

## The Future of Rurality : Sustainable Rural Development: Attaching Young People to the Local Culture of China's Rural Communities

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### Abstract

The purposes of this research were, to determine the influence of local culture (take local music culture as an example) on young people. The sample was a series of online surveys conducted among young people aged 13-24 in the Wugang region of southern China to assess their knowledge of the local culture of rural life (take local music culture as an example). The research process involves organizing data, conducting literature reviews, administering questionnaire surveys, conducting interviews, performing technical analysis, engaging in comparative analysis, employing logical reasoning, and summarizing findings inductively. Spss 17.0 was used for data analysis in this study. Descriptive statistics and content analysis.

The results show that: When young people learn about local culture and stimulate their deep hometown culture, they will feel satisfied and safe in the community and gain a strong sense of folk culture identity. When more than 60 percent of young people use the local dialect, they are more likely to increase the sense of goodwill and honor towards their hometown and promote the local culture. These results highlight the need to make young people attached to the local culture of China's rural communities, combining tradition and The Times to create a local culture more in line with The Times.

**Keywords:** Rural Youth Exodus, Rural Local Culture, Sustainable Development, Local Mu-sic.

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## Introduction

Rural areas are often considered an attractive place to live because of their social and natural environment and high quality of life. In fact, rural youth who have a strong attachment to a place due to close ties among community members, family and friends are most likely to stay in rural areas, assigning the term "place attachment" to the act of making an emotional connection to a place, and thus to the physical and local cultural environment in which residents develop their daily activities and personal experiences - this is considered a feel-good factor. This is considered to be a feel-good factor. People develop these attachments in places where they feel safe and protected, and young people gain a deeper understanding of local culture and consider these places their home. Promoting a sustainable rural spirit allows young people to attach to the local culture of rural communities.

In the southern region of China, according to the study, a total of 1,000 questionnaires were distributed to young people in the countryside, and 998 questionnaires were returned, of which 15 percent knew about local culture in the countryside and 85 percent did not; the sustainability of local culture in the countryside has become a very important issue. We are addressing a specific issue: young people should be encouraged to understand local culture, and to enhance their sense of identity and pride in order to pass on local culture and promote sustainable rural development.

Understanding the characteristics of young people in rural areas is crucial for the future of these areas. The main characteristics of today's rural young people are higher levels of education, making them more flexible and open to innovation, better able to use new technologies, forms of socialization and methods of acquiring knowledge, making them relevant players in their respective territories. However, the knowledge of the local culture gradually tends to decline and the attachment and sense of belonging to the countryside diminishes. In countries such as Japan and the United Kingdom, young people integrate and innovate the local culture, gradually attaching to it and preserving it, allowing the countryside to achieve sustainable development.(J. Rural Stud. 2019)

Previous studies have shown that rural youth's interest in rural life is also related to local culture. Thus, young people's motivation to migrate from or return to rural areas after completing their education is influenced by family pressure, employment expectations, quality of life, personal background, and local culture, especially young people's sense of identity and pride in the countryside stemming from the transmission and dissemination of local culture.(Johnson.2019)

People in rural areas tend to be more strongly attached to their communities than those in urban areas; therefore, in this sense, local culture is what influences young people's sense of satisfaction with the rural spiritual world. Young people are less aware of local culture, and less likely to participate in community organizations, local cultural groups, and other initiatives that nourish the culture of the local community. Local culture is also an important motivator for rural life.(Vásquez Wiedeman 2021)

Moreover, the association with local culture, when understood as a personal attitude, is considered as one of the multiple and dynamic dimensions of place attachment. In general, young people express positive attitudes toward local culture as an attractive aspect of rural areas and associate these places with their local customs and local music, and our study aims to quantitatively assess whether rural youth understand the impact of attachment to local culture on sustainable rural development.

### **National Policy on Rural Development**

So far, China is a big population country, and the importance for rural areas is one of the few in the world ranking. The national policies to support local culture in rural areas are: 1. to protect and inherit ethnic folk culture and set up protection mechanisms; 2. to enhance the vitality of rural cultural development; 3. to encourage local culture for innovation and promote local school-based curriculum. The state has formulated many policies on the development of local culture in rural areas and delegated authority to local governments to develop local culture, but the population is gradually aging and young people are the backbone of the nation, so allowing young people to fully understand local culture and enhancing young people's sense of rural identity and pride is conducive to sustainable rural development.

