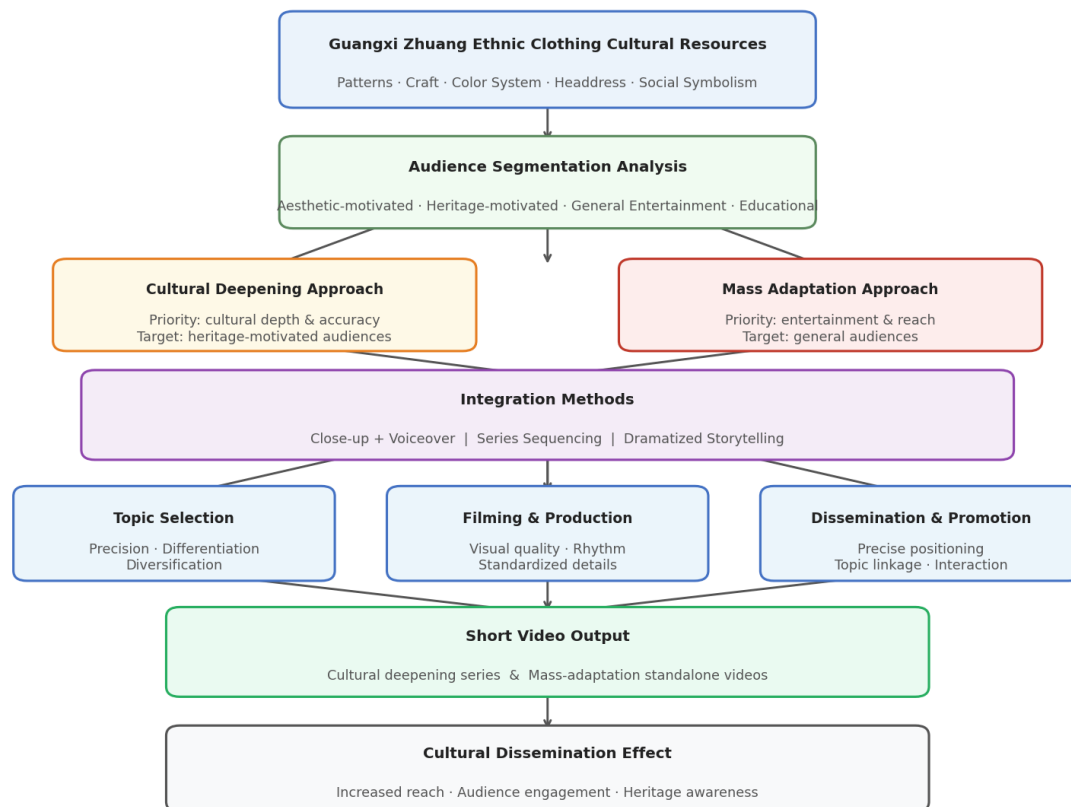


Figure 3. Short Video Content Creation Framework for Guangxi Zhuang Ethnic Clothing Culture

The production principles framework that arises from the above analysis can be divided into three operational dimensions. In terms of the topic selection dimension, creators should apply the principles of precision (select topics that are in line with their own knowledge and expectations of the audience), differentiation (make their content stand out from existing Zhuang clothing video archives), and diversification (organise thematically according to the categories of cultural elements in Table 1 to build a comprehensive system of understanding over time). In terms of filming and production, the basic professional standard is to have excellent visual quality; at the same time, adapt the pace according to the difficulty of the content and the attention curve of the audience, and use standardised detail presentation to ensure the accuracy and consistency of cultural information. For dissemination and promotion, the three rules are: to be specific about the location and topic linkage; there should be interactive operations to maximise the initial spread and continuous participation of the community.

7. Conclusion

In this paper, I have conducted research on the history and development of ethnic clothing culture in Guangxi from 1949 to the present, analyzed the current situation of short-video spread on major self-media platforms, identified the main creative shortcomings in existing content, and developed a target-group-oriented content creation strategy based on empirical surveys and semi-structured interviews. The four stages of the development of Zhuang clothing culture - the early People's Republic of China period, the Reform and Opening-up era, the modernisation challenge period, and the self-media era - can provide a good basis for research on both the cultural resources available for dissemination via short videos and the structural deficiencies that need to be addressed through a systematic creative method.

At present, the main problem is that although short-video platforms have the potential for the propagation and inheritance of living culture of the Zhuang ethnic group in Guangxi, many creators have not yet made good use of this platform due to deficiencies in creation mode, content richness and other factors. The two ways of creation are to deepen culture and spread it widely; thus, new works will be both innovative and rooted in tradition. The three ways of integration are a close-up

with voiceover, a series of sequences and dramatised narration, etc., and all can be applied to produce individual videos.

There are serious problems that have yet to be solved, such as the risk of losing the production skills of traditional craftspeople due to the weakened intergenerational transmission network. Short video content that systematically documents and explains the production techniques of weaving, embroidery, garment construction, etc., can serve as a form of digital heritage archiving to support the protection efforts for physical culture and promote active revitalisation. Cooperation among cultural heritage institutions, short-video platforms and creator communities has now established a good system to continuously improve the quality and cultural influence of short-video content on Zhuang clothing culture. The method used in this study is a combination of historical documentation, a questionnaire survey, semi-structured interview data and systematic case analysis to provide an applicable model for research on the spread of other ethnic minority cultural traditions in the face of the same problem of cultural erosion due to modernisation.

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