

# Cultural Translation and Digital Empowerment of Agricultural Branding: A Case Study of Fulu Town in the Dadu River Basin

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**Abstract:** Agricultural branding has become an important pathway for enhancing rural economic competitiveness and increasing the added value of agricultural products. However, many rural regions still face challenges such as weak brand awareness, insufficient cultural representation and limited digital marketing channels. This study examines Fulu Town in the Dadu River Basin of Sichuan Province, China, a region rich in agricultural resources and cultural heritage but with relatively underdeveloped agricultural branding. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining questionnaire surveys (256 valid responses), fourteen in-depth interviews and qualitative textual analysis to investigate the current status of agricultural branding, the utilisation of cultural resources and the potential of digital communication. The results indicate that cultural symbols have not yet been effectively translated into brand narratives and digital marketing channels remain underdeveloped. Based on empirical findings, the study proposes a regional agricultural branding model of “cultural gene translation–brand design–digital communication”, providing practical insights for sustainable rural revitalisation.

**Keywords:** Agricultural branding; cultural heritage; digital communication; rural revitalisation; artificial intelligence

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## 1. Introduction

Global agricultural markets have gradually shifted from production-oriented competition towards brand-oriented competition. In the past, agricultural development primarily relied on increases in productivity and improvements in product quality. However, with the expansion of global supply chains and increasing product homogeneity, agricultural producers now face growing pressure to differentiate their products within highly competitive markets. In this context, branding has become a critical strategy for enhancing the competitiveness of agricultural products.

Brand development enables agricultural producers to differentiate their products from similar commodities, enhance market value and establish long-term relationships with consumers. Through effective branding, agricultural products can convey cultural meanings, geographic identities and symbolic value that go beyond their basic functional attributes. As a result, branding not only improves economic value but also strengthens consumer trust and emotional engagement.

Brand equity theory provides an important theoretical foundation for understanding how brands generate value. According to Aaker (1991), brand equity refers to a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service. These assets include brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality and brand associations. Together, these dimensions form the intangible value of a brand and significantly influence consumer purchasing behaviour.

Keller (1993) further developed this concept through the Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model, which emphasises that brand value originates from consumers' brand knowledge structures. Keller argues that brand knowledge consists of brand awareness and brand image, and that brand image is formed through associations stored in consumers' memory. When consumers form strong, favourable and unique brand associations, brand equity can be effectively established.

Within the agricultural sector, brand equity is closely linked not only to product quality but also to consumers' perceptions of authenticity, cultural identity and trust. Agricultural products are often deeply embedded within particular geographical environments and cultural traditions. Consequently, cultural narratives and regional identities play an essential role in shaping consumer perceptions of agricultural brands.

Fulu Town in the Dadu River Basin of Sichuan Province represents a typical agricultural region characterised by abundant natural resources but relatively limited brand development. The region produces a wide range of agricultural products, including tea, kiwi fruit, citrus fruits and traditional Chinese

medicinal herbs. In addition to its agricultural resources, the region also possesses rich cultural heritage. This heritage includes river trade culture associated with the historical Dadu River transport system, traditional agricultural practices developed over generations, and numerous local legends and folk traditions.

These cultural resources provide valuable symbolic materials for agricultural brand development. Cultural heritage can strengthen brand identity, enhance product authenticity and create emotional connections between consumers and local products. Nevertheless, despite these advantages, most agricultural products in the region are still marketed as generic commodities rather than branded goods.

Farmers and producers in the region largely rely on traditional sales channels such as local markets and wholesale distribution networks. Systematic branding strategies, unified visual identity systems and storytelling marketing approaches remain largely absent. As a result, the cultural value embedded within local agricultural products has not been effectively translated into brand identity or marketing narratives.

Meanwhile, rapid digital transformation is reshaping the structure of marketing communication. The emergence of e-commerce platforms, social media networks and short-video applications has created new opportunities for agricultural marketing. Digital platforms enable agricultural producers to communicate directly with consumers, share stories about product origins and promote regional cultural heritage.

Furthermore, emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data analytics and digital content production tools are increasingly being used to enhance marketing strategies and improve brand communication efficiency. These technological developments provide new opportunities for rural regions seeking to transform traditional agricultural products into competitive cultural brands.

Against this background, exploring how cultural resources can be translated into brand narratives and how digital technologies can strengthen agricultural brand communication has become an important research topic. In particular, rural regions with rich cultural heritage but weak brand development require innovative strategies to transform cultural assets into competitive branding resources.