### **Innovation of sustainable development of local music culture abroad**

Western musical theater, on the basis of the original innovation, such as musical theater aspects try to integrate a variety of forms, multiple styles of art forms such as opera, jazz and drama into an organic whole, innovative traditional music and dance vocabulary and simple stage technology. In terms of singing, the old opera vocal method has been changed, and the popular contemporary pop singing techniques have been improved, with a large number of mute, air voice and crying voice, making the overall style of the musical very modern. In terms of dance, the modern ballet and gymnastic dance movements have been enhanced, and the traditional tap dance form has been changed. The stage set also introduced a lot of lighting, electronics and other advanced technology, more dazzling and colorful. At the same time, the innovation of the musical also combines the theme of the times, more popular with young people, gaining a sense of cultural identity, which is conducive to the spread of local culture.

The Japanese local culture "Tochiku Modulation" is based on the original local music culture scale, retaining the characteristics of the original modulation, but also adding different fusions of other modulations, such as the most classic Japanese folk song "Sakura" in different versions.

One of the popular music in the United States, country music, has been developed for hundreds of years it is more a reflection of local culture, is an expression of the overall musical phenomenon of folk songs, dance music and instrumental music in remote areas of the United States influenced by local life this type of music is mainly the music of the working class. In the course of history, country music has come a long way, successively tied to radio stations and record companies, its musical mood has both rural and urban flavors, both traditional nostalgic ballads and new and creative modern songs, and now country music is gradually moving to the international stage, influencing the development of world music. Country music, a kind of folk song, is a kind of folk music derived from the traditional folk songs of the white agricultural areas in the southeastern United States, with a strong flavor of folk songs and unpretentious tunes. The revival of country music in the 1990s, after the 1990s, country music began to develop internationally, and the famous musicians in this period include many country singers represented by Faith Hill, who absorbed the ingredients of rock and jazz, combined with pop music and the singing skills of country music, and whose music has

the simplicity and naturalness of country music, as well as the qualities of classical beauty. The music has the simplicity and naturalness of country music, as well as classical beauty. The revival of country music in this period was characterized by the combination of different musical elements and the formation of a unique musical style and expression, with a little more freedom and a sense of openness.

Modern composers who continued to adhere to the path of nationalism in the 20th century include: the Hungarian composer Bartók, who absorbed various components of folk music and melted them into his own language, breaking through the framework of traditional European music and drawing extensively on new compositional techniques; the British Vaughan Williams, who consciously drew from English folk songs, ancient or Renaissance music, and whose compositions have fully embodied the English nationalist style; American Gershwin, who successfully introduced jazz, blues and black spirituals into art music and wrote a large number of orchestral works. The success of these composers was based on the proper extraction and absorption of local art, and their successful experiences also have important inspirations for modern Chinese music.

### **Research's objective**

To determine the influence of local culture (take local music culture as an example) on young people

### **Hypothesis**

1. Young people like the local culture of their hometown more after learning about it
2. Young people will spread local culture more when they are attached to it
3. Local culture contributes to sustainable rural development

The data analysis in this study were all done using spss17.0 and the statistical

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

This study utilizes research methods , employs data collection, analysis, and logical reasoning as its primary methodologies. The research process involves organizing data,

conducting literature reviews, administering questionnaire surveys, conducting interviews, performing technical analysis, engaging in comparative analysis, employing logical reasoning, and summarizing findings inductively. By analyzing a significant amount of survey data and non-quantitative information, this study progressively develops a conceptual framework for the research topic. It then analyzes, compares, and focuses on various issues at different levels, ultimately arriving at conclusions regarding the research topic.

### **Place of study**

The study was conducted in the southern part of China, specifically in the Wugang district of Hunan: a typical southern city located in southern China (see Figure 1). This district has typical Chinese rural characteristics, for example, the district is located in a mountainous area with underdeveloped transportation; the district has an aging population, more children left behind, and young people are working outside. It also has a rich local folk culture and intangible cultural heritage.

