

Article

Investigating the Influence Mechanism of Douyin Live on the Sale of Traditional Handicrafts in China—Based on a Dual Perspective of Youth Participation

Linlin Li ¹, Jiayan Chen ¹, Dubin Dong ², Jialu Chen ³ and Luhu Shuai ^{1,*}

1 Institute of Ecological Civilization, Zhejiang A&F University, Hangzhou 310007, China; 20140036@zafu.edu.cn (L.L.); 1661974114@qq.com (J.C.)

2 College of Tea Science and Tea Culture, Zhejiang A&F University, Hangzhou 310007, China; 812588636@qq.com

3 College of Economics and Management, Zhejiang A&F University, Hangzhou 310007, China; 2469388588@qq.com

* Correspondence: slh@zafu.edu.cn

Abstract: As an integral component of Chinese national culture, traditional handicrafts face dual challenges of being replaced by modern industrial products and market contraction. In the context of the digital economy, the youth demographic, serving as primary participants and innovators in live-streaming e-commerce, positions Douyin live as a pivotal avenue to explore new opportunities for traditional handicrafts in modern markets. This study focuses on Lin'an District, Hangzhou City, Zhejiang Province, employing questionnaire surveys and on-site interviews with 53 artisans to investigate the role of Douyin live in enhancing the sales of traditional handicrafts. The findings reveal that youth engagement drives the sales of traditional handicrafts through dual pathways of consumption support and cultural participation: young creators significantly improve the online visibility of handicrafts through content innovation; the Douyin platform facilitates the preservation of intangible cultural heritage, markedly boosting market sales; and policy support and resource integration facilitated by Douyin positively influence sales, with young livestream hosts demonstrating greater adaptability in leveraging policy resources. Based on empirical analysis, this study confirms the positive impact of Douyin live on traditional handicraft sales and proposes actionable strategies, including content innovation, brand building, and technological empowerment, to further promote sales and sustainable development. The results not only provide practical marketing strategies for artisans but also offer novel insights into the inheritance and innovative development of traditional handicrafts.

Keywords: Douyin live; traditional handicrafts; sale volume; youth; influence mechanism



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1. Introduction

As a treasure of Chinese culture, traditional handicraft, which was the main mode of production in the pre-industrial era, carries abundant information about traditional culture and occupies an important position in both cultural and artistic activities. However, with the acceleration of modernization and the transformation of consumption concepts, traditional handicrafts have been greatly affected and are facing several unprecedented challenges nowadays. Two main issues currently affecting the sale of traditional handicrafts are revealed via an investigation through the visits and surveys of traditional handicraftsmen in China. On the one hand, handicraft products have been gradually replaced by modern craft products and have slowly lost their market share (Bao et al., 2023). In the presence of efficient industrial production, the traditional handicraft industry is unable to compete with the well-organized modern industry. A large number of handicraftsmen were struggling to survive or even abandon their business and move to the cities to earn income. Consequently, the traditional handicraft has been pushed to the side and several traditional crafting skills and techniques have been lost. But, on the other hand, many traditional handicrafts have unique charms, such as bamboo braiding, hand-knocking pecans, etc., and many people want to buy them but there is still a lack of smooth Business to Customer (B2C) sale channel (Sato et al., 2020). Many exquisite handicrafts have difficulty finding suitable market outlets, and this dilemma needs to be solved urgently. Hangzhou's Lin'an District boasts a rich traditional culture and is home to countless skilled artisans. The Lin'an District Trade Union has been innovatively implementing policies to promote the preservation of traditional culture and support artisans through new media platforms

like Douyin. These efforts aim to boost the sales of traditional handicrafts and provide sustainable livelihoods for craftsmen. Given our strong interest in this initiative, this paper takes Lin'an District as a case study to analyze the impact mechanism of Douyin live streaming on the sales of handicrafts.

In the context of the information and networking era, the rise of new media platforms has provided new possibilities for the sale of traditional handicrafts. Douyin (Chinese version of TikTok), the most prominent short video and live broadcasting social platform in China, has emerged as one of the world's most popular social media platforms. Its unique content creation and sharing mechanisms have attracted a massive user base, particularly among youth demographics—data indicates that over half of Douyin live's user base comprises individuals under 35. This demographic's evolving demands for cultural consumption present unique opportunities for the marketing of traditional handicrafts. As indicated by data from QuestMobile (2023), the number of monthly active users of Douyin has reached 743 million, representing a year-on-year increase of 5.1%. The average daily usage time per person has increased from 108.4 minutes to 115.2 minutes in 2023, showing a high level of engagement and dependency on the platform among users. Moreover, the utilization of data analysis tools, such as the Douyin e-commerce compass, enables merchants to achieve the growth and optimization of business through data-driven insight. Consequently, investigating the impact of Douyin live on traditional handicraft sales from a youth perspective holds significant research value. It not only highlights the provision of a novel channel for product display and sales but also underscores how optimizing marketing strategies through youth-preferred content formats and interactive mechanisms enables businesses to deeply understand younger consumers' demands, thereby gaining a competitive edge in saturated markets. This mechanism offers critical insights into leveraging emerging social media platforms to enhance the market performance of traditional handicrafts.