Therefore, this study focuses on Fulu Town in the Dadu River Basin and investigates the mechanisms through which cultural heritage and digital communication can contribute to agricultural brand development. Specifically, the research aims to analyse the current state of agricultural branding in the region, examine consumer perceptions and cultural preferences, and explore how digital technologies can support the promotion and communication of agricultural brands.

By integrating quantitative survey data with qualitative interview analysis, this research seeks to provide empirical insights into the role of cultural translation and digital empowerment in regional agricultural branding. The findings contribute to interdisciplinary research in rural development, cultural branding and digital innovation. In addition, the study provides practical implications for policy-makers and agricultural producers seeking to promote sustainable rural economic development through innovative branding strategies.

## 2. Literature Review

Brand equity theory represents one of the most important theoretical foundations in branding research. Aaker (1991), in his seminal work *Managing Brand Equity*, defined brand equity as a collection of assets and liabilities associated with a brand name and symbol that can increase or decrease the value provided by a product or service. Aaker identified several key components of brand equity, including brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality and brand associations. This framework has become a widely used theoretical model for analysing brand value across various industries.

Building upon Aaker's framework, Keller (1993) proposed the Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model. Keller emphasised that brand equity ultimately derives from consumers' knowledge structures. According to Keller, brand knowledge consists of brand awareness and brand image. Brand image, in turn, is formed through the network of associations stored within consumers' memory. When these associations are strong, favourable and distinctive, brand equity becomes firmly established.

Within the context of agricultural branding, cultural and geographical factors play particularly important roles. Agricultural products are often closely associated with specific regions, production environments and traditional knowledge systems. As a result, cultural identity and geographical origin frequently serve as key elements in agricultural brand differentiation.

Research on regional food products has increasingly emphasised the importance of place-based identity. Tregear et al. (2007), in their study of European regional food branding, argued that local food products often rely on geographical identity and cultural tradition to establish product differentiation. By emphasising local origin and traditional production methods, regional food brands can enhance consumer trust and strengthen perceived authenticity.

Similarly, Belletti and Marescotti (2011) highlighted the significance of geographical indications (GI) in agricultural branding. Their research demonstrated that the competitive advantage of geographical indication products does not solely depend on product quality but also derives from cultural heritage and historical traditions associated with specific regions.

Sidali, Kastenholz and Bianchi (2015) further explored the relationship between traditional food products and cultural tourism. Their findings suggest that cultural narratives surrounding traditional food can significantly enhance consumers' emotional attachment and cultural identification with local products.

Research on authenticity has also become a key theme within agricultural branding studies. Sims (2009), in a study published in the *Journal of Rural Studies*, argued that local food branding frequently relies on narratives of place, traditional production practices and local identity to construct authenticity. This authenticity is not only related to the product itself but also to the broader cultural and environmental context in which the product is produced.

Ray (1998) similarly emphasised the close relationship between food culture and regional identity. According to Ray, culinary traditions often reflect the social history, cultural values and environmental conditions of specific regions. Consequently, incorporating cultural narratives into food branding can significantly strengthen consumer emotional engagement.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods research approach that integrates quantitative survey analysis with qualitative research in order to systematically examine the current development of agricultural branding and the transformation of cultural resources in Fulu Town. Mixed-methods research allows the advantages of statistical analysis derived from questionnaire surveys to be combined with the deeper explanatory insights obtained from interview-based qualitative research. Such an approach enhances both the reliability and interpretative power of the research findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The research design consists of three primary stages.

The first stage involves a questionnaire survey aimed at collecting data regarding local residents' and consumers' perceptions of agricultural product branding, consumption behaviour and preferences related to cultural elements. Through structured survey questions, the research gathers quantitative information concerning purchasing frequency, purchasing channels and brand awareness.

The second stage involves in-depth interviews conducted with various stakeholders in the agricultural sector. These include farmers, village officials, agricultural product sellers and consumers. The interviews aim to explore perceptions of agricultural branding development, challenges faced by local producers and the potential role of cultural resources in brand construction.

The third stage consists of qualitative textual analysis. Interview transcripts are analysed using grounded theory coding techniques in order to identify key factors influencing the development of agricultural branding. Through this process, underlying patterns and conceptual categories are extracted from qualitative data.