### **Population and Sampling**

We conducted an online survey (using Google Forms) with young people aged 13 to 24 to present a data visualization of the percentage of young people who know and do not know about local culture, with the local study tour taking place between February and March 2022. We engaged young people through an online questionnaire to maximize the sample size, and community leaders and members provided us with a list of 1,000 people who were contacted directly by phone, and the survey was sent via WhatsApp to fill out the questionnaire. In addition, we used a chain sampling method among community members so that the survey could reach a larger number of young people. It should be noted that we started with a physical survey, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we adapted to an online format. In the process of sustainable rural development, local cultural identity allows young people to gradually find their cultural roots, and we will sample and study data on young men and women who know local culture and those who do not. The four degrees of not knowing at all, knowing somewhat, knowing relatively well and knowing very well show that most young people know nothing at all about local culture, and a large proportion still know something. As shown in the figure.

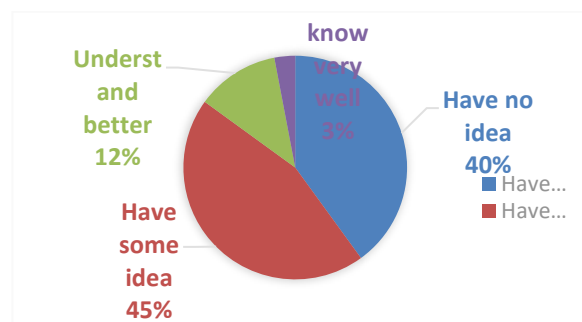


Fig. 1: Young people's knowledge of local culture in Wugang area (self-drawn)

### Measures

A survey was designed to measure the impact on young people's attachment to rural culture, including two main components: (i) the percentage of young people who know about music, and (ii) the percentage of young people who know about music, and who like music. In the sampling to have data involving their personal information (age, gender, education, place of residence and knowledge of local culture), the first part has 20 data points on the percentage of these young people who know about local folk music culture, and in the second part we get the percentage of young people who like local musicians among those who know about music, and some opinions that they think can be continuously sustainable to facilitate data for us to learn from other countries and to preserve cultural heritage.

### Methods used were (Yan jijun 2021)

Frequency distribution in descriptive statistics for the analysis of basic information about young people and basic information about their preferences for local culture (in the case of local music culture). Averages, for exploring young people's pride in local culture (in the case of local music culture). Independent samples t-test for analyzing differences in young people's understanding of local culture (in the case of local music culture). Analysis of variance (ANOVA) for analyzing differences in local cultures (in the case of local musical cultures) among young people. Cardinality analysis for exploring the degree of attachment to local culture among young people tested before and after learning about local culture.

## Results

A questionnaire was administered to all young people who participated in the experiment. A total of 165 valid questionnaires were obtained after the questionnaires were returned. The total return rate was 98.8%, and the usability rate was 98.2%. Local officials, local cultural artists, and policy makers were also selected for interviews related to this experiment.

### Enjoyment of local culture before and after knowledge of local culture - Take Wugang Yang Opera as an example

**Table 1.** The attitude of young people who do not know about the local culture of Wugang Yang Opera preference

Reasons why young people like Wugang Yang Opera				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.Dislike	107	64.8	64.8	100.0
2.Sung in the dialect of the hometown	20	12.1	12.1	12.1
3.Interesting rhythm	4	2.4	2.4	14.5
4.The singing voice is new and has not been touched before	17	10.3	10.3	24.8
5.The melody is beautiful	5	3.0	3.0	27.9
6.Other reasons	12	7.3	7.3	35.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

The template is designed so that author affiliations are not repln the survey, the situation of young people who do not know about the attitude of preference of local culture Wugang Yang Opera is shown in Figure 2, less than 4% of young people who like it very much, 22% of young people who like it, up to 47% of young people who do not like it, and 10% of young people who dislike it very much, the results show that the young people who do not like the students of local culture Wugang Yang Opera are very high, close to 60%. For the young people who like local culture Wugang Yang



Opera, the reason for liking Wugang Yang Opera is that those who sing in their hometown dialect are 20, accounting for 12.1% of the total number of young people who like Wugang Yang Opera; those who have not been exposed to it before are 17, accounting for 10.3%; those who sing fresh and have beautiful melodies are 5, accounting for 3%; and those who have interesting rhythm are 4, accounting for 2.4%. This makes them have little sense of cultural identity.

