

Problems and Countermeasures of Local Government Exploring New Channels for Agricultural Assistance Based on the Analysis of the Officials' Live Commerce

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ABSTRACT

The rapid development of the Internet and artificial intelligence technology has made the live broadcast industry gradually enter the public's field of vision. The effect of live commerce is very significant and has attracted the attention of the government. Government officials have also begun to embark on the live broadcast platform from behind the scenes to explore new channels for helping farmers. This not only alleviates the unsalable situation of agricultural products caused by the epidemic, allows more farmers to taste the sweetness, and accelerates the pace of rural revitalization, but also reflects the determination, patience and confidence of government officials to help rural development. The live commerce of government officials began to test the water in 2019, and good achievements have been made so far. However, there are also problems that breed new formalism, damage government credibility, and decentralize official functions. Therefore, it is also necessary to continuously improve the live commerce of government officials to deliver goods, implement it as a new channel for the people to obtain benefits, and explore the new normal of cooperative governance by various entities.

Keywords: Government officials, Live commerce, Problems and countermeasures.

1. INTRODUCTION

At present, information technology such as the Internet and artificial intelligence technologies have begun to become important external forces to promote social governance, and they have played an important role in reshaping the relationship between the government and society, and improving the efficiency of social governance and public service supply capabilities of county governments. Local governments have begun to use the Internet to explore new channels to seek assistance from farmers. This new channel is that government officials help to sell goods through the live broadcast. China's live broadcast industry has developed rapidly since 2016. From the current situation, live commerce has brought huge profits and traffic. Consumer participation and brand consumption patterns are gradually forming, and the attention of all sectors of society and the number of people actually participating in live

broadcast are also increasing. As of December 2020, the number of online live broadcast users in China has reached 617 million, of which e-commerce live broadcast users have reached 388 million¹. Subsequently, the government also saw the influence of e-commerce platforms on the development of agriculture, rural areas and farmers in China, and pointed out that the officials must be good at using Internet technology and information technology to carry out work, and they must begin to explore new ideas and new business opportunities for agricultural product sales. In 2018, the "Guiding Opinions of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on Winning the Three-Year Action for Poverty Alleviation" and the 2019 "Digital Village Development Strategy Outline" both pointed out that it is necessary to use the Internet to develop digital villages[1] to build a digital China, and it is even more necessary to use

1. The 47th Statistical Report on Internet Development in China: 53 pages.

the Internet to explore new poverty alleviation models to realize rural revitalization strategies [2]. In April 2020, General Secretary Xi Jinping clearly pointed out the important role of e-commerce in promoting agricultural and sideline products during an inspection in Shaanxi². The above policy documents and events indicate that it is necessary to make full use of the Internet + live broadcast, tell stories about agriculture, rural areas and farmers, stand for farmers, speak for agricultural products, and help farmers and rich peasants. Subsequently, the county magistrate began to "test the waters" with the live commerce, and government officials stepped onto the live broadcast platform from behind the scenes and began to cross-border early adopters. Once the different identities merged, a wonderful chemical reaction occurred. Live commerce by government officials is the process by which local government officials, as the main body of the live broadcast, use the government's credibility as the support to increase the credit of regional rural enterprises and assist in the sales of agricultural products. The smooth progress of the live broadcast requires the organic combination and coordination of four types of subjects: the web live broadcast platform, the local government, the merchants or farmers that provide products and services, and the users who watch the live broadcast. The participation of government officials in live commerce is not only an innovative move of grassroots social governance that promotes the circulation of agricultural products on the basis of promoting the development of rural e-commerce, but also reflects the new requirements of the new era for leading cadres. In the context of the new era, government officials must forge ahead, break conventions, and innovate working methods and working methods. However, this method is still in its infancy, and political and academic circles have disputes over it.

2. ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS' LIVE COMMERCE

2.1 Live Commerce Helps Rural Revitalization

The issue of agriculture, rural areas and farmers has always been a fundamental issue related to the national economy and people's livelihood. To realize the strategy of rural revitalization faster and