By combining quantitative survey data with qualitative interview analysis, this research provides a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms influencing agricultural branding development in rural regions.

#### 3.2 Questionnaire Survey and Sample Sources

The questionnaire survey primarily targeted residents, farmers and consumers in Fulu Town, as well as a smaller number of tourists and individuals from surrounding areas. Since the research aims to understand the development needs of agricultural industries and agricultural product branding in the region, purposive sampling was adopted for participant selection. Purposive sampling is commonly used in exploratory research because it ensures that participants possess relevant knowledge or experience related to the research topic (Patton, 2015).

The questionnaire was distributed through online platforms in order to improve the efficiency of data collection and expand the geographical coverage of respondents. A total of 272 questionnaires were distributed, of which 256 were valid responses, resulting in an effective response rate of 94.12 per cent.

#### The questionnaire consisted of five main sections:

1. Basic demographic information of respondents (gender, age and identity)
2. Consumption behaviour related to agricultural products (purchase frequency and purchasing channels)
3. Awareness of agricultural product brands (brand familiarity and brand trust)

4. Preferences regarding regional culture (cultural symbols and cultural narratives)
5. Acceptance of digital communication methods (short-video platforms, e-commerce platforms and AI interaction)

The questionnaire included multiple question formats such as single-choice questions, multiple-choice questions and Likert-scale questions, enabling the study to assess respondents' perceptions and attitudes towards various aspects of agricultural branding.

### **3.3 In-depth Interviews**

In order to gain deeper insight into the cultural and industrial factors influencing agricultural branding development, this study conducted in-depth interviews with multiple stakeholder groups.

#### **Interview participants included:**

1. Local farmers
2. Village officials
3. Agricultural product traders
4. Consumers

A total of fourteen interviews were conducted, each lasting between 30 and 60 minutes.

The interviews adopted a semi-structured format. Semi-structured interviews ensure that core research topics are addressed while also allowing participants to freely express their views and experiences. This approach enables researchers to obtain richer and more nuanced qualitative data.

#### **The interviews focused on the following themes:**

1. The current development status of local agricultural products
2. Key challenges in agricultural brand construction
3. The role of regional culture in agricultural branding
4. The influence of digital media on agricultural product sales

All interviews were recorded with participants' consent and subsequently transcribed. The resulting interview transcripts amounted to approximately 32,000 Chinese characters of qualitative textual data.

### **3.4 Text Analysis Method**

For the qualitative component of the research, grounded theory was employed as the analytical framework. Grounded theory is a research method that systematically extracts concepts and theoretical structures from empirical data through coding procedures (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This method is widely used in social science research because it allows theoretical insights to emerge directly from data.

The text analysis process consisted of three stages.

#### **Open Coding**

During the open coding stage, interview transcripts were examined line by line in order to identify concepts related to agricultural branding, cultural identity and digital communication. Through this process, a total of forty-two conceptual nodes were extracted. Examples of these concepts include: Natural ecology, Regional culture, Brand stories, Product quality, Digital communication.

These concepts reflect respondents' perceptions of agricultural branding and its associated factors.

#### **Axial Coding**

In the axial coding stage, relationships between the identified concepts were analysed. The concepts generated during open coding were then grouped into broader conceptual categories. These categories included: Product quality, Cultural identity, Brand image, Communication channels, Consumer experience.

These categories reveal key factors influencing agricultural brand development.

#### **Selective Coding**

During the selective coding stage, the identified categories were integrated into a central theoretical framework. The core concept identified in this research is the "cultural translation-driven agricultural branding mechanism".

This mechanism emphasises the interactive relationship between regional culture, brand design and digital communication.

### 3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative data collected from the questionnaire survey were analysed using descriptive statistical methods. The analysis focused on several key aspects: Sample structure analysis, Consumer behaviour analysis, Brand awareness analysis, Cultural preference analysis.

Qualitative data from interviews were analysed using grounded theory coding techniques combined with semantic analysis. This approach allowed key themes and conceptual patterns to be identified.

By integrating quantitative and qualitative analysis, the research provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing agricultural branding development.

### 3.6 Reliability and Validity

Several measures were taken to ensure the reliability and validity of the research results.

First, during the questionnaire design stage, expert evaluation and pilot testing were conducted in order to optimise the structure and clarity of survey questions. This process helped ensure the content validity of the questionnaire.

