



# Frontier hotspots and trend evolution of Rural Cultural and Creative Industries in China—an empirical research on CNKI-based bibliometrics

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**Abstract.** The rural cultural industry is one of the essential ways to realize industrial prosperity and cultural enrichment in rural revitalization and has received extensive attention from scholars in recent years. To objectively reflect the current situation and trend of research in the field of rural cultural industry since the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, this paper uses bibliometric methodology and CiteSpace software to visualize and quantitatively analyze the core literature of CNKI database with "rural revitalization & rural cultural industry" as the content of the research from the three aspects of the current situation of the analysis, the trend of the research and the research hotspots. The study analyzes the core literature of "rural revitalization & rural culture industry" in the CNKI database from the research status, evolution trend, and research hotspot. It is found that the academic attention to rural cultural industry is proliferating, and it is now in the hot period led by the national policy. However, there needs to be more cooperation and communication between domestic authors and institutions. This field is still in the early research stage, and the evolution trend is characterized by the change from a centralized focus to diversified attention. Three clustered themes are formed: industrial poverty alleviation, industrial attributes, and industrial integration. The research content tends to favor the research on industrial and cultural features, but there needs to be more research on economic facts.

**Keywords:** Rural Revitalization; Rural Cultural Industries; Quantitative Analysis; CiteSpace; Knowledge Map.

## 1 Introduction

The rural cultural industry has strong practical feasibility and good development prospects in the implementation of China's rural revitalization strategy, which can effectively help rural economic transformation and upgrading, promote the prosperity of rural culture, promote the social harmony and stability of the countryside, and improve the rural ecological environment, etc. Cultural industry is a kind of economic form through the creation, dissemination, and consumption of culture. [1] The essence of the culture industry is a kind of organic economic form through creating, spreading, and consuming culture. As the birthplace of traditional culture, the countryside has rich and

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diverse cultural and genetic resources, and the abundant cultural capital provides a deep foundation and unlimited prospects for developing the rural cultural industry. [2]With the gradual development of rural revitalization, many scholars have achieved considerable research results in the field of rural cultural industry; for example, Sheng Shuaishuai et al. (2021)[3], Shao Minghua (2020)[4] and other scholars have explored the path of development of the rural cultural industry from the perspectives of policy, industry, and culture. Scholars such as Hua Shuangyan (2020)[5]and Xu Chunhua (2020)[6] have studied the industrial integration of rural cultural industry. Zhou Jin (2020)[7], Yang Honglin (2020)[8], and other scholars have explored the synergistic development of urban-rural integration and cultural industry in rural revitalization. Because the current domestic academic community has not yet been able to carry out systematic sorting work for the above results and lacks of quantitative research analysis. In this paper, we will apply bibliometric methods to the research results of the previous researchers, construct a knowledge map through CiteSpace software, and quantitatively analyze the research status, development trend, and research hotspots of China's rural cultural industry under the background of rural revitalization, to provide scientific and objective references for China's rural cultural industry research.

## **2 Research method: bibliometrics**

### **2.1 Literature sources**

Through the previous literature research, it is found that, since many of the current rural cultural industry research literature in the theme, keywords title, and other important search scopes, commonly used characteristics of cultural industries, cultural industry revitalization, creative industries and other similar terms to replace the rural cultural industry, rural cultural revitalization and rural revitalization strategy to replace the rural revitalization, to avoid the search of the missing data, and to further enhance the process of literature collection of the check rate. To avoid missing data and further enhance the search rate of the literature collection process, this paper conducts a full-text advanced search in the Chinese database of academic journals on China Knowledge Network (CNKI) with the search term "rural revitalization\*rural culture industry" in which the main theme is "rural revitalization," "rural revitalization strategy," "cultural industry," "rural revitalization strategy," "cultural industry," and so on. Strategy," "cultural industry," "rural cultural industry," "cultural industry development," "cultural industry revitalization," "Creative Industries," "Specialized Cultural Industries." As the rural revitalization strategy was first proposed in the report of the 19th CPC National Congress in October 2017, the literature search time is set from 2017-2023, and the operation time is October 30, 2023, to ensure the quality of the literature, the Chinese core, CSSCI, and CSCD databases are used as the source of data analysis, and after multiple searches and screening to obtain 804 pieces of literature, to reduce the research error, to ensure the rate of checking accuracy and research precision, the data are manually compared and screened, eliminating invalid data such as news reports, conference notices, book reviews, secondary reprints of the class and literature with low relevance, and finally selecting 627 pieces of valid literature.

## 2.2 Research Methodology and Procedures

The bibliometric method is a quantitative analysis using various characteristics of the literature as the researched object. It uses the methods of mathematics and statistics to describe, evaluate, and predict the current situation and development trend of the research field, which belongs to the branch of library and information science.

CiteSpace is a citation visualization and analysis software supported by scientometrics and data visualization, which is mainly based on the theory of co-citation analysis (co-citation) and pathfinder network algorithms (pathFinder), etc., to quantify the information visualization of literature data. [9] The bibliometric method mainly uses statistical and mathematical methods to study the external formal characteristics of the literature in order to analyze the quantitative relationship, distribution structure, and change trend of the literature. [10] On the basis of the bibliometric method, this paper quantitatively analyzes the research in the field of rural cultural industry under the background of rural revitalization with the help of CiteSpace software.

## 3 Analysis of research results

### 3.1 Statistics of the basic situation

An important indicator for assessing the current status of research in this field is the trend change in the number of literature publications. In 2017, no relevant core journal articles were retrieved, resulting in a publication output of 0 articles. This is likely due to the fact that the rural revitalization strategy was first proposed in October 2017, and there is a certain time lag from the initiation of related research in the field of rural cultural industries to the publication of papers. The publication output increased significantly in subsequent years, with 37 articles in 2018, 105 articles in 2019, 198 articles in 2022, and 287 articles from January to October 2023. The publication output for 2023 already surpasses that of 2022. As of the retrieval date on June 15, 2023, a total of 627 articles have been published, showing a noticeable growth in annual publication output.

Several factors are contributing to this growth. First, rural areas in China are the origin and treasure trove of Chinese culture. The rich cultural resources, including natural scenery, cultural structures, local customs, and unique abilities, can be transformed into products and services with modern cultural and artistic styles through the rural cultural industry. This not only generates income for local villagers but also promotes the localized development of the industry by utilizing local resources. Second, poverty alleviation and cultural revitalization have become important parts of the strategy with the government's introduction and improvement of the rural revitalization strategy policy. Due to its dual nature of culture and industry, the cultural industry can effectively optimize the development path of poverty alleviation and cultural revitalization. This has significant advantages over other industries. This has motivated scholars to focus on relevant research objectives. To sum up, since the rural revitalization strategy was proposed, rural cultural industries continue to receive scholarly attention, and future prospects seem promising.

Overall, the new requirements of industrial prosperity, cultural enrichment, and eco-friendly living have become important components of rural revitalization with the release of the "Opinion on Comprehensively Promoting Rural Revitalization and Accelerating Agricultural and Rural Modernization" on February 21, 2021, which marks the comprehensive launch of rural revitalization work nationwide. There has been an increase in the importance of cultural industries in rural areas, and research in this field is currently in a period of enthusiasm under the impetus of national policies. As the work of rural revitalization progresses, the depth and breadth of research on rural cultural industries will continue to improve, and the topics and results of research will become more and more diverse.

### **3.2 Analysis of the system of cultural and creative research**

The analysis of authors' co-occurrence can reflect the core authors in this field, the intensity of their cooperation, and the mutual citation relationship. [11] According to the statistics of the number of articles published in this field, the core group of authors focuses on the development of the cultural industry and urban-rural integration, cultural poverty alleviation, cultural and tourism integration, etc. The research cooperation presents the characteristics of "big dispersion, small concentration." Most of the authors are in the state of independent research, and even if they work together, they mostly work on a small scale, between 2 and 5 people. Most of the authors are in independent research status, and even if they cooperate, it is mostly small-scale cooperation between 2-5 people, mainly between scholars within each research institution and agency, and very little cross-institutional and institutional cooperation. Among them, the School of Geography and Marine Science of Nanjing University, the School of Geographic Science of Nanjing Normal University, the Collaborative Innovation Center for Geographic Information Resources Development and Utilization of Jiangsu Province, the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Resources of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and the Key Laboratory for Analysis and Simulation of Regional Sustainable Development of the Chinese Academy of Sciences are the institutions with more cooperation and contacts in this field. In addition, the core authors' research fields are related to geography, culture, tourism, history, humans, politics, ethnology, etc. Focusing on the domains of humanities and social sciences, which encompass geography, management, and economic disciplines., it can be seen that the research in this field involves a certain breadth and diversification of disciplines. However, there is very little literature with the background of applied disciplines with high relevance to the research in this field, such as design and architecture, which also reflects the lack of research on the product and service contents of rural cultural industry and the weak research on cultural creativity and design. Creativity and design are the frontiers of product and service research and development of the rural cultural industry, which is the key factor in driving innovation of the cultural industry and also one of the core values distinguishing it from other general industries. The lack of core values will lead to the homogenization of the rural cultural industry in China, and low-added values will become a common problem.

### 3.3 Analysis of research hotspots in China's Rural Cultural and Creative Industries

The frequency and centrality size of the keywords can be used to understand the research hotspots and future trends of the rural cultural industry in the context of rural revitalization in China. Based on the analysis of word frequency statistics, if certain keywords appear frequently in many literatures in the field, then these keywords are the research hotspots in the field. Mediation centrality refers to the number of times a node serves as a bridge for the shortest path between two other nodes, which is an index reflecting the importance of the node, and the higher mediation means that the node is likely to foretell future research trends in the field. [12] (see Figure 1).

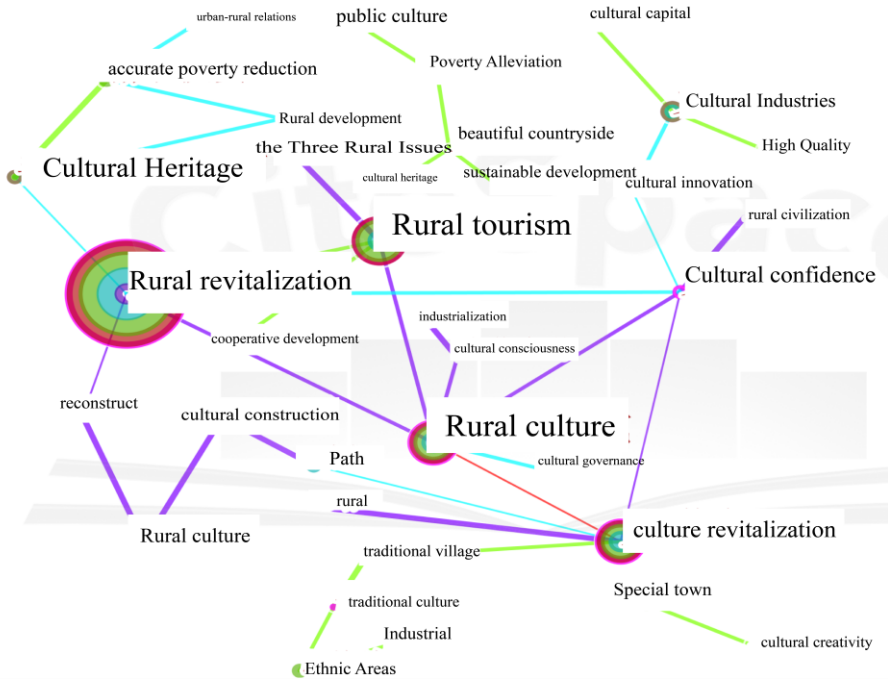


Fig. 1. Analysis of keyword co-occurrence

The keywords were ranked according to their frequency of occurrence and mediated centrality, respectively, to obtain the top 15 keywords in terms of frequency of occurrence and the top 15 keywords in terms of mediated centrality (see Table 1).

Through the summarization and analysis of Table 1, it can be seen that the highest frequency of rural revitalization is 241, the frequency of rural tourism is 52, and the frequency of rural culture is 33. The diameter of the keyword node in the atlas reflects the number of times the keyword has appeared in the literature samples, and the color of each layer of the year represents the corresponding year, and the wider the color of each layer means that the keyword has appeared more often in that year. By summarizing and analyzing the above information, it can be seen that the frequency of "rural revitalization" is higher in the early years but has a decreasing trend in recent years,

while the two keywords "rural culture" and "rural tourism" have received more attention in the last two years than in the last two years. The keywords "rural culture" and "rural tourism" have attracted more attention than "rural revitalization" in the past two years, and the centrality of "rural culture" is 0.41, indicating that "rural culture" should be the new hotspot and future development trend in this research field. This indicates that "rural culture" should be a new hotspot and future development trend in this research field. In addition, there are other high-frequency words in the field of rural culture industry, such as rural culture revitalization (frequency 22), culture revitalization (frequency 16), culture industry (frequency 15), intangible cultural heritage (frequency 12), culture and tourism fusion (frequency 11), industry fusion (frequency 9), and featured small town (frequency 9), which are also the main hotspots of this research field.

**Table 1.** Top 15 keywords (frequency of occurrence, intermediary centrality)

No.	Keywords	Frequency	Keywords	Centrality
1	Rural revitalization	241	Rural culture	0.41
2	Rural tourism	52	Rural tourism	0.28
3	Rural culture	33	Rural revitalization	0.21
4	Rural revitalization	22	Cultural confidence	0.18
5	Cultural revitalization	16	Cultural revitalization	0.13
6	Cultural Industries	15	Rural Revitalization	0.08
7	Cultural Heritage	12	Path	0.08
8	Cultural Tourism	11	Cultural Tourism	0.07
9	Industrial Integration	9	Cultural Industries	0.06
10	Special Town	9	Cultural Heritage	0.04
11	Poverty Alleviation	9	Ethnic Areas	0.04
12	Path	9	Industrial integration	0.02
13	High-quality	9	Special town	0.01
14	Cultural Confidence	8	High Quality	0.01
15	Ethnic areas	8	poverty alleviation	0.01

As far as the CiteSpace tool is concerned, the nodes whose mediated centrality of related nodes is greater than 0.1 are called key nodes. [11] As can be seen from Table 1, keywords such as rural culture (0.41), rural tourism (0.28), rural revitalization (0.21), cultural self-confidence (0.18), and cultural revitalization (0.13) have become the key nodes of the research in the field of rural cultural industry under the background of rural revitalization in China, and also reflect that scholars currently researching on China's rural cultural industry adhere to the ideology of abiding by the truth and innovation, and closely focus on the national socialist core values to carry out research. In addition, most scholars basically focus on the research of the cultural value of the industry, which will also remain the main research content in the field in the future. In addition, there is a partial difference between the frequency of the top 15 keywords in Table 1 and the mediated centrality ranking, which also indicates that there is still a lack of research depth in the field of rural cultural industry.

### 3.4 Keyword Cluster Analysis

The co-occurrence analysis of keywords can reflect the overview and importance of the research hotspots, but at this time, the research hotspots are still fragmented and unsystematic, and the structural relationship between the keywords is not revealed, which needs to be co-occurrence analyzed to form the research theme. [12] To further study the deep relationship between the hotspots in this field, based on the co-occurrence analysis of keywords, LLR (Log-Likelihood Ratio) was used to extract noun terms for keywords for clustering and naming, and the keyword clustering map of the research in the field of rural cultural industry was obtained (see Fig. 2), which formed seven clusters with cluster labels numbered from #0 to #6, and the cluster label The number is inversely proportional to the size of the clusters, the smaller the number is, the larger the clusters are, and the more keywords they contain. The modularity Q value is 0.6937 ( $>0.3$ ), which indicates that the clusters are valid, and the Mean Silhouette average contour value is 0.8652 ( $>0.5$ ), indicating that the consistency of the members of the clusters is good, and they have a higher degree of confidence.

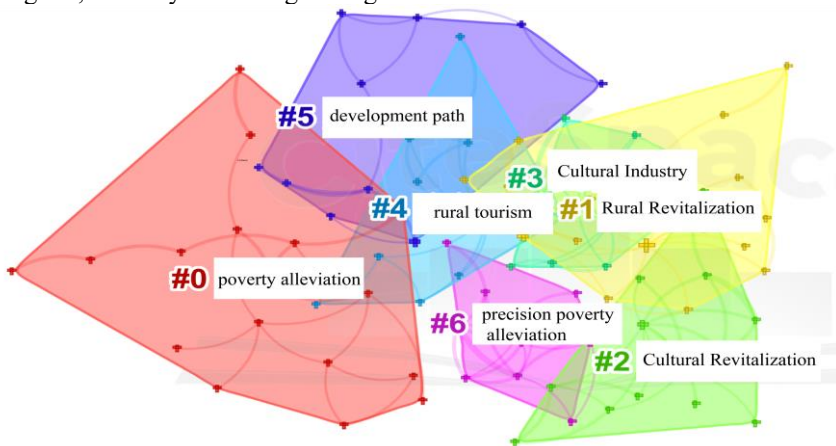


Fig. 2. Keyword clustering map

The keyword clustering can be summarized into three research themes: industrial poverty alleviation, industrial attributes, and industrial integration. Applying the technique of content analysis to further analyze the literature data., ten representative articles are selected for each theme for intensive reading, and the contents of hot topics are summarized on the basis of intensive reading of the literature, as summarized below:

1. Industrial poverty alleviation. It includes two clusters, "#0 Poverty Eradication" and "#6 Precision Poverty Alleviation", which can be summarized as Rural Poverty Alleviation. Getting rid of poverty is a prerequisite for rural revitalization, and the problem of rural poverty is the main shortcoming in China's economic and social development. At present, there are three main views in the academic community: First, art and design to alleviate poverty; design can activate the local traditional handicrafts; the countryside can use its own characteristics and cultural resources to establish rural brands, help to accurately alleviate poverty, and ultimately achieve the revitalization of

the rural economy. The second is poverty alleviation through intangible heritage. Making full use of intangible cultural heritage can promote the sustainable development of culture and industry in ethnic regions, thus realizing precise poverty alleviation in ethnic minority regions. Thirdly, cultural tourism poverty alleviation is an important means of blood-creation poverty alleviation in China, which can effectively help poor areas quickly realize the task of poverty alleviation. Generally speaking, the rural cultural industry is a sustainable way of poverty alleviation for solving rural poverty, but scholars have done very little research on the operation and management of poverty alleviation projects and market research, and there is a lack of overall systematic research.

2. Industrial attributes. It includes three clusters: "#1 Rural Revitalization", "#2 Cultural Revitalization" and "#3 Cultural Industry". The cultural industry has both cultural and industrial attributes, which are its basic characteristics. The cultural attribute is an ideological attribute that refers to the function of cultural dissemination and cultural development. The industrial attribute is the economic attribute, which is the economic activity of transforming cultural symbols into products and services. In addition, because the cultural industry takes culture as the industrial content to realize its economic value, resulting in the industrial attributes, which are constrained and influenced by the cultural attributes. Therefore, it is difficult to study the industrial attributes of rural cultural industry divorced from the cultural attributes.

Currently, scholars have discussed and researched from the perspectives of cultural inheritance, cultural revitalization, cultural confidence, industrial structure, urban-rural integration, and high-quality development. The inheritance of outstanding rural culture requires the enhancement of advanced production relations that are compatible with the development of productive forces of the times contained behind the core cultural values of the industry, and to realize the revitalization of rural culture, it is necessary to promote the integration of cultural revitalization, ecological revitalization, and industrial revitalization, and to build a characteristic brand of the countryside. In a word, the industrial transformation of cultural resources in the attributes of rural cultural industry is the core factor for the development of cultural industry, in which the use of rural cultural resources in different places to create and develop differentiated characteristics of rural cultural industry is a common conclusion recognized by all scholars. However, most of the current research on industrial attributes focuses on cultural resources and policy environment and lacks research on technological innovation, market demand, professional talents, and industrial clusters. In addition, most of the research on rural cultural industry lacks market research data, operation case analysis, and business model construction and basically focuses on qualitative analysis, which inevitably influences the conclusions of the research by the researchers' subjective cognition and experience and fails to objectively reflect the market demand. In general, however, the rural cultural industry is characterized by fast and convenient, green and environmental protection, diversified forms of business with high value-addedness, etc. It can turn rural cultural resources into industrial content, create cultural and economic value, and is one of the important ways to realize rural revitalization. However, it should adhere to the mission of "localization" of the industry, innovation and creativity as the driving force, and sustainable development as the goal, to ensure the competitiveness of the



rural cultural industry in today's diversified market so as to better help the implementation of the strategy of rural revitalization to move forward steadily.

3. Industrial integration. Including "#4 rural tourism" and "#5 development path" two clusters. Industrial integration refers to the dynamic development process in which different industries or different sectors of the same industry penetrate and cross each other, merge into one, and form new industries. At present, there is mainly the integration of cultural industry and modern agriculture, the integration of cultural industry and tourism industry, the integration of cultural ecotourism and health industry, and other research. It can be seen that rural tourism is currently the intermediary core plate of the integration of rural cultural industries, but the relevant research only focuses on individual regional case studies, the lack of systematic research, the phenomenon of homogenization of rural tourism around the countryside is more serious, the quality is lower, most of the maintenance of small-scale operations, the development of the level and intensification is low, the overall integration of culture and tourism is not deep enough. In addition, most of the countryside is not suitable for the development of tourism; the countryside is mainly agriculture, farmers, and rural areas of the "three rural" complex, "three rural issues" is still the focus of the current rural revitalization of the industrial prosperity of the object, how to combine the cultural industry with the "three rural," the "three rural," the "three rural" and the "three rural." How to combine the cultural industry with the "three rural areas" and extend the rural industrial chain should be a key concern, but less targeted related research. In summary, the industrial structure of industrial integration in this field needs to be optimized, the industrial content needs to be deeply excavated, and the overall scale of the industry is small, lacking diversity and creativity. At the same time, there is also a lack of research on the projects and market operation of the rural cultural industry in this cluster.

## 4 Conclusions

This paper uses the bibliometric method, with the help of CiteSpace software, to comb and analyze the relevant research literature on rural cultural industry from the three aspects of research status quo, evolution trend, and research hotspot, and the results found that since the rural revitalization strategy was put forward in 2017, the academic attention to the rural cultural industry has been growing rapidly, the topics and achievements have been enriched, and the heat of the research is continuing to go up, and it is currently in a national policy-led boom period, and the research institutions in each geographical region reflect the phenomenon of research tailored to local conditions. However, the cooperation relationship between authors in this research field is weak, mostly independent research, lack of effective organization and construction, the overall state of "big dispersion, small concentration," the research background of scholars is concentrated in the field of humanities and social sciences, and the related applied disciplines are involved in less, and the distribution of scientific research power in various regions of the country is uneven, which is not conducive to the integration, innovation, and deepening of research results of academic resources.

This is not conducive to the integration and innovation of academic resources and the deepening and expansion of research results. This field is still in the early stage of research, without forming a systematic and logical research framework and theoretical results, and the research hotspots focus on the cultural attributes of the industry, but the economic attributes of the industry are less researched. The trend of research evolution shows the characteristics of concentrated focus to diversified attention, in which "rural culture" is the new research hotspot and future trend in this field, forming three hotspot clustering themes of industrial poverty alleviation, industrial attributes, and industrial integration. Among them, products and service contents, industrial talents and market operation, industrial structure, and business forms are the main weak points of the research in this field. To sum up, in the future research process of the rural cultural industry, scholars and organizations should strengthen cooperation and exchange, especially cross-regional cooperation, and set up a core team, which is the basis for ensuring the quality and depth of the research. Moreover, based on meeting the market demand, we should strengthen the research on the economic attributes of the industry and increase the research efforts on the industrial structure and forms of industry, the innovation and design consciousness of products and services, the application of technology and the market demand, as well as the industrial talents and operation and management, etc., so as to better promote the in-depth and development of the research on rural cultural industry in China.

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