

# Decoding Rural Revitalization: A Four-Dimensional Analysis of Culinary Short Videos' Efficacy Through Multimodal Memory Engineering

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**Abstract:** This study endeavors to explore the intrinsic mechanisms through which "hometown flavors" in culinary short videos evoke cultural memory, foster emotional resonance, and sequentially drive interactive behaviors — revealing the underlying chain effects embedded within this dynamic process. Grounding itself in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theoretical model, this study integrates a multimodal analysis framework and the theory of interaction ritual chains. It then employs a structural equation model to empirically examine the four-stage transmission pathway: "hometown flavors engagement → cultural memory activation → emotional experience → interactive behavior. It is revealed that: (1) The multimodal symbol system constructs an embodied digital memory space through re-mediation technology, and activated cultural memory by involving the hometown flavors. (2) Once cultural memory is activated, it triggers emotional resonance. (3) The hometown engagement flavors drive purchase intention through a dual-mediation pathway. The innovatively constructed four-stage transmission model in this study provides a theoretical paradigm for the dissemination of rural cultural memory in the digital age. (4) Moreover, from the perspectives of enterprise platforms and video content creators, a digital practice paradigm is proposed: "S (symbolic stimulus)-O (embodied experience)-R (behavioral feedback)", thus reconstructing digital nostalgia.

**Keywords:** hometown flavors, cultural memory, chain mediation effect, behavioral intention

## 1. Introduction

The industrial revolution, while fostering significant material progress, has concurrently led to the disintegration of traditional cultural practices and the erosion of people's spiritual roots. Marcuse's concept of the "One-Dimensional Man" (Marcuse, 2014) [1] is vividly manifested in the "cultural limbo" experienced by 380 million mobile population[2]. Simultaneously, the rapid advancement of digital technologies has birthed a novel "screen-centric society". Paradoxically, despite its promise of seamless connectivity, this digital society has failed to alleviate modern-day anxieties. Instead, the #hometownflavors# trend on short-video platforms has served as a digital loom, reconstructing individuals' fragmented memories into a "digital enclave" of collective nostalgia. This technology-empowered memory reproduction serves as not only a compensatory mechanism for the loss of authenticity in the process of industrialization, but also a vital cognitive safeguard against cultural identity anxiety. However, the current body of research in this field fails to integrate different disciplines effectively, resulting in a fragmented understanding of this complex phenomenon. Specifically, communication studies predominantly focused on generating high traffic of short videos and their dissemination mechanisms. Economic research, on the other hand, is fixated on economic benefit indicators such as the GMV conversion rate. Meanwhile, sociology is largely confined within the framework of the urban-rural dual narrative. This disciplinary fragmentation has created two significant theoretical voids: first, how multimodal symbols activate individual neurocognition through multisensory synesthetic encoding; second, how the "emotional potential" generated by cultural memory activation crosses cognitive thresholds and translates into tangible "industrial momentum", such as e-commerce consumption and cultural tourism visits. Against this backdrop, this study develops an extended "Stimulus - Organism - Response" (SOR) chain transformation framework. Its core objective is to thoroughly explore the transition process: "multimodal symbol decoding - the activation of cultural memory - behavioral response". By delving into how digital technologies shape cultural memory and behavioral responses, we aim to propose innovative approaches for the preservation and inheritance of rural culture, as well as for the integrated development of urban and rural cultures.

## 2. The Evolution of Research Paradigms

### 2.1 The Systematic Construction of the Theoretical Framework

Some scholars have constructed a framework of rural cultural memory through the integration of theories from multiple