Second, during the qualitative analysis stage, a dual-coding method was adopted. Two researchers independently coded the interview transcripts, and the coding results were subsequently compared. This procedure enhanced the reliability of qualitative analysis.

Finally, the study employed data triangulation by combining questionnaire surveys and interview data. The use of multiple data sources strengthened the explanatory power of the research findings.

## 4. Data Analysis

### 4.1 Sample Structure Analysis

This study collected a total of 256 valid questionnaires. The sample consisted primarily of residents and farmers from Fulü Town, whilst also including some tourists and consumers from neighbouring areas. The sample structure indicates that the respondents are reasonably representative and capable of reflecting local agricultural consumption patterns and brand awareness (see Table 1). In terms of gender distribution, female respondents accounted for 54.69 per cent, whilst male respondents accounted for 45.31 per cent. The proportion of female respondents was slightly higher than that of males, a finding consistent with general observations in studies of agricultural consumption behaviour. Existing research indicates that women typically play a greater role in food purchasing decisions within household consumption. Consequently, the proportion of female respondents is often higher in surveys of agricultural product consumption. Furthermore, female consumers are more sensitive to food quality, safety and brand trust, which is of significant importance for the analysis of agricultural product brand perception.

Table 1: Sample Characteristics

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	45.31
	Female	54.69
Identity	Farmers	0.915
	Residents	18.36
	Consumers	11.33
	Others	5.47

In terms of the demographic composition of respondents, farmers accounted for 64.84% of the sample, constituting the main group. This result indicates that the sample adequately reflects the views and needs of agricultural producers. Residents accounted for 18.36%, consumers for 11.33%, and a further 5.47% of respondents fell into other categories. A sample structure with a high proportion of farmers is of significant value for research into agricultural industrial development and the building of agricultural product brands, as farmers are not only the primary producers of agricultural products but also key participants in agricultural brand development.

Overall, the sample structure of this study is highly representative. On the one hand, the high proportion of farmers reflects the genuine needs of the agricultural production sector; on the other hand, the inclusion of residents and consumers provides insight into the agricultural product consumption market. Consequently, this sample structure offers a comprehensive data foundation for researching agricultural brand development from both production and consumption perspectives.

#### 4.2 Frequency of Agricultural Product Purchases

Table 2 presents the statistical results regarding respondents' frequency of purchasing agricultural products. Overall, local residents' demand for agricultural products is relatively stable. Approximately 46.09% of respondents indicated that they purchase agricultural products at least once a week, suggesting that such products hold significant importance in the daily consumption of local residents. Meanwhile, 22.66% of respondents stated that they purchase agricultural products several times a month; this group of consumers typically makes purchases in stages according to household needs.

Furthermore, approximately 9.38% of respondents indicated that they primarily purchase agricultural products during specific seasons. This type of consumption behaviour is often linked to the seasonal production characteristics of agricultural products, such as the peak harvest periods for fruit or specific produce. Additionally, 21.88% of respondents stated that they purchase agricultural products infrequently; this group primarily comprises tourists or residents from non-agricultural areas.

Table 2 : Frequency of Agricultural Product Purchase

Purchase Frequency	Percentage (%)
Weekly	46.09
Several times per month	22.66
Seasonal purchase	9.38
Rarely	21.88

Overall, the data indicates that the local agricultural produce market has a relatively stable consumer base. The high proportion of regular purchases suggests that demand for agricultural produce is fairly consistent, which provides favourable market conditions for agricultural brand development. Stable purchasing frequency implies that branded agricultural produce has significant growth potential in the local market, whilst also providing a solid foundation for brand promotion and market expansion.

#### 4.3 Channels for Purchasing Agricultural Products

Table 3 reflects the main channels through which respondents purchase agricultural products. The data shows that traditional brick-and-mortar shops remain the primary sales channel, accounting for 65.23%. This result indicates that sales of local agricultural products are still predominantly conducted through traditional retail channels, such as farmers' markets, neighbourhood shops and local agricultural product outlets.

However, the role of digital platforms in agricultural product sales is gradually increasing. The survey results show that the proportion of agricultural products purchased via short-video platforms has reached 32.42%. In recent years, short-video platforms have gradually become an important channel for agricultural product marketing, with many agricultural operators using short videos to showcase agricultural production processes and rural life scenes, thereby enhancing consumer trust.