better, it is necessary to open up the context of rural development and accelerate the pace of rural development. Although China has achieved remarkable results in poverty alleviation, problems such as relatively lagging rural development, weak agricultural product market competitiveness and high sales pressure still exist. Especially under the influence of the new crown epidemic, the economies of various countries have been more or less affected, and the burden on the country has continued to increase, hindering the progress of rural revitalization. From the above, it can be seen that the emergence of government officials' live commerce has its special strategic significance and practical value. The innovative development of rural industries requires the help of live commerce, and the help of live commerce is needed to solve the unsalable agricultural products caused by public health emergencies. With its short sales time and amazing sales effect, this method has promoted the rapid circulation of unsold agricultural products, brought benefits to farmers, innovated channels for promoting agricultural products, and opened up a new way for the development of rural industries. In addition, the realization of the rural revitalization strategy must involve the actual participation of leading cadres. The live commerce of government officials provides channels and opportunities for cadres to explore the modernization of local government governance capabilities. In general, government officials' live commerce has promoted the sale of agricultural products and increased farmers' income. From a deeper level, it also shows the determination, patience and confidence of the local government to solve problems for farmers, which is the guarantee for realizing rural revitalization and overcoming poverty. The road is obstructed and long, but if people keep going, it will be approaching. As long as people persist in exploring new channels for agricultural assistance, China's rural revitalization is just around the corner [3].

2.2 Live Commerce Helps the Interaction Between Officials and Citizens

Officials' live commerce enables local governments to interact with the public through a new sales model of Internet + government + farmers, opening up a new channel for the people to benefit from the Internet era. This approach can first optimize the image of the local government in the minds of the public. Leading cadres appear on the platform and broadcast live with affection. In this process, they put down their shelves and leaned

2. http://sociology.cssn.cn/shxsw/swx_kycg/swx_yjbg/202005/t20200515_5129614.html

down, establishing an image of public servants who are diligent for the people and sincerely helping the farmers, and they have established an image of a responsible government that seeks truth from facts and introduces new ideas. Not only do they sell local special agricultural products, they also gain popular support. Secondly, the actual needs of the public can not only be better perceived by the local government, but the public feels the freshness of the live broadcast in the process, and they are very willing to communicate and communicate with the anchor in real time through barrage and comments, which is also conducive to the public breaking the traditional cognition of leading cadres, refreshing the stereotype of local officials, and increasing the intimacy towards local officials. In short, government officials' live commerce is to use the Internet as a platform to achieve close contact between the government and the public. This new method has narrowed the distance between government officials, live broadcast platforms, farmers who provide agricultural products, and viewers watching the live broadcast. The first is to enable government officials to become agricultural product propagandists and helpers for poverty alleviation, and to maintain the image of a service-oriented and responsible government. The second is that the influence of government officials increases the exposure of live broadcast platforms and increases platform traffic. The third is to make the farmers at the grass-roots level feel the care and help given to them by the government, so that they can improve their e-commerce awareness and skills. And the fourth is to create a sense of trust and intimacy for the audience. The four types of live commerce promote each other in multi-party collaboration, and explore the new normal of cooperative governance by each entity.

2.3 Live Commerce Helps the Industrial Linkage

Industrial linkage can support the sustainable development of rural areas and is an important driving force and fundamental requirement for rural development. At present, China's rural development has entered a new stage, rural industries continue to expand, and new rural businesses continue to emerge. The participation of government officials in the live commerce has played a positive role in promoting the linkage of rural industries. In addition, the more local governments attach importance to live commerce, the more it has guiding and exemplary significance for the prosperity and development of the network

economy. Since the Internet live broadcast, a new type of online marketing model, needs the support of data, marketing, logistics, etc., in order to promote the effect of government officials' live commerce, and to carry out public welfare poverty alleviation and agricultural advertising in all directions, all time and space, and all platforms, it is necessary to increase investment in new infrastructure such as 5G, Internet of Things, and cloud computing in rural areas, so that the development of rural areas in China can adapt to the development requirements of the new era. Wang Sixin, deputy dean of the Institute of Community with a Shared Future for Humanity, Communication University of China, expressed the same view. He analyzed that the intervention of government officials will lead to follow-up of other measures. To promote the lasting and planned development of the webcast economy, local governments will adjust related industries to make the connection between various industries closer, such as the data industry. Because when there are more live broadcasts, there would be more data accumulation. When there are more live broadcasts, more agricultural products are sold, and the logistics industry can also be driven. The industry has achieved linkage, which has enriched the market, and effectively activated the local economy.

3. DISADVANTAGES OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS' LIVE COMMERCE

3.1 Breeding New Formalism

Information technology has deeply integrated the Internet and government governance, which has brought many conveniences to the development of government work. However, once government officials' live commerce deviates from the original intention of technology empowerment, it is not conducive to the construction of work styles, which makes new formalisms such as information formalism that uses information technology to waste information platform investment and intelligent bureaucracy that uses information technology to slacken government to appear [4]. These new variants of formalism make the work at the grassroots level go from reality to empty, waste administrative resources, affect work style, and consume cadres' energy. Some scholars have pointed out that if officials' live broadcasts become the norm, exaggeration may occur, and there may even be a bubble of political performance that will distract officials from their work. Leading cadres'

live commerce is a good thing for the country and the people. The use of information technology to promote work is convenient and effective. However, at present, some leading cadres have distorted the original intention of live commerce, turning the cart before the horse, and treating the live broadcast room as a show, causing traffic injections, sales frauds, large distributions of posts, publicity greater than actions, and the use of new media to deceive themselves. In addition, webcasting allows the public to express their opinions and speak freely, which makes the live broadcast face the problem of public noise. In order to cater to government officials, some members of the public have turned the government official live broadcast room into a place for leaders to compliment and praise the leaders, and flattery appears one after another. These practices seem innocuous, but they are actually a kind of bureaucracy, affecting the ecology of the officialdom, and even distorting the original intention of government officials on the live commerce.

3.2 Damaging the Credibility of Local Governments

The effect of the officials' live commerce is obvious, and it has won the recognition of the vast number of consumers, and consumers are also willing to pay for it. The main reason why government officials' live commerce can achieve results in a short period of time lies in the hidden soft power behind it — government credibility [5], which means that the government live commerce is not just an outbound activity, it is actually a form of government service that guarantees the government's credit for the enterprise and supports the development of the enterprise. The product is endorsed by the government's credibility, and the product's credit is improved. Consumers naturally feel that the product can be bought with peace of mind and eat at ease. The enthusiasm for participating in some live broadcast activities to help farmers will also increase. These are all intangible assets for the government. However, the agricultural products supported by the government with credibility have unstable factors. Agricultural products have their particularities, and its quality is difficult to control. Once the agricultural products sold have problems, the government's credibility will be damaged. First, it is the uneven quality of the growth of agricultural products due to the external environment. The growth of agricultural products will be affected by the natural environment, and soil, humidity, and light can all

affect the quality of the products. Second, the quality of agricultural product picking is uneven due to the influence of human factors. Due to the time and method of manual picking, the taste of agricultural products will also vary. Third, bumps and damages will inevitably occur in the process of storage and transportation of agricultural products. Fourth, the sale of agricultural products must have matching after-sales. Since the existence of the first three conditions increases the probability of problems with agricultural products, it is more difficult to sell the products, and a complete after-sales service can dispel consumers' worries to a certain extent. Since government officials cannot spend all their energy on the production, sales, transportation, and after-sales links of agricultural products, there may be problems with the quality of the corresponding products. If a problem occurs in a certain link, the public will feel dissatisfied, and the government's credibility may be damaged.

3.3 Decentralizing the Functional Focus of Government Officials

The function of the local government is not only to complete the tasks of the higher-level government, but more importantly, to build itself into a limited, service-oriented, and efficient government that can solve social conflicts and ease social relations. At present, because official live broadcasts play an important role in promoting grassroots governance innovation, it has been recognized and valued by local governments, and some local governments even use this behavior as part of government functions. However, there is a tendency for government officials to trifles and neglect the essentials in the live commerce, and abandon other common, effective, low-cost methods. There is also the problem of decentralizing official functions, which will create a new dilemma of responsibility. First, the government needs to devote more energy to maintain the complex relationship between multiple subjects. Because the rapid development of network technology makes the connection and cooperation between the government, enterprises, and the public closer, and the relationship between the three generally requires the government to be the leader. Secondly, government officials cannot fully adapt to this new type of activity in a short period of time due to the lack of a real webcast experience before. It is more likely that due to the shackles of identity, their personality characteristics cannot be fully displayed, which greatly reduces the effect of live commerce. In order to break the inherent image of

government officials, and to enhance the viewing and interactive nature of live broadcasts, it is necessary to improve the main body, content and form of the live commerce. However, government officials have to spend extra time and energy to practice and try, which increases their work pressure and distracts their functional focus [6].

4. RESEARCH ON THE COUNTERMEASURES OF OPTIMIZING GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS' LIVE COMMERCE

4.1 Giving More Supervision to Officials and Products

The first is to strengthen the supervision of officials and create a lively and pure live broadcast room. At present, regulations such as the "Regulations on the Administration of Internet Live Broadcasting Services", the "Notice on Strengthening the Management of Live Broadcast Service Management of Online Trial Listening Programs", and the "Self-Discipline Convention for the Prohibited Web Live Broadcasting Industry" require the regulation of barrage and comments in live broadcast rooms, and more importantly, it is necessary to standardize the content of the live broadcast, and create a clean and vigorous government affairs live broadcast room. Some scholars also pointed out that the business boundaries must be clarified. Leading cadres need to be approved to enter the live broadcast room to sell products, and cadres who participate in relevant marketing activities at will need to be punished. In addition, the products brought by government officials should be limited to specialty products that are unsalable due to special circumstances. The second is to strengthen platform supervision and strictly control product quality. The platform is an intermediary for the smooth progress of live broadcasts. There will be a necessity to urge relevant departments to strengthen the supervision of the platform, increase the illegal cost of online live commerce, encourage e-commerce platforms to improve the integrity evaluation mechanism of agricultural product live broadcasts and implement list management [7], and establish a traceability system to promote the healthy and rapid development of the live broadcast economy of agricultural products. Secondly, it is a must to control the quality, ensure the quality and safety of agricultural products, reduce the occurrence of problems such as poor after-sales, and even

improve the supply of products. In the long run, only by regulating the behavior of officials, ensuring the formality of the platform and ensuring the quality of products, can the live webcast room be full of positive energy, and the power of the government, the platform, and the public can be condensed to ensure democratic consultations and win-win cooperation among all subjects.

4.2 Strengthening the Training of Professional Talents

The effect of government officials' live commerce is very significant, and this method is effective in solving the problem of unsalable agricultural products caused by emergencies. It can be seen that the live commerce supported by government authority is worth promoting, but some scholars pointed out that the official live commerce is a personalized and short-term behavior, which can only stimulate the development of a few brands and can only solve the temporary problem of unsalable agricultural products. It is not a long-term solution and cannot be normalized. Government officials cannot become anchors. Therefore, the live broadcast by professionals authorized by the government can achieve a situation of both ends. However, at present, agricultural production and operation units generally lack professionals who understand live broadcast skills, and the cost of outsourcing to professional teams is too high. This is a heavy burden for traditional industries such as agricultural production, which severely reduces profits. Therefore, what the government needs to do is not only to increase the supervision of the agricultural live broadcast industry through the popularization and promotion of the "Code of Conduct for Online Live Marketing" and other laws and regulations, but also to enhance the training of rural live broadcast professionals and expand the talent pool by the government. It can not only make the live commerce of government officials not a flash in the pan, make this effect last, but also reduce the problems of government officials in it, avoiding the emergence of problems that damage the government's credibility and the government's image, and alleviating the pressure on agriculture, rural areas and farmers.

4.3 Hardware Equipment Must Keep Up

The live commerce of government officials is an emerging product of local governments, media, technology and other subjects and fields. Therefore, the smooth progress of government officials' live

broadcast must be supported by innovative technology. In terms of hardware technology, there is a must to first regulate the Internet live broadcast channels. The government can set up a live broadcast room entrance on government websites, government affairs microblogs, and government affairs official accounts, or cooperate with third-party platforms with a large number of public views, and expand government officials' attention to live commerce by leveraging the influence of third-party platforms. Currently, there are many live broadcast channels for agricultural products, including platforms such as Douyin and Taobao with high dissemination, as well as e-commerce platforms built by local governments. To a certain extent, it will be an diversion to attract traffic. Therefore, it is necessary to integrate and plan e-commerce platforms. Secondly, it is of great significance to make full use of the dividends brought by Internet technology. For example, it is necessary for the officials to make full use of technical means such as artificial intelligence algorithm recommendation, and regularly pushing the news and content of government officials' live commerce to the public by understanding the time and content of the public viewing the live broadcast platform, which is hoped that user viscosity can be formed and the short-term freshness of the public will be transformed into lasting loyalty. It can also make full use of the artificial intelligence system to supervise live content, ease the pressure of human supervision, and reduce the cost of traditional human supervision. Finally, blockchain technology can be introduced to generate blocks of live content to facilitate the review of live content and improve the standardization and reliability of live content.

5. CONCLUSION

The prevalence of webcasting has its special significance. As a special group of government officials, carrying out live commerce has its novelty and flaws. On the one hand, it can not only increase the interaction between the government and the public, optimize the image of the government, but also solve the problem of unsalable agricultural products caused by special circumstances, promote agricultural products and platforms, and open new channels for rural revitalization. On the other hand, it will increase the pressure of government work, distract government officials from their functions, and that government officials' live-streaming of goods cannot be normalized and long-lasting, because from the current point of view, this is just one of the ways to solve the problem of unsalable

agricultural products caused by the epidemic. More importantly, the focus of government officials' live commerce is on the sellers who provide agricultural products, and they do not consider the seller's needs. In the long run, there may be problems of supply and non-needed, which does not meet the characteristics of the socialization of government services. Therefore, it is also necessary to continuously improve the live commerce model, use live broadcast as a carrier to create products suitable for online sales, cultivate and build an ecological system for local e-commerce sales, and promote the high-quality development of rural agriculture.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Ruoxue Zou conceived, collected information and wrote the manuscript, Huafeng Lu contributed to revising and giving some suggestions.

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