After half a year of local culture popularization, such as online lectures, self-media dissemination, etc., young people were informed about the local culture and then a questionnaire survey was conducted, and the change of young people's preference for local culture Wugang Yang Opera is shown in Figure 2. to 11%. This shows that after being exposed to Wugang Yang opera through teaching, students' preference for Wugang Yang opera has greatly changed and the sustainable development of the countryside has had a very desirable effect.

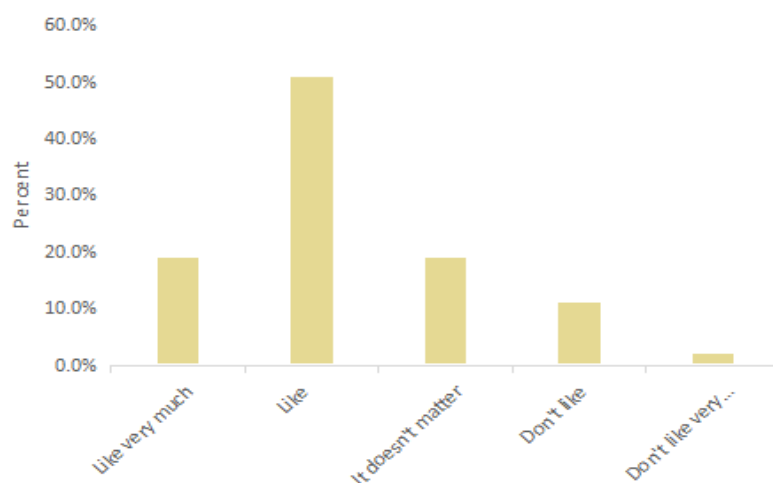
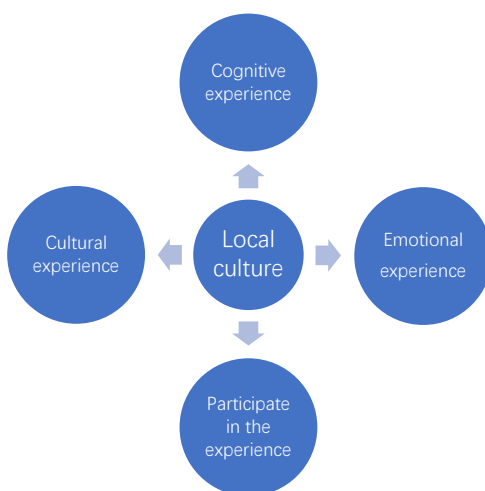


Fig. 2. Attitude towards local culture Wugang Yang Opera after understanding

After understanding local culture, cognitive experience (COE), affective experience (CUE), and cultural experience (TERB) among young people, the sense of hometown cultural identity gradually rises, and this sense of experiential participation is directly proportional to local culture. As shown in Figures 3 and 4, in centering on local culture, other cognitive, emotional, participation and cultural experiences form an inner circle, while influencing the feelings of young people through local culture.



**Fig. 3.** The value of local culture

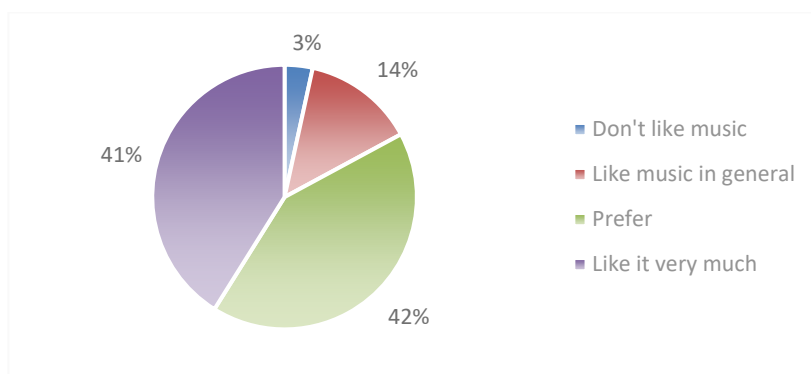


**Fig. 4.** The value of local culture

**The percentage of young people who love local music culture among those who know about local culture.**

According to the questionnaire survey, the percentage of young people who like local music culture after learning about local culture is gradually increasing, between 84% of young people who like it very much and those who like it more pointed out that if local music culture can be created and integrated, it will greatly increase the enthusiasm and spread of young people, and also make young people more attached

to the local culture with a sense of the times, and promote the sustainable development of the countryside. The development of the village will be sustainable.