Furthermore, social consumption channels such as community group buying and recommendations from friends also account for a significant proportion, at 18.36% and 17.97% respectively. This consumption model, based on social relationships, exerts a strong influence in rural and community markets. Meanwhile, e-commerce platforms account for 16.41%, indicating that online sales channels are gradually developing.

Table 3: Purchasing Channels of Agricultural Products

Purchasing Channel	Percentage (%)
Offline stores	65.23
Short-video platforms	32.42
Community group buying	18.36
Friend recommendation	17.97
E-commerce platforms	16.41

Overall, agricultural product sales channels are characterised by a predominance of traditional channels, with digital channels showing gradual growth. With the advancement of digital technology, short-video platforms, e-commerce platforms and social media are expected to become key channels for agricultural brand promotion in the future.

#### 4.4 Awareness of Agricultural Product Brands

Table 4 illustrates respondents' level of awareness regarding local agricultural product brands. The statistical results indicate that only 15.23% of respondents stated they were 'very familiar' with local agricultural product brands, suggesting that awareness of local agricultural brands among consumers remains relatively low.

At the same time, 45.70% of respondents stated they were 'fairly familiar', suggesting that some consumers have begun to develop a certain level of awareness of local agricultural brands, though this awareness remains at an early stage. Approximately 30.86% of respondents stated they were 'not very familiar', whilst 8.20% stated they were 'completely unaware'.

Table 4: Awareness of Local Agricultural Product Brands

Awareness Level	Percentage (%)
Very familiar	15.23
Relatively familiar	45.70
Not very familiar	30.86
Completely unfamiliar	8.20

These findings indicate that local agricultural brands are still, on the whole, in the early stages of development. Although some consumers have developed a basic awareness of these brands, their influence remains limited. The lack of a unified brand identity system, brand narrative and systematic brand communication strategy are key factors contributing to the low level of brand awareness.

Consequently, strengthening agricultural brand development, establishing a unified brand image and enhancing brand communication strategies are crucial pathways for improving the competitiveness of the local agricultural products market.

#### 4.5 Thematic Categorisation of Text Analysis

Table 5 presents the main thematic categories identified through the analysis of in-depth interview transcripts. Following a grounded theory coding analysis of the interview data, a total of 42 conceptual nodes were identified and further summarised into four core themes: product quality, cultural authenticity, brand identity, and digital communication.

Table 5: Key Themes from Text Analysis

Theme Category	Key Concepts
Product quality	Safety, taste, health, ecological production
Cultural authenticity	Farming culture, local stories, traditional crafts
Brand identity	Brand name, packaging design, regional symbols
Digital communication	Short-video platforms, e-commerce, social media

Firstly, regarding product quality, the keywords most frequently mentioned by respondents included 'safety', 'taste', 'health' and 'eco-friendliness'. This indicates that food safety and product quality are the primary concerns for consumers when purchasing agricultural products.

Secondly, regarding cultural authenticity, many respondents highlighted elements such as 'agricultural culture', 'local stories' and 'traditional craftsmanship'. This demonstrates that regional culture holds significant value in the development of agricultural product brands. By integrating cultural narratives into brand storytelling, it is possible to strengthen consumers' emotional connection to the product.

Thirdly, regarding brand identity, respondents generally agreed that brand names, packaging design and regional symbols have a significant impact on the image of agricultural product brands. A brand visual identity system with regional characteristics helps consumers quickly identify the product's origin.

Finally, in terms of digital communication, short-video platforms, e-commerce platforms and social media are considered key channels for promoting agricultural product brands. Digital platforms not only expand market reach but also reinforce brand stories through visual communication.

#### 4.6 Summary of Data Analysis

By combining the results of the questionnaire survey with the analysis of in-depth interview transcripts, it is possible to provide a comprehensive summary of the current status and characteristics of agricultural brand development in Fulü Town, leading to the following main conclusions.

Firstly, the overall demand for local agricultural products is relatively stable. According to the questionnaire results, over half of the respondents indicated that they purchase agricultural products on a regular basis, either weekly or monthly, which demonstrates that such products occupy an important position in the daily consumption patterns of local residents. This stable demand not only reflects the sustainability of the agricultural market but also provides a solid market foundation for agricultural brand development. A stable consumer base implies that branded agricultural products possess significant development potential, offering crucial conditions for future brand promotion and market expansion.