dimensions. Fan and Xie (2015) challenged conventional preservation paradigms by introducing a tripartite cyclic model of "cultural memory-display-gaze." Through empirical research on three villages in southwestern Shandong, they deconstructed the mutually constitutive dynamics "memory symbolization, themed exhibition, and gaze practices". The framework they established—"heritage activation model - local attachment cultivation mechanism - cultural carrier transformation strategy"—achieved theoretical convergence between cultural heritage conservation and tourism development from perspectives of both local communities and visitors [3]. Building on this, Lv's research team (2018–2020) advanced methodological innovations by introducing a dynamic framework (time - space - society) to decode the spatiotemporal evolution mechanism of cultural memory. Employing GIS spatial technology, they constructed a four - dimensional classification system—"livelihood and production - functional symbolism - social representation - spiritual consciousness"—to reveal the agglomeration characteristics and southwest-northeast expansion patterns of cultural memory spaces in Suzhou's Jinting Town during the Ming and Qing dynasties. The proposed dynamic mechanism model—"human-land relationship foundation, folk-custom and cultural ethos drive, clan inheritance assurance"—provides a quantitative research paradigm[4][5][6][7] for identifying rural cultural genes.

## 2.2 Interdisciplinary Breakthrough in Methodology

Interdisciplinary features are prominently manifested in researchers' methodological practices. Zhai et al. (2017) integrated Lefebvre's theory of the production of space into rural tourism research. Through a case study of Hongsha Village in Chengdu, they developed a tripartite analytical framework—"capital circulation, power negotiation, and symbolic alienation"—uncovering the underlying mechanism of capital accumulation that drives landscape amnesia. The proposed regeneration model, "ecological restoration, memory revival, and symbolic reconstruction," successfully bridges critical spatial theory with rural revitalization practices[8]. Li and colleagues (2022) innovatively integrate cultural memory theory into Actor-Network Theory (ANT) in their study of the Long March National Cultural Park. Their research revealed a tripartite catalytic mechanism—"identity formation - cultural conscientization - participatory agency"—through which collective memory operates. Focusing on the Suoqiao Ferry Crossing as a key node, they empirically demonstrated how the remediation of 'red memories' fosters community co-governance empowerment[9]. Notably, Zheng (2022) pioneered the application of digital twin technology to memory space studies, developing a reconstruction framework—"mnemonic localization-digital twinning"—that bridges physical-virtual spatial dynamics[10].

## 2.3 Theoretical Critique of Preservation and Practical Shifts

While recognizing the governance utility of cultural memory, scholars remain theoretically vigilant against its latent risks of alienation effects. He (2020) analyzed the pervasive "museification paradox" in heritage preservation, where institutional conservation unintentionally detaches memory spaces from their living social contexts[11]. Liu et al. (2024) further critiqued the growing phenomenon of "replica-ization," demonstrating how commercialized reconstruction practices fundamentally alter and dilute cultural DNA[12]. Scholars have proposed innovative solutions to address these preservation challenges. Lv et al. (2020) identified a "core-periphery ribbon" pattern in livelihood memoryscapes through a "spatial - cultural - market" framework, developing a "memory - to - empowerment" model[7]. Similarly, Li (2021) created a "ritual - to - therapy" model based on disaster-response wisdom, offering novel approaches for post-catastrophe rural memory activation[13].

## 2.4 Research Limitations and Future Directions

Despite significant advances, current research remains inadequate in addressing three critical dimensions: (1) insufficient examination of digital technology's role in memory reproduction processes; (2) predominant focus on singular cultural types, lacking a systematic framework for diverse memory carriers (e.g., oral traditions, folk arts); (3) inadequate evaluation systems for preservation strategies, especially for the dynamic relationship between memory space vitality and community engagement. Future studies should prioritize: digital humanities-spatial computing integration, multi-stakeholder governance innovation, and adaptive evaluation systems to bridge theoretical and practical divides.

# 3. Theoretical Framework and Research Hypotheses

## 3.1 Theoretical Framework

The SOR model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974)[14] posits a tripartite behavioral mechanism of human behavior: Stimulus (S) → Organism (O) → Response (R). Unlike behaviorism's "stimulus - response" paradigm, this framework emphasizes dual-processing mechanism of brain: prefrontal cortical cognition (rational evaluation) and amygdalar activation (emotional arousal)[15]. This model has proven particularly generative in consumer behavior and HCI research. Integrating multimodal discourse analysis, interaction ritual chain theory, and cultural memory theory with the SOR framework, this

study proposes a new "Multimodal Symbolic Transmission - Cultural Memory - Emotional Energy" framework. The core Pathway is: "Hometown Flavor" (S)→ "Cultural Memory Activation" (O1)→ "Emotional Resonance" (O2)→ "Behavioral Engagement" (R).