**Fig. 5.** Percentage of young people who like local music culture after understanding local culture

### Interest in the sustainability of local culture

By understanding local culture, young people's love for local culture gradually rises identity also gradually increases, listening to some music sung in the local dialect allows young people to gradually form a rural attachment, plus the local community environment provided also determines whether young people are willing to spread local culture to continue sustainable development. The researcher has developed the following conceptual framework for the study by analyzing relevant data and information based on a large amount of literature such as texts, books, academic journals, and statistics.

Modern composers who continued to adhere to the path of nationalism in the 20th century include: the Hungarian composer Bartók, who absorbed various components of folk music and melted them into his own language, breaking through the framework of traditional European music and drawing extensively on new compositional techniques; the British Vaughan Williams, who consciously drew from English folk songs, ancient or Renaissance music, and whose compositions have fully embodied the English nationalist style; American Gershwin, who successfully introduced jazz, blues and black spirituals into art music and wrote a large number of orchestral

works. The success of these composers is precisely based on the proper extraction and absorption of local art, and their successful experiences also have important inspirations for the sustainable development of local culture in China.

In China we often say that what is national is global. Therefore, nationalization is necessary for a nation's music to stand in the world music. The question is how to perfectly integrate Chinese folk music components with Western compositional techniques. We should melt and absorb the musical elements of our own nationality and fuse them into our own compositions, and interpret Chinese sentiments through the perfect form of Western music, which is a major issue in the local music culture of rural China.

Our findings suggest that when young people are satisfied with their local culture, they may develop strong local attachments and therefore become more interested in living in rural areas. Thus, being satisfied with their local culture may promote rural youth's desire for this lifestyle. In addition, our study contributes to a small number of published quantitative studies that consider both natural and social environments to determine young people's interest in local culture.

The social environment strongly influenced local cultural attachment, explaining the positive correlation between interest in young people's lives and local cultural values. Thus, the love of local culture may influence young people's decision to spread local culture. Likewise, enhancing their own pride and identification with rural local culture.

Understanding and identification with local culture is crucial to the satisfaction of its members, mainly because of the opportunity to learn and appreciate the local culture. Connection to local culture was the highest scoring scale (mean  $\pm$  SE =  $4.46 \pm 0.06$ ). The fact that young people living in rural areas have a strong connection to local culture compared to those in urban areas may be due to the fact that rural young people usually spend more time on local culture. Thus, CN was the proportion more associated with ILC ( $r = 0.524$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This strong connection to local culture could promote strong local attachment and, therefore, greater interest in living in rural areas. This is consistent with previous research showing that local culture is an important factor motivating young people to develop a sustainable rural local culture, implying that

local culture has the potential to generate a sense of attachment to family among young people.

### Conclusions and Discussion

The gradual endangerment of rural local culture is an important challenge to the sustainability of rural local culture in the Chinese nation. (Li bo 2010) Our findings suggest that a community that is comfortable with its own culture, connected to its local culture, and that local culture is more interesting to young people when it is contemporary. This helps to demonstrate that young people's cultural identity is an important factor in the sustainability of local culture. These results highlight the importance of promoting a sense of local attachment and belonging within rural communities, which translates into young people's interest in the sustainability of rural cultural transmission. Therefore, rural management and local policies in China should focus not only on economic or employment issues, but also on enhancing young people's local cultural values in order to increase their attachment to place and promote local festivals and cultural practices in order to build connections within the community for rural sustainability.

In fact, rural youth who feel a strong attachment to a place due to close ties among community members, family and friends are most inclined to remain in rural areas, assigning the term "place attachment" to the act of creating an emotional connection to a place, Thus connecting with the physical and local cultural environment in which residents develop their daily activities and personal experiences - this is considered a feel-good factor. People develop these attachments in places where they feel safe and protected, where young people have a deeper understanding of local culture and consider these places to be their home. To promote the sustainable development of rural spirit and make young people attached to the local culture of rural communities.

Due to my limited ability, there are still many shortcomings in this study, such as the lack of depth in the investigation, which need to be further discussed in the future study and work. I hope that more scholars can join in the sustainable rural culture, strengthen the protection of rural culture, solve the problem of gradual lack of

local culture, and let more young people return to their hometown. Develop a sense of pride and identity

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