Secondly, traditional sales channels continue to dominate the agricultural product sales system, though digital platforms are developing rapidly. Survey data indicates that physical shops and traditional markets remain the primary sales channels. However, the proportion of usage of digital channels—such as short-video platforms, e-commerce platforms and social media—is gradually increasing. This trend suggests that digital communication is progressively transforming agricultural product sales models. As rural internet infrastructure continues to improve, digital platforms are expected to become key channels for future agricultural brand promotion.

Thirdly, overall brand awareness of local agricultural products remains relatively low. Although some respondents indicated a certain level of familiarity with local agricultural brands, the overall level of brand awareness remains low. This suggests that the local agricultural brand system has not yet formed a complete structure, and brand identity, brand narratives and brand communication strategies still require further refinement. Insufficient brand awareness limits the enhancement of the market value of agricultural products to a certain extent, and also indicates that agricultural brand building still has considerable room for development.

Fourthly, consumers place great emphasis on product quality and cultural authenticity when purchasing agricultural produce. Text analysis reveals that the keywords most frequently mentioned by respondents when describing agricultural products include ‘health’, ‘ecological’, ‘natural’ and ‘traditional’. These keywords indicate that consumers, when purchasing agricultural produce, are concerned not only with product quality but also with the regional culture and production environment embodied by the product. Therefore, integrating local cultural resources into the brand narrative of agricultural products can effectively enhance the brand’s cultural value and market appeal.

Fifth, short-video platforms and e-commerce platforms offer new opportunities for agricultural brand promotion. With the advancement of digital media technology, agricultural product marketing is gradually shifting from traditional offline sales towards online promotion and sales models. By presenting visual content showcasing agricultural production processes and rural life, short-video platforms can enhance consumer trust and improve brand communication efficiency. Meanwhile, e-commerce platforms provide broader market channels for agricultural product sales, enabling local produce to transcend geographical constraints and enter larger consumer markets.

Overall, the quantitative data and qualitative analysis results of this study corroborate one another, indicating that agricultural brand building requires the establishment of a mechanism for synergistic development between product quality, cultural expression and digital communication. Only by integrating regional cultural resources, brand design and digital marketing platforms can the market competitiveness of agricultural brands be further enhanced, thereby promoting the sustainable development of rural industries.

## 5. Discussion

Research findings indicate that the development of agricultural brands depends not only on product quality and market channels, but also on the deep integration of cultural narratives and digital technology. As competition in the agricultural market intensifies, relying solely on the functional attributes of the product itself is no longer sufficient to establish a long-term competitive advantage. Brand equity theory suggests that brand value stems from consumers’ perceptions of the brand, their emotional associations with it, and the trust they place in it. Therefore, in the process of building agricultural brands, transforming local cultural resources into brand narratives is a key means of enhancing brand differentiation.

This study found that Fulū Town possesses rich cultural resources, including traditional farming culture, river trade culture and local historical narratives. These cultural elements not only reflect the developmental process of the local society and history but also provide unique symbolic resources for agricultural brands. However, survey results indicate that local agricultural products are still primarily sold as generic commodities, lacking a unified brand identity system and cultural narrative structure. This phenomenon indicates that cultural resources do not automatically translate into brand value; only through systematic cultural translation and brand design can cultural elements become part of a brand’s assets.

In the brand communication process, cultural elements need to be expressed through visual symbols, brand names and brand stories. Visual design helps consumers quickly identify the brand's origins, whilst brand stories reinforce emotional identification. For instance, integrating local historical narratives, traditional production methods and the natural ecological environment into brand storytelling can enhance a product's authenticity and cultural value, thereby increasing consumer trust in the brand.

Furthermore, the development of digital technology is transforming agricultural brand communication models. Research indicates that whilst traditional offline channels remain the primary method for selling local agricultural products, digital channels such as short-video platforms, e-commerce platforms and social media are gradually becoming significant communication channels. Digital platforms not only break down geographical barriers, enabling agricultural producers to reach a wider consumer base directly, but also showcase agricultural production processes and rural cultural scenes through multimedia content, thereby enhancing brand authenticity and transparency.

The role of short-video platforms in agricultural product marketing is particularly significant. Through short-video content, agricultural producers can showcase the growing environment, production processes and rural lifestyles of their products, enabling consumers to gain a more intuitive understanding of the product's origins. This 'visual narrative' approach to communication effectively boosts consumer trust and enhances the brand's cultural appeal. At the same time, e-commerce platforms provide more convenient transaction channels for agricultural product sales, allowing local produce to access broader markets.

