

Innovative Approaches to Cultural Identity Preservation: The Rural Culture Development Model for Huangpu District, Guangzhou

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Abstract

This study examines the preservation of cultural identity in Huangpu District, Guang-zhou, amidst rapid urbanisation. It highlights the district's rich cultural heritage, including traditional Lingnan-style architecture, festivals, and folk arts. The proposed Rural Culture Development Model (RCDM) aims to balance cultural preservation with modernisation through a multi-faceted approach. The study gathers comprehensive data on cultural practices and stakeholder perspectives using a mixed-methods approach. Social cognitive theory is employed to understand the transmission and preservation of cultural values. Key findings emphasise the importance of community involvement, government policies, and economic integration in sustaining cultural heritage. Challenges such as urban encroachment, talent drain, and resource limitations are identified. The RCDM addresses these challenges by promoting cultural innovation, leveraging economic synergy, and empowering local communities. The study concludes that the RCDM can serve as a blueprint for other regions facing similar challenges, ensuring the sustainable preservation of rural culture across China.

Keywords: Rural Culture Development Model (RCDM), Preservation of Culture, Huangpu District, Urbanisation

Introduction

Cultural identity is a fundamental component of human society, reflecting shared values, traditions, and histories. It serves as a cornerstone for community cohesion and individual self-awareness. Rapid urbanisation has significantly impacted rural communities in China, often threatening their unique cultural identities. The dichotomy between urban and rural development has widened, leading to a cultural disadvantage in rural areas (Xu et al. 2021;

Wong et al. 2022). This disparity not only undermines the cultural fabric of rural communities but also poses a risk to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage.

The Huangpu District in Guangzhou is a prime example of this phenomenon. As urbanisation accelerates, rural areas within the district face the challenge of maintaining their cultural identity amidst the pressures of modernisation (Li et al., 2023). This study explores innovative methods to preserve cultural identity in Huangpu District, Guangzhou. Focusing on rural culture highlights how traditions can be safeguarded while integrating modern elements to create sustainable development. This study aims to propose a Rural Culture Development Model (RCDM) that balances cultural preservation with modernisation.

The RCDM addresses the unique challenges rural communities face in Huangpu District. It emphasises the importance of community involvement and integrating traditional practices with contemporary approaches (