### 3.1.1 Multimodal symbolic cross-sensory activation (S)

Short video platforms reconstruct cultural representations of hometown flavors with a tripartite coding system (visual - auditory - textual). Visually, ingredient close-ups and ritual movements activate hippocampal episodic memory via temporal lobe processing (Conway, 2005)[16]. Auditory cues (dialects, cooking sounds) stimulate insular cortex responses through primary auditory pathways. Textual elements (titles, comments) enhance prefrontal semantic integration. This remediation process[17] utilizes hyperreal technologies (e.g., 4K macro lenses) to overcome digital disembodiment. For instance, Douyin's #HandmadeSausage videos simulate tactile experiences through stuffing close-ups, effectively triggering users' muscle memory recall.

### 3.1.2 Memory-Emotion Co-Transformation (O1→O2)

Jan Assmann's cultural memory theory states that sensory stimuli — such as the aroma of firewood-cooked rice or regional dialects (the "smoky hometown soundscape") — activate a distinct "mnemonic - sensory dual - processing mechanism". This involves enhanced functional connectivity between the hippocampus (memory consolidation) and insula (somatic integration) [18], facilitating automatic sensorimotor associations (e.g., kneading gestures ↔ kitchen smoke). The affective transformation occurs via two parallel pathways: (1) Hedonic Response: Dopaminergic release in the nucleus accumbens induces immediate gratification (e.g., salivation at smoked meat visuals). (2) Semiotic Reconstruction: Prefrontal-default mode network integration translates gustatory cues into cultural schemata (e.g., cured meat = familial bonding). This process culminates in a "mnemonic core complex" — a neural embedding of nostalgia. During recollection, the brain generates a multisensory hologram, simultaneously relieving episodic traces and their original somatic valence, thereby dynamically inscribing cultural identity within neurocognitive architecture.

### 3.1.3 Ritualized Practices and Compensatory Behavior Generation (R)

Collins' interaction ritual chain theory (2004)[19] posits dual neural pathways for behavioral conversion of emotional energy: (1) Limbic-striatal circuit mediates impulsive consumption (e.g., instant purchase of cured meat). (2) Prefrontal-basal ganglia loop sustains participatory engagement (e.g., recurrent workshop attendance), ritualizing cultural practices. In terms of compensation, it occurs through: (1) Material substitution (nostalgic product consumption). (2) Symbolic community-building (e.g., sharing videos captioned "My mom's method"). This behavioral transformation exhibits both biological adaptability and cultural constructiveness, embodying the dialectical unity between memory reproduction and emotional consumption in the digital era.

## 3.2 Research Hypotheses

The multimodal representation of hometown flavors in travel and culinary short videos reconstructs cultural memory through a tripartite symbolic system (visual, auditory, and textual), creating a digital "lieu de mémoire" [20]. Building on Assmann's cultural memory framework[21], these concrete sensory cues — from woodstove smoke to regional dialect exclamations — transcend the screen's disembodied nature to directly activate users' embodied memories. A representative example emerges in Douyin's #HandmadeSausage videos: close-up shots of sausage stuffing coupled with crackling firewood sounds collectively trigger childhood kinesthetic memories of familial food preparation rituals.

The concept of remediation[17] was extended to cultural memory studies by Erl[22] who highlighted memory's dynamic reconstruction and spread across media (texts, images, digital platforms). Neurocognitive support comes from dual coding theory [23], with fMRI evidence showing cross - modal activation of the hippocampus (memory) and insula (sensorimotor processing) through audiovisual stimuli, elevating neural activity by 42–45%[24]. For example, user's comment (e.g., "watching sausage-casing stuffing instantly revived the tactile memory of tying strings") confirm mediated embodied recall. Platform algorithms amplify this through geocultural targeting (e.g., prioritizing Hunan cured meat videos via LBS), establishing accurate correlation between digital "lieu de mémoire" and physical cultural memory where food is ritualized as familial memory[25]. Based on this theoretical and empirical foundation, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Hometown flavor exposure positively predicts cultural memory activation.

Wetherell's (2012) theory of "affective practices" points out that media content breaks through the limitation of disembodiment of the screen through hyper-real aesthetics, triggering users' physiological reactions, which are then transformed into emotional experiences[26]. Douyin's "immersive mode", through full-screen playback and sliding-blocking design, further amplifies the intensity of emotions. Neuroscientific research shows that the visual stimulation of food can induce the secretion of dopamine by activating the insular cortex, enhancing the pleasant experience [27]. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Hometown flavor engagement positively predicts emotional experience intensity.

Sedikides and Wildschut's psychological model of nostalgia posits that individuals employ self-continuity mechanisms to integrate pivotal identity markers across their life course[28]. Specifically, activated cultural memories (e.g., rural landscapes, traditional rituals) facilitate reconstruction of the "extended self" - a symbolic narrative framework that anchors both pre-urban and urbanized identities within a coherent meaning system. This process effectively mitigates self-discontinuity threats arising from rural-urban transitions while enhancing belongingness and emotional homeostasis. We therefore hypothesize:

H3: Cultural memory activation positively influences emotional experience.

Collins' (2004) interaction ritual chain theory elucidates how shared emotional states in collective practices (e.g., family cooking rituals) generate embodied symbols (e.g., "mother's flavor")[19]. Through repeated performances, these symbols accumulate as emotional energy. On platforms like Douyin, comments (e.g., "My mom does it this way too") create virtual ritual chains, fostering group identity and emotional fulfillment through collective remembering. Extending Barbalet's sociological framework[29], we observe that emotions drive individualized action through two compensation pathways: (1) Material compensation (purchasing local specialties) . (2) Symbolic compensation (sharing videos). This leads to our fourth hypothesis:

H4: Positive emotional experiences significantly increase interactive behavioral intentions.

Drawing on cultural semiotics, "hometown flavor" functions as a multimodal system — combining visual and auditory symbols — that activates gustatory schemata via cross-modal integration. This initiates the primary transformation from symbolic stimuli to cultural memory activation (O1) through temporal-hippocampal circuits . Memory activation triggers dual emotional differentiation: (1) Short-term pleasure (O2a) caused by dopaminergic release in the nucleus accumbens, which generates nostalgic hedonia, manifesting as immediate sensory reactions. (2) Long-term meaning (O2b) where Prefrontal-DMN synergy reconstructs cultural symbolism into self-referential belonging. These form a hierarchical "memory schema → emotional energy" chain, which converts to behavior via.. We thus put forward the hypothesis:

H5: The cultural memory→emotion chain mediates the hometown flavor→behavioral intention relationship.

## 4. Scale Design and Data Collection

### 4.1 Scale Design

The scale integrates five adapted scales: (1) a 9-item hometown flavor involvement scale[30], (2) a 7-item cultural memory activation scale [31], (3) a 6-item emotional experience scale (PANAS-X)[32], (4) a 7-item behavioral intention scale [33], and (5) demographic controls.

### 4.2 Data Collection

The preliminary survey (March 2025; N=30, convenience sampling) informed item optimization through reliability/validity tests, while the formal survey (April 2025; N=400/413 retained after quality checks, 96.85% validity rate) captured a sample comprising 91.3% 21-40-year-olds (n=365), a 1:1.7 male-female ratio matching internet user demographics, and 80% urban residents (n=320) aligned with urban leisure consumption research.

## 5. Data Analysis

This study employs partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) for empirical analysis, with model estimation and hypothesis testing conducted using SmartPLS 4.0 (Bootstraps=5000)

### 5.1 Measurement Model Evaluation

The scale demonstrates strong psychometric properties, with excellent internal consistency (total scale Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.878$ ;  $\alpha > 0.8$ ) and the confirmatory factor analysis shows all primary factor loadings  $> 0.5$  - though some cross-loadings ranged 0.38-0.45, with all values significantly exceeding the 0.30 critical threshold for N=350 samples, thereby meeting standard validity requirements[34].

### 5.2 Analysis of the Structural Model

#### 5.2.1 Model Explanatory Power Assessment

The data analysis demonstrates that  $R^2$  values of emotional experience (53.9%), Cultural Memory Activation ( 59.8%) and Behavioral Intention (31.1%) exceeds the moderate explanatory power threshold ( $R^2 \geq 0.25$ ) in social sciences, with the first two exceeding the strong effect benchmark ( $R^2 \geq 0.50$ ).

### 5.2.2 Evaluation of the Cross - Validation Redundancy

The PLS-SEM analysis employing blindfolding procedures ( $D=7$ ) established the model's predictive validity, as evidenced by: (1) all  $Q^2$  values significantly exceeding zero (emotional experience=0.180, cultural memory activation=0.175, behavioral intention=0.101), and (2) path-specific effect sizes exceeding benchmarks ( $q^2 \geq 0.12$ ), with cultural memory  $\rightarrow$  emotional experience ( $q^2=0.15$ ) demonstrating medium effects (Cohen, 1988).

### 5.2.3 Collinearity Assessment

The variance inflation factor (VIF) analysis shows both observed variables ( $VIF = 1.0-1.5$ ) and latent variables ( $VIF = 1.0-3.0$ ), demonstrating values well below the conservative threshold of 5, thereby establishing the measurement model's structural validity.

### 5.2.4 Direct Effects Analysis

As shown in Table 1, hometown flavor engagement strongly predicts both cultural memory activation ( $\beta = 0.773$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and emotional experience ( $\beta = 0.494$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Cultural memory activation demonstrates a significant positive effect on emotional experience ( $\beta = 0.282$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Emotional experience substantially influences behavioral intention ( $\beta = 0.558$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). These results provide full support for hypotheses H1 through H4.

Table 1. Direct Effects Analysis

| Hypotheses | Path Relationship                                                   | Path Relationship | T-value | P-value | Conclusion |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------|---------|------------|
| H1         | Hometown flavor engagement $\rightarrow$ cultural memory activation | 0.773             | 34.684  | 0.000   | Support    |
| H2         | Hometown flavor engagement $\rightarrow$ Emotional experience       | 0.494             | 8.017   | 0.000   | Support    |
| H3         | Cultural memory activation $\rightarrow$ Emotional experience       | 0.282             | 4.126   | 0.000   | Support    |
| H4         | Emotional experience $\rightarrow$ Behavioral intention             | 0.558             | 14.494  | 0.000   | Support    |

### 5.2.5 Chained Mediation Analysis

Employing Preacher and Hayes' (2008) bootstrapping approach [35], the analysis revealed a statistically significant total indirect effect for the sequential mediation path: hometown flavor engagement  $\rightarrow$  cultural memory activation  $\rightarrow$  emotional experience  $\rightarrow$  behavioral intention ( $\beta=0.122$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). These results confirm the hypothesized chained mediation mechanism, and Hypothesis H5 is proven.

Table 2. Mediation Effect Test (Total Effect Size)

| Path Relationship                                             | Total Effect Size | T-value | P-value |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------|---------|
| Cultural memory activation $\rightarrow$ Behavioral intention | 0.157             | 3.62    | 0.000   |
| Hometown flavor engagement $\rightarrow$ Emotional experience | 0.218             | 3.999   | 0.000   |
| Hometown flavor engagement $\rightarrow$ Behavioral intention | 0.397             | 10.981  | 0.000   |

Table 3. Mediation Effect Test (Indirect Effect Size)

| Path Relationship                                                                                                                         | Indirect Effect Size | T-value | P-value |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------|---------|
| Hometown flavor engagement $\rightarrow$ Cultural memory activation $\rightarrow$ Emotional experience                                    | 0.218                | 3.999   | 0.000   |
| Cultural memory activation $\rightarrow$ Emotional experience $\rightarrow$ Behavioral intention                                          | 0.157                | 3.62    | 0.000   |
| Hometown flavor engagement $\rightarrow$ Emotional experience $\rightarrow$ Behavioral intention                                          | 0.276                | 7.375   | 0.000   |
| Hometown flavor engagement $\rightarrow$ Cultural memory activation $\rightarrow$ Emotional experience $\rightarrow$ Behavioral intention | 0.122                | 3.495   | 0.000   |

## 6. Research Conclusions

### 6.1 Conclusions

Grounded in the SOR framework, this study investigates how digital representations of "hometown flavors" on short-video platforms drive user interaction through the following mechanism: cultural memory activation  $\rightarrow$  emotional resonance  $\rightarrow$  behavioral transformation, with three key findings:

**Multimodal Embodiment Effect:** Through the remediation of visual, auditory, and textual symbols, this study constructs an immersive digital memory space that transcends screen-mediated disembodiment, empirically validating hometown flavor engagement as a significant driver of cultural memory activation.

**Mnemonic-Emotional Integration:** Intermedial intertextuality fosters an accessible immersive experience, where



material transformations activate multisensory embodied cognition, while self-continuity mechanisms bridge urban-rural identity gaps through "extended self" reconstruction, confirming positive effects of cultural memory on emotional experience.

Cognition-Emotion-Behavior Chain: Structural equation modeling demonstrates significant chained mediation (memory → emotion → behavior), with hometown flavor engagement driving behavioral intention, fully uncovering the psychosocial sequence: collective memory decoding→emotional commitment activation→ritualized behavior formation.

## 6.2 Discussion and Implications

### 6.2.1 Theoretical Contributions

This study constructs a three-stage "symbol embodiment-memory integration-behavior transformation" model that extends the SOR framework's explanatory power in digital memory research, revealing: (1) a cognitive compensation mechanism wherein multisensory (visual/auditory/tactile) cross-modal collaboration during media materialization reconstructs embodied digital memory practices, and (2) through structural equation modeling, verifies how digital memory interfaces compensate urban-rural identity fractures via the "extended self" effect to achieve identity re-embedding in mobile societies.

### 6.2.2 Practical Implications

This study proposes actionable pathways for short video platform operations and local culture dissemination through its "symbol activation → emotional resonance → behavior transformation" conduction mechanism, offering three practical implementation frameworks:

An integrated three-stage operational framework for short video platforms is proposed to activate cultural memory through "symbol system construction → embodied interface design → behavioral closed-loop transformation", where (1) the systematic integration of multisensory hometown symbols (dialect soundtracks, kitchen stove visuals, etc.) into a "hometown flavor database" enables AR-powered virtual scene reconstruction, (2) multimodal interaction design achieves synchronized memory activation across visual, auditory, and tactile channels, and (3) an S-O-R (Stimulus - Organism - Response) mechanism — implemented through symbol literacy training, nostalgia-themed live dialogues, and gamified memory points — converges with smart hardware development to establish a self-reinforcing digital nostalgia ecosystem

This study proposes a tripartite "technology-emotion-value" framework for content value creation, wherein: (1) multimodal synesthetic encoding (visual - auditory - olfactory synchronization) activates cultural DNA, (2) ritualized interaction platforms (solar-term livestreams, digital village archives) foster affective communities, and (3) a data-responsive "memory - to - consumption" model — quantified through GMV conversion rates and Net Promoter Scores — transcends traffic-driven paradigms to establish a cultural-commercial symbiosis, ultimately forging an ecosystem where memory reproduction and industrial value creation become mutually reinforcing.

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