From the perspective of brand communication mechanisms, the development of agricultural brands can be viewed as a process of "cultural resources—brand translation—digital dissemination". Firstly, regional culture provides symbolic resources for the brand; secondly, brand design transforms cultural elements into visual symbols and brand narratives; and finally, digital dissemination platforms expand the brand's influence. The synergy between these three elements constitutes a key mechanism for the development of agricultural brands.

The findings of this study offer significant insights for the development of rural industries. For agricultural producers, relying solely on traditional sales models makes it difficult to establish stable brand value. Therefore, there is a need to strengthen brand design and cultural expression to enable agricultural products to establish a unique identity in the market. At the same time, local governments and rural organisations can also promote local brands through digital platforms, driving the integrated development of agriculture, culture and tourism.

Overall, this study demonstrates that the integration of cultural narratives and digital technology can provide new pathways for agricultural brand development. By transforming local cultural resources into brand symbols and utilising digital communication to expand brand influence, rural areas can establish a more distinctive agricultural brand system within the context of global market competition. This not only helps to enhance the added value of agricultural products but also provides new impetus for rural revitalisation and sustainable rural development.

## 6. Conclusion

This paper takes Fulü Town in the Dadu River Basin of Sichuan Province, China, as its subject of study. Through methods such as questionnaire surveys, in-depth interviews and textual analysis, it conducts a systematic investigation into the current state of local agricultural product branding. The findings indicate that, although Fulü Town possesses abundant agricultural resources and a rich regional cultural heritage, the development of agricultural branding remains at a relatively early stage. Most local agricultural products enter the market as generic commodities, lacking a unified brand identity and a systematic brand communication strategy. Furthermore, whilst local cultural resources are abundant, these cultural elements have not yet been effectively transformed into brand symbols that consumers can recognise and understand. In addition, the sale of local agricultural products remains primarily reliant on traditional offline channels, with digital marketing and brand communication systems being relatively underdeveloped.

The findings further indicate that the development of agricultural brands depends not only on product quality but also on the synergistic effects of cultural narratives and digital communication. Regional culture can provide unique symbolic value for agricultural brands; by integrating elements such as traditional farming culture, local historical narratives and the ecological environment into brand narratives, it is possible to effectively enhance consumers' emotional identification with and cultural understanding of the brand. However, these cultural resources can only be transformed into market-competitive brand assets through translation via brand design and visual expression.

Against the backdrop of digital transformation, short-video platforms, e-commerce platforms and social media offer new opportunities for the dissemination of agricultural brands. Digital platforms not only break down geographical barriers, enabling agricultural products to access broader markets, but also enhance consumer engagement through visual storytelling and interactive communication. Consequently, future agricultural brand strategies should focus on three key areas: firstly, constructing brand narratives with regional characteristics through cultural translation and brand design; secondly, establishing a unified brand identity system and visual image to enhance consumer recognition; and thirdly, making full use of digital communication platforms to strengthen online marketing and brand promotion.

Furthermore, the application of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) offers new possibilities for agricultural brand development. For instance, AI can optimise brand marketing strategies through data analysis, improve the efficiency of agricultural product promotion via intelligent recommendation systems, and strengthen brand communication capabilities through digital content production. By integrating AI technology with agricultural brand communication, the market competitiveness of agricultural products can be further enhanced, thereby promoting rural economic development.

This study explores the mechanisms of agricultural brand development from the perspectives of cultural translation and digital communication, offering a new research perspective for understanding agricultural brand building in rural areas. At the same time, this study provides practical guidance for local governments and agricultural operators in formulating agricultural brand development strategies.

However, this study has certain limitations. For instance, the survey sample was primarily concentrated in Fulü Town and its surrounding areas, with a relatively limited scope; consequently, the applicability of the findings to a broader geographical area remains to be further verified. Future research could conduct comparative studies across wider regions to further explore the differences in agricultural brand development under varying cultural contexts and industrial structures. Furthermore, future research could incorporate methods such as big data analysis or structural equation modelling to conduct a more in-depth quantitative analysis of the factors influencing agricultural branding.

Overall, against the backdrop of the digital economy and rural revitalisation, by integrating local cultural resources, brand design and digital communication technologies, rural areas can gradually establish agricultural brand systems with distinctive local characteristics, thereby enhancing the added value of agricultural products and promoting the sustainable development of the rural economy.

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