Before the era of e-commerce live streaming, research on traditional handicrafts mainly focused on factors such as handicraft prices, brand value, consumers' habits, and social norms. With the rise and popularity of live streaming, live streaming has become a potential factor influencing consumers' decision to purchase traditional handicrafts. As a new form of e-commerce, although some studies have pointed out that live broadcast has the characteristics of real-time, interactivity, and convenience, there is still a lack of research on the relationship between traditional handicraft marketing and live broadcast utilization. In the international academic community, research on Douyin live to increase the sale of handicrafts has begun to attract attention. For example, Gao et al. (2021) in their 2021 study explored how live e-commerce viewers process persuasive information from the perspective of information processing and examined the moderating effect of mindfulness. This study provided a new perspective for understanding the psychology and behavior of consumers during live streaming, especially for goods such as handicrafts, which are highly dependent on personal experience and cultural value. Through a review of relevant literature, the study reveals that Douyin's live streaming functionality enhances the sales of traditional handicrafts by visually showcasing their production processes and artistic appeal through youth-oriented content. These youth-centric communication strategies—such as immersive craft demonstrations and real-time comment interactions—significantly strengthen young consumers' cultural identification and purchase intention, thereby promoting sales (Sheng et al., 2024). Although these studies provided us with valuable insights, there is still little research on how Douyin live specifically affects the sale of traditional handicrafts. Our research will fill this gap by providing empirical support for traditional craft marketing strategies through an in-depth analysis of the characteristics and consumer behavior of Douyin live. By combining domestic and international research, we are not only able to better understand the global trend of live-streaming e-commerce but also provide specific marketing strategy suggestions for the traditional handicraft industry to adapt to the market demand in the digital age.

In the absence of relevant research, this study aims to assess the effect of Douyin live on the sale of traditional handicrafts, so as to provide a theoretical basis for the development of live streaming of traditional handicrafts. Based on the data obtained from questionnaire surveys and field interviews with 53 craftsmen in Lin'an District, Hangzhou City, from July 2021 to March 2024, this study constructs a linear model with Douyin live as the core explanatory variable, and sale volume of traditional handicrafts as the explanatory variable, and rigorously analyzes the sale of traditional handicrafts. A linear model was constructed to rigorously estimate the mechanism of the influence of Douyin live on the sale of traditional handicrafts. Through the benchmark regression analysis (BRA) and mediated effects method, three aspects of the influence of Douyin live on the sale of traditional handicrafts are derived, and five suggestions are also put forward, in the hope that our study can provide craftsmen with effective marketing strategies, particularly the unique value of youth empowerment, and at the same time provide new ideas and directions for the inheritance and development of traditional handicrafts.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Related Research on Douyin Live

Concept Definition

Douyin is the Chinese version of TikTok. Douyin live is a real-time video interactive function provided by the Douyin platform, which allows users to broadcast live videos through mobile phones or professional equipment, and communicate and interact with the audience in real time. Many scholars have analyzed and explained the characteristics and functions of Douyin live. Some scholars pointed out in their research that as an important platform for live streaming, Douyin live has attracted the attention of a large number of young users by virtue of its unique short video content and social attributes, and its rich interactive functions have further enhanced the interaction and stickiness between users and anchors

2.2. Research on the Impact of Live E-Commerce on Product Sale

In recent years, with the rise of live-streaming e-commerce, many scholars have begun to conduct extensive research on live-streaming e-commerce and its impact on product sales. Zhang and Xu (2024) believed that brands can choose live streaming mode to create more value; We also studied the impact of different types of information on accurate sale forecasting (Xu & Ruan, 2023; Z. Zhang et al., 2023). G. Xu et al. (2024) used a comprehensive set of data to achieve the best performance among all evaluation metrics in e-commerce live streaming (Y. Xu et al., 2023; Lv et al., 2022). Chen et al. (2024) used structural equation modeling to reveal the important role of live streamers in shaping mobile commerce (Tran, 2021). Yang and Lee's (2024) research found that good live-streaming technology and experience quality can lead customers to discount their own information and imitate their peers. Customer conformity behavior has a positive impact on their purchase intention (Lu et al., 2023; Lu & Chen, 2021; Lyu et al., 2022). Luo et al. (2024) found that by enhancing our understanding of the information and emotional support obtained from streaming voice content, they have contributed to the existing literature on live-streaming commerce (Abarbanel & Johnson, 2020; Chen, 2023). Huang et al. (2024) found that social presence in live-streaming e-commerce has a significant positive impact on consumer happiness, thereby promoting product sales (Henderson et al., 2023). D. Zhang et al. (2024) studied some results that will help live-streaming business managers better understand consumers' psychological activities, enabling them to effectively design live-streaming interaction strategies for marketing activities (Giertz et al., 2021; Tian & Frank, 2024; Tan et al., 2018). Ma and Yang (2024) found that manufacturers' encroachment on live streaming channels can achieve a win-win situation for both manufacturers and e-commerce platforms (Fan et al., 2024).

Douyin Live on Product Sale

As new media platforms such as Douyin continue to set off a trend of live broadcasts and selling goods, many scholars have begun to focus on the research of Douyin live and product sales. Liu et al. (2022) explored the sustainable development of live broadcast and selling goods to help farmers in the 5G era. Taking the Douyin platform as an example, they analyzed the problems existing in the live broadcast and selling goods process, and put forward countermeasures and suggestions such as improving the live broadcast ability of anchors and developing short videos that are vertical to the Live broadcast content to promote the sustainable development of Live broadcast and selling goods to help farmers. Wang et al. (2010) analyzed that Douyin has a good delivery effect as a marketing activity platform and can increase consumers' purchasing intentions. Tang et al. (2021) pointed out that technological progress and 5G network applications will play a vital role in rural revitalization to increase the sale of agricultural products on Live broadcast platforms (Bansal, 2023). These studies revealed the potential of Douyin live in promoting product sales.

2.3. Research on the Sale of Traditional Handicrafts

In recent years, with the advent of modern production methods, market demands of global economic integration, and the mechanized era, exquisite traditional handicrafts are facing the dilemma of lack of market, loss of skills, and lack of successors.

Faced with such a dilemma, scholars at home and abroad have discussed new sale development directions for traditional handicrafts, mainly the combination of the traditional handicraft industry with e-commerce and the Internet. This transformative pathway is increasingly supported by cutting-edge empirical studies. These findings collectively suggest that the synergy of emerging technologies and traditional crafts can simultaneously address economic sustainability and cultural innovation.

However, a comprehensive review of existing literature reveals a paucity of research on Douyin's impact on traditional handicraft sales. Traditional handicrafts face persistent challenges

in modern markets, including low visibility and stagnant sales, yet the mechanisms through which Douyin—a dominant social media platform in China—influences their commercialization remain underexplored. While existing literature acknowledges the dominant role of youth in e-commerce live streaming, their unique advantages in traditional craft dissemination remain underexplored. Young creators not only possess technological empowerment capabilities—such as employing green screen effects and 3D visualization techniques to showcase artisanal details—but also leverage social diffusion mechanisms like fan community operations and cross-platform traffic diversion to expand their reach, thereby forming a closed-loop system of “youth-produced content-youth-consumed content-youth-amplified content.” Compared to middle-aged and elderly users, young creators demonstrate superior aptitude for integrating traditional craftsmanship with contemporary lifestyles—for instance, pairing intangible cultural heritage accessories with modern fashion or incorporating handcrafted furniture into minimalist home aesthetics—effectively lowering cultural consumption barriers and activating latent markets. Nevertheless, the full potential of young creators disseminating traditional crafts on Douyin remains underutilized and warrants further investigation. This study aims to address this research gap by systematically analyzing how Douyin’s application affects the sales of traditional handicrafts, thereby proposing practical recommendations to alleviate the marketing difficulties inherent to these cultural products.

3. Data and Research Methods

3.1 Data Sources

The data for this study was gathered through a questionnaire survey and field visits to 53 craftsmen in Lin’an District, Hangzhou City, Zhejiang Province. Given the relatively novel perspective and micro-study focus on the local craftsmen in Lin’an, the total sample size is relatively limited. The distribution of the number of craftsmen in Lin’an District is shown in Figure 1. The sample was selected based on the following criteria:

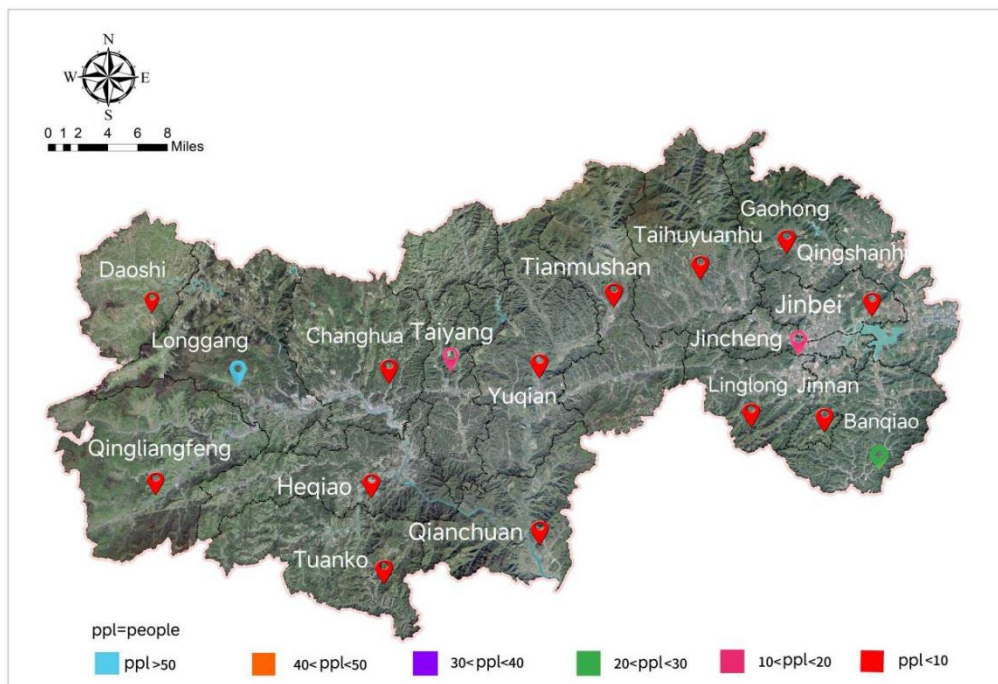


Figure 1. The distribution of traditional craftsmen in various towns in Lin’an District. Source: Authors.

- (1) Industry representativeness: The interviewees represent a variety of traditional handicraft fields in Lin’an, including wood carving, bamboo weaving, paper cutting, and food processing, thereby ensuring comprehensive coverage of the research.
- (2) Douyin live situation: To ensure the targeted nature of the research, all respondents have active accounts on the Douyin platform, which they make use of to display and sell their handicrafts. Meanwhile, there is a distinction between those who use Live broadcasts and those who do not, allowing us to conduct a comparative analysis.
- (3) Diversity of experience: The respondents exhibited a wide range of experience in using the Douyin platform, from novice to senior. This allows us for an investigation into the impact of different experience levels on handicraft sales.

Research object case:

- (1) Official case: Lin'an District Federation of Trade Unions established and registered an official Douyin account "Tianmu Searching Craftsmen." This has attracted considerable attention in a relatively short time and become a prototype for promoting the spirit of artisans through the flow of new media. One approach is to systematically create a series of short videos of traditional craftsmen in Lin'an. Through a process of comparison and selection, the District Federation of Trade Unions identified three professional Douyin short video copywriting, planning, and shooting units as cooperation units, as well as five "Internet + traditional craft" incubation projects such as Qingke bamboo flute, Qingke bird cage, and Tianmu Stone carving. As of the time of writing, there have been a total of 151,000 followers. Another approach is the professional management of the official TikTok account "Tianmu Searching Craftsmen," where the Federation of Trade Unions and the selected cooperation units work together to set up a professional operation team for utilizing high-quality videos and live broadcasting and other techniques to shunt the pipelines.
- (2) Artisan case: Jiang Yunpan is a post-80s entrepreneur and the founder of "Xiao Junsu Di," who is proficient in bamboo flute making technology. He learned from Xu Zhaoyi, a master of folk craft skills inheriting talent in Hubei Province and once learned bamboo flute manufacturing technology in Tongling Bridge, "the hometown of bamboo flute in China." After completing his studies, he returned to his hometown Qingke village in Lin'an District to make flute and initiated a business venture. His expertise enabled him to quickly produce high-quality flutes with excellent timbres and pitches. However, to ensure the sustainability of his enterprise, he recognized the necessity to not only manufacture these instruments but also to effectively market and sell them. Later, with the support of the "Tianmu Searching Craftsmen" project in Lin'an District, he created a Douyin account and released short videos about the process of making the flute. Up to now, his Douyin account "Xiao Junsudi" has released 180 works, received 127,000 likes, and gained 27,000 followers. By the end of 2022, sales from Jiang Yunpan's live broadcast had exceeded 150,000 in just half a month, with the highest single-session sales reaching nearly 40,000 yuan. Since 2022, Jiang Yunpan's team has broadcast daily with a notable increase in sales from more than 80,000 yuan per month to about 200,000 yuan now. This has resulted in total sales exceeding 2 million.

The data collection process followed these steps:

- (1) Questionnaire design: The questionnaire was designed mainly to investigate the usage of the Douyin platform, sale data of handicrafts, and the specific impact of Douyin on sales.
- (2) Pre-test: Before the formal survey, the questionnaire was pre-tested to ensure its scientific rigor and operational efficacy.
- (3) Field interviews: Members of the research team personally visited handicraft practitioners in the Lin'an area and collected first-hand data through face-to-face interviews, ensuring the authenticity and depth of the data.

This article is based on first-hand data combined with questionnaire surveys and on-site visits, which provide a comprehensive understanding of the role and influence of the Douyin platform in the sale of traditional handicrafts. The research results aim to provide empirical support for understanding the transformation and development of the traditional handicraft industry in the context of new media.

3.2. Mechanism Analysis and Hypotheses

Through its e-commerce and live broadcast functions, Douyin platform provides a new channel and display window for the sale of traditional handicrafts, effectively promoting the marketing and cultural inheritance of handicrafts while significantly enhancing the market exposure of traditional handicrafts. As well, the popularity and sale of traditional handicrafts have also contributed to the inheritance and promotion of intangible cultural heritage.

- (1) Improve visibility and market access:

Douyin platform provides small and medium-sized craftsmen the opportunity to gain exposure through its live video broadcast and intelligent distribution capabilities. The traditional model of handicraft production has been dominated by individual studios, which have been lacking in effective marketing and promotion capabilities. The low barrier to entry and user-friendly character of Douyin provide an accessible platform for craftsmen to showcase their crafts and products, thereby increasing the visibility of their work. Pan Chunxiang, a carver skilled in tooth carving, wood carving, horn carving, and other carving techniques, earns his income mainly by processing and carving finished products for other people's materials. Because he was deaf and dumb, and because few people knew about his carvings, his income could not support his life for a while. Until April 2023, the Lin'an District Labor Union "Tianmu Searching Craftsmen" Group found him and

sent a professional team for Pan Chunxiang to open a Douyin live account and training guide, so that his craft was found by more people, and greatly increased his account clout and the development of the fan economy. Up to now, his Douyin account “stone teeth antlers walnut obsessed (Tianmu Seeking Craftsmen)” has gained 4033 fans and received 24,000 likes, of which the highest number of views of the short video had reached 200,000, through the Douyin live effectively increase the number of orders, the monthly income from the previous 3,000 yuan to the current 10,000 yuan or so. Furthermore, Douyin also attracts young people to learn flute-making skills, thereby driving local employment and common prosperity. This case fully demonstrates the effective way for craftsmen to use Douyin platform to enhance brand awareness, cultivate traditional handicraft inheritors, and expand sale channels.

(2) Increase sale channels:

The Douyin e-commerce plan, well known as “Seeing Crafts,” is designed to help craftsmen to enhance their income through various measures, such as traffic support, fee discounts, official training, exclusive operating activities, and live broadcast base services. Douyin’s live e-commerce function enables craftsmen to showcase their crafts and products and interact with consumers in real time through live broadcast. This model increases the immediacy and interactivity of sales and thereby increases consumers’ willingness to purchase. Youth entrepreneur Su Guanghui, through operating the Douyin account “Chao Ba Agritourism,” has successfully expanded online sales channels for agricultural products, emerging as a benchmark case of digital economy-driven rural revitalization. By integrating the traditional culinary culture of Lin’an Changhua with short videos and live streaming promotions, he has effectively enhanced brand awareness and boosted sales of local agricultural products. With the assistance of the “Tianmu Searching Craftsmen” project, he not only achieved an increase in the viewership of his personal Douyin account but also helped local farmers increase their income through live broadcasts for charity. This plan led to the creation of employment for nearly 80 farmers and an annual income of 20 million for the village collective. His Douyin account published 1,065 works, received 1.023 million likes, and gained 121,000 followers. In 2022, it achieved more than 2.8 million agricultural products sales and B&B revenue of 1.5 million, significantly promoting common prosperity.

Combining (1) and (2), we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: The Douyin application has a positive effect on the sale of traditional handicrafts.

(3) Cultural inheritance and innovation:

The short video format of the Douyin platform provides traditional handicrafts an opportunity to display their cultural values and craft history. Strikingly, the combination of cultural inheritance and innovation has attracted the attention and support of a growing number of young consumers. The Douyin platform facilitates access to traditional handicrafts with the younger generation and thus stimulates their interest in traditional culture and handicrafts. Jiang Sihai, an expert in the field of bloodstone in Lin’an, has utilized the Douyin platform as a means to inherit and innovate the cultural values associated with the bloodstone. By combining traditional crafts with the Douyin application, he has released 799 works and attracted 22,000 fans, thereby significantly enhancing cultural visibility. His account “Jiang Sihai·One Yin per Person” maintains a regular live broadcast about 1–2 hours each day and has launched a “Daily Yin” gift link that is very popular among Douyin fans, greatly improving the fan viscosity and activity in the live broadcast room. It not only demonstrates the traditional charm of bloodstone, but also innovatively attracts the interest of the younger generation. The combination of traditional and modern communication methods enhances the cultural experience while providing new ideas for the innovative dissemination of traditional culture. Furthermore, it promotes widespread dissemination and innovative development of chicken blood stone culture.

(4) Assisting in the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage:

A new approach to the transmission of intangible cultural heritage has been facilitated by the extensive coverage and in-depth promotion of the Douyin platform. A considerable number of projects pertaining to intangible cultural heritage have experienced a resurgence of vitality. For example, a revolutionary change has been done by the “Tuanyuan People” in the inheritance of the intangible cultural heritage of hand-knocking pecans. During the period of the epidemic, the traditional sales model was dreadfully constrained and there is a rapid growth in the use of online shopping. As a consequence of the successful digital transformation of Douyin, the “Tuanyuan People” have not only broadened their sales channels but also greatly increased brand awareness. Through the form of short videos, the “Tuanyuan People” intuitively demonstrate the unique charm of pecan hand-stripping skills, capturing the attention of the public especially the youth. This, in turn, enhances the dissemination and influence of intangible cultural heritage and lets the world see Lin’an pecans.

Based on (3) and (4), we propose the following hypothesis: H2:

The Douyin app drives employment and sale of traditional handicrafts through cultural heritage.

(5) Policy support and resource integration:

The data analysis of the Douyin platform identifies potential craftsmen, thus enabling the government to accurately capture potential craftsmen. These selected craftsmen are awarded the title of “Common Prosperity Workshop” and get the government’s policy inclination and resource investment. Specially, we display the “Tianmu Searching Craftsmen” project established by the Lin’an District Federation of Trade Unions. In this project, the selected craftsmen are guided on how to live broadcast and introduce their goods on the Douyin platform, and multiple resources are provided to promote the dissemination of traditional handicraft culture. Combined with new media, the traditional handicraft industry is promoted, thereby stimulating employment and income growth for low-income groups.

Based on (5), the hypothesis is proposed: H3:

The Douyin app enhances the sales of traditional handicrafts by leveraging precise targeting to attract policy support, and youth-led livestream accounts exhibit significant advantages in accessing policy resources.

3.3. Model Building

The objective of this study is to examine the potential impact of Douyin live streams on the sales of traditional handicrafts. To this end, a preliminary model has been formulated to test the hypothesis that such broadcasts can stimulate sales of these traditional products. The model is as follows:

$$xl_i = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 zb_i + \gamma_1 sk_i + \gamma_2 ls_i + \gamma_3 jp_i + \theta_i + \mu_i \quad (1)$$

Among them, i is an individual index, xl_i is the explained variable of traditional handicraft sale volume, α_0 represents the intercept term, and β_1 represents the regression coefficient of the explanatory variable. Here zb_i is the core explanation of whether it is Douyin live, γ_1 to γ_3 is the regression index of the control variable, sk_i , ls_i , and jp_i represent external teaching promotion, brand history, and the number of competing products in the market, respectively. θ_i represents the individual fixed effect and μ_i is a random disturbance term.

Based on Jiang Ting’s operational proposals on mediation effect analysis, the traditional three-step method of mediating variables was improved to construct the following mediation effect model:

$$M_i = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 zb_i + \gamma_1 sk_i + \gamma_2 ls_i + \gamma_3 jp_i + \theta_i + \mu_i \quad (2)$$

As above, the variable i , as an individual, serves as the mediating factor that influences both the number of employed individuals and their eligibility for participation in the “Common Wealth Workshop.” α_0 denotes the intercept term, β_1 denotes the regression coefficient of the explanatory variable, zb_i is the core explanatory variable whether or not the person is doing Douyin live, γ_1 to γ_3 is the regression index of the control variable, sk_i , ls_i , and jp_i denote the number of out-of-home lectures and publicity, the history of the brand, and the number of competing products in the market, respectively, θ_i denotes an individual fixed effect, and μ_i is a random perturbation term.

3.4. Variable and Data Selection

(1) Core explanatory variables

The core explanatory variable in this article is whether the craftsmen engage in Douyin lives. The data obtained from the questionnaire, denoted by zb , is set as a binary variable, who conducts Douyin lives is set to 1, and who does not is 0.

(2) Explained variable

In this paper, the explained variable is the sale volume of traditional handicrafts (xl), the sale which was obtained from the questionnaires within one year are obtained through questionnaires, denoted as xl .

(3) Mediating variables

In order to ascertain whether there is an indirect impact between Douyin live streams and traditional handicrafts, this paper selects the number of people employed and the company’s designation as a “Common Wealth Workshop” as mediating variables. The number of people employed (iy) is used as a signal for the positive impact of Douyin live streams on stimulating employment. Meanwhile, the company’s designation as a “Common Wealth Workshop” (gf) is employed as a proxy for the promotion of common prosperity and the sale of traditional handicrafts by breaking down sale barriers and developing remote shopping.

In Zhejiang, the “Common Wealth Workshop” has become an important carrier for the advancement of common prosperity. By providing a variety of resources and technical support, it effectively absorbs surplus rural labor and low-income farmers, increases the village collective

economic income, and promotes the common prosperity of farmers. Here we note that the “Common Wealth Workshop” in this article mainly refers to the one established by the Lin’an District Federation of Trade Unions. The Lin’an District Labor Union has designated the establishment of the “Tianmu Common Wealth Workshop” as a key area for financial support and has so far arranged a total of 1 million yuan in incentive funds. The workshops are classified into three levels (one-star, two-star, and three-star) based on several criteria, including the number of low-income groups employed by the workshop, the number of online live broadcasts, and the number of followers on the workshop’s Douyin account.

(4) Control variables

In this study, the external teaching promotion, brand history, and the number of competing products in the market are identified as control variables. Through questionnaires, the number of external teaching promotions, the years of brand existence, and the number of competing products in the market evaluated subjectively by individuals on a 1–10 scoring system are obtained to control the factors other than Douyin live streams that affect the sale volume of handicrafts in that year, which are recorded as sk, ls, and jp, respectively.

The various types of variables set in this paper are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Variables.

Variable Types	Variable Name	Variable Symbols	Variable Source
Core explanatory variables	Whether to live broadcast on Douyin	zb	Questionnaire results
Explained variable	The sale of traditional handicrafts	xl	Questionnaire results
Mediating variables	Driving employment	jy	Questionnaire results
	Whether or not to be awarded the Common Wealth Workshop	gf	Questionnaire results
	Out-of-town teaching promotion	sk	Questionnaire results
Control variables	Brand history	ls	Questionnaire results
	Number of competing products in the market	jp	Questionnaire results

4. Results and Analysis

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are performed on the 53 individuals involved in this study, and the results are collected in Table 2. Firstly, the core explanatory variable as a 0/1 variable, shows that among the interviewees, people who have initiated a Douyin live is slightly less than the craftsmen who have not yet. Forward, the maximum value of the explained variable is 40 million yuan, the minimum value is 40,000 yuan, and the average income is 2.39 million yuan, indicating that Lin'an traditional handicrafts have a relatively complete sale system and good market prospects. As an important control variable, the average employment is 17.92 but with a large gap. The maximum value of people employed is up to 78, while the minimum is just two. According to the mediating variable “gf,” we uncovered that the “Common Wealth Workshop” project is accessible to handicraftsmen and most of them have been awarded and supported by this project. The control variable “ls” has a high degree of variability, reflecting that the Lin’an handicraft industry has a long history, and the variable “jp” suggests that the local market is growing rapidly, and has a good development driving force.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of variables.

Descriptive Statistics	N	Scope	Minimum	Maximum	Average value	Standard Deviation	Variance
zb	53	1	0	1	0.42	0.497	0.247
x	53	3996	4	4000	239.21	731.588	535221.245
jy	53	76	2	78	17.92	18.952	359.187
gf	53	1	0	1	0.51	0.505	0.255
sk	53	99	1	100	13.3	16.899	285.561
ls	53	59	1	60	15.28	12.196	148.745
jp	53	91	5	96	53.94	25.449	647.67

4.2. Benchmark Regression

After model selection, this paper uses a single fixed effect model to conduct a regression analysis of the impact of Douyin live on the sale of traditional handicrafts. The analysis results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Single fixed effect regression results.

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Beta	t	R ²	F
The sale of traditional handicrafts	Whether to live broadcast on Douyin	0.318	3.030***	0.856	78.569***
	Out-of-town teaching promotion	0.314	2.971***		
	Brand history	1.205	4.805***		
	Number of competing products in the market	0.406	2.024*		

t statistics in parentheses

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Four core explanatory variables of Douyin live are well analyzed and the results indicate that there is a significant promoting effect on the sale of traditional handicrafts. As the most important element, the use of Douyin live in the handicraft industry can effectively promote the sale of traditional handicrafts. The online sale model has the additional benefits of reducing marketing costs and expanding the audience, while also enabling the production of goods according to pre-made orders, which in turn reduces order losses. The promotion of out-of-town teaching has a significant positive impact on the sale of traditional handicrafts at the 1 % level. This demonstrates that the promotion of out-of-town teaching can promote the popularity of traditional handicrafts and attract a great number of handicraft inheritors to enter the traditional handicraft industry offline. Instructional professors are able to more intuitively demonstrate the beauty of craftsmanship that cannot be replicated by machines. Moreover, they also allow the public to get close to traditional handicrafts through personal experiential learning. The brand history of a product has a significant positive influence on the sale of traditional handicrafts at the statistical 1 % level. In light of traditional Chinese concepts, this study will be more inclined to conclude that the brands and industries with a long history have been refined by the market over the years and are now still able to gain high popularity and support in the face of adversity. Moreover, brand history serves as a “living business card,” that attracts customers and sells products by word-of-mouth.

Interestingly, we found that the number of competing products in the market also has a positive effect on the sale of traditional handicrafts with an estimated impact of 10 % level. It can be observed that among all variables, the impact of the number of competing products on the market on the sale of traditional handicrafts is the least significant. This is due to the fact that the scope of the study is limited in Lin'an District, which is relatively small compared to the entire sale market. Why we still can observe the impact is that the traditional Handicrafts themselves have regional

characteristics and have a larger audience in the region. With the development of digitalization, the sales market has gradually expanded.

4.3. Mediating Effect Model

The fixed effects regression results are shown in Table 4. It can be seen that at the 5% significance level, there is a significant positive correlation between the number of driven jobs and whether to live broadcast on Douyin. That is to say, as the use of Douyin live increases, there is a significant increase in handicraft employees. Naturally, as employment opportunities increase and people's income levels increase, the demand for cultural products also increases, which in turn promotes the development of the handicraft market. In-depth research on the influence of job creation through the sale of traditional handicrafts has been conducted in previous literature. In addition, the expansion of employment has also led to the growth of related industrial chains, thereby providing impetus for innovation and diversification within the handicrafts-producing region. These studies not only provided theoretical support for understanding the dynamics of the handicraft market but also offer practical guidance for promoting the development of cultural industries and employment growth.

Table 4. Intermediation effect regression results.

Mediating variable	Independent variable	Beta	t	R ²	F
Number of people led to employment	Whether to live broadcast on Douyin	0.530	4.459***	0.266	19.886***
Whether or not to be awarded the Common Wealth Workshop		0.827	10.492***	0.677	110.083***

t statistics in parentheses

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

From Table 4, the impact of being awarded as a “Common Wealth Workshop” is positive and at a 5% significance level. Specifically, the number of employees has increased significantly with the granting of the “Common Wealth Workshop.” As a new industrial poverty alleviation model, the impact of the “Common Wealth Workshop” project on the sale of traditional handicrafts has gained widespread attention from academic researchers. It's shown that the “Common Wealth Workshop” has significantly improved the production efficiency and quality of handicrafts. This has been achieved by providing professional training, technical support, and market channels, thereby enhancing the market competitiveness of its products. In addition, the “Common Wealth Workshop” also increased the purchasing power of handicrafts by fostering local employment and growing residents' income, thus driving sales growth. These studies provided an important perspective for understanding the role of the “Common Wealth Workshop” in the development of the traditional handicraft industry, and also provide a theoretical basis for the formulation of relevant policy.

4.4. Results Analysis

Based on the data from 53 craftsmen in Lin'an District, Hangzhou City, Zhejiang Province, this study investigates and analyzes the situation of traditional craftsmen using Douyin to increase the sale of handicrafts. We consider whether Douyin live as the core explanatory variable and construct a model with the sale volume of traditional handicrafts as the explained variable. The results of benchmark regression analysis and mediation effect model lead to the following conclusions:

(1) Douyin increases sales of traditional handicrafts in various ways:

Empirical research indicated that, firstly, Douyin expands the visibility and market access of traditional craftsmen and their craftsmanship through live broadcasts and short video promotions. At the same time, Douyin's e-commerce activities such as the “Seeing Craftsmanship” program supported by the big data technique, have actively expanded the audience of traditional handicrafts, and traditional craftsmen and craftsmanship have been effectively showcased. Secondly, Douyin's low threshold and operability also facilitate the development of online sales channels for traditional handicraftsmen. The use of short videos enables the display of handicrafts anytime and anywhere, thereby increasing the consumers' willingness to purchase the goods. Moreover, live broadcasts facilitate face-to-face interaction between the consumers and handicraftsmen. The Explanation of product interaction for the promotion of consumption has significantly increased the market sale of traditional handicrafts. Douyin live streaming fosters a bidirectional driving mechanism—“craft visualization-cultural identity construction-consumption conversion”—through content production

by young creators and interactive engagement from young consumers. Youth creators excel at deconstructing traditional crafts into shareable “cultural symbols,” such as using slow live streams to showcase the artisan spirit behind woodworking joinery, employing close-up shots in short videos to highlight the aesthetic details of embroidery color matching, or designing interactive “handcraft workshop” sessions during broadcasts to allow young consumers to directly appreciate the value of craftsmanship. Simultaneously, as “social dissemination nodes,” young users amplify reach through sharing livestream links, participating in hashtag challenges, and creating secondary derivative content, thereby activating a social diffusion loop of “product seeding-instant purchasing-repeat buying.” This operational model, grounded in the behavioral logic of digital natives, significantly enhances both the dissemination efficiency and commercial conversion rates of traditional handicrafts.

(2) Douyin drives employment and sale of traditional handicrafts through cultural heritage:

The Douyin app provides a platform for traditional handicrafts to demonstrate their unique cultural value and historical craft traditions through the user-friendly and interactive form of short videos, attracting considerable interest from younger audiences. This innovation in cultural inheritance not only revitalizes traditional handicrafts but also inspires younger consumers to engage with traditional culture and participate in the handicraft industry, stimulating the sale of handicrafts and promoting the inheritance of traditional culture. Meanwhile, the promotion of the Douyin platform provides additional employment opportunities for low-income people. Through skills training and policy support, craftsmen can expand their online sales channels and encourage surrounding villagers to participate in the production and sale of handicrafts. Remarkably, the Douyin platform has successfully achieved the dual objectives of cultural inheritance and employment promotion, thereby providing a robust foundation for the sustainable development of traditional handicrafts.

(3) Douyin platform gains policy support through adopting a precise positioning strategy that promotes the sale of traditional handicrafts:

The data analysis and user behavior tracking functions of the Douyin platform provide the government with a way to accurately identify and locate traditional craftsmen with development potential. Through the platform’s big data analysis, the government can identify those craftsmen who are active on Douyin and popular with users, and then award them the title of “Common Wealth Workshop” as a recognition of their craftsmanship and market potential. Craftsmen who receive the title will receive government policy support and resource support, including but not limited to the investment of human resources, capital, technology, and other factors. This policy support helps craftsmen expand their production scale and improve their craftsmanship, while also promoting the sustainable development and innovation of traditional handicrafts. Through the effective combination of the Douyin platform and government resources, the marketization and modernization of traditional handicrafts can be further promoted, achieving a win-win situation for cultural heritage and economic development. Young livestream hosts demonstrate stronger adaptability in policy and resource coordination compared to middle-aged and elderly artisans, with their unique advantages manifesting in three key aspects. First, their technological proficiency enables them to quickly master data analytics tools such as Douyin’s E-Commerce Compass, allowing for precise user targeting—for instance, by refining product designs based on audience demographics. Second, their content innovation bridges traditional craftsmanship and contemporary trends, such as combining classical handicrafts with “Hanfu” fashion or integrating intangible cultural heritage (ICH) paper-cutting into Chinese products, thereby appealing to younger consumers. Third, their social media engagement strategies—including community management and interactive livestream techniques like “exclusive fan perks” and “limited-time customization”—effectively enhance user retention. A notable example is young artisan Su Guanghui, who operates the “Chao Ba Agritourism” account. By transforming traditional Changhua food-making processes into engaging short videos and supplementing livestreams with behind-the-scenes narratives, his account achieved significantly higher follower growth and product sales than those run by older artisans, serving as a prime case of youth-driven revitalization of traditional crafts.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

The utilization of the Douyin platform’s video and live broadcasting functions has resulted in a favorable impact on the sales of conventional handicrafts. However, this has also given rise to a number of challenges and shortcomings. For example, the promotion of handicrafts on the Douyin platform may encounter some problems such as content homogeneity, user aesthetic fatigue, and obstacles for craftsmen in the use of Douyin functions. Therefore, in order to further promote the sales and development of traditional handicrafts, this study proposes the following countermeasures and suggestions:

(1) Brand building and sustainable development: It’s recommended that efforts should be made to enhance the brand awareness of traditional handicrafts and improve brand influence and

- market competitiveness. This may be achieved through the utilization of storytelling marketing and brand history inheritance. For the realization of the sustainable development of the handicraft industry, we should balance the relationship between traditional craft protection and market innovation, and ensure the long-term development of the handicraft industry.
- (2) Cooperative operation model: It's possible for handicraftsmen to cooperate with professional social media operation companies, utilizing the knowledge and experience of their professional teams to effectively manage and optimize their Douyin accounts. These operation companies usually possess professional capabilities, including market analysis, content planning, video production, and account promotion. These capabilities assist the handicraftsmen showcase the unique value and process of their handicrafts more effectively, and improve the creativity and attractiveness of the content.
 - (3) Utilize platform tools and resources: Handicraftsmen are encouraged to make full use of the various tools and resources provided by the Douyin platform. These include data analysis tools such as the Douyin e-commerce compass system, which can assist the users to better understand the target audience and market trends. In addition, handicraftsmen can participate in various trainings and seminars held by the Douyin platform. In those lectures, they may learn how to utilize the platform's marketing functions, including challenges, hashtags, advertising, etc., and finally improve their brand awareness and sale conversion rate on Douyin.
 - (4) Strengthen the creation and promotion of intangible cultural heritage content: We should encourage and support intangible cultural heritage inheritors and related organizations to publish high-quality intangible cultural heritage content on Douyin. To attract the interest of younger audiences, this can be presented in the form of short videos that showcase the craftsmanship process, cultural background, and artistic value. Cross-border cooperation and brand collaboration should be pursued. We should promote the cooperation between intangible cultural heritage and modern brands, and combine intangible cultural heritage with modern aesthetics through joint products, special activities, and other forms. The aim of this is to broaden the audience base of intangible cultural heritage.
 - (5) Technical training and policy support: Governments and relevant departments should introduce more support policies to provide financial assistance and policy guidance for preserving and developing traditional handicrafts. According to Douyin's 2023 Intangible Cultural Heritage Data Report, among the top 100 intangible cultural heritage inheritors with the highest e-commerce sales on the platform in 2023, 37% were post-90s generation, highlighting the rise of young artisans and underscoring the critical need for targeted youth-oriented policy support and technical training. To empower this demographic, it is essential to provide comprehensive training in new media operations and e-commerce sales, particularly for young artisans. Initiatives such as advancing the "Youth Douyin Livestream" platform development can enhance their ability to leverage digital tools for effective market promotion. Simultaneously, specialized workshops on contemporary marketing strategies should be offered to help artisans better utilize online platforms for commercial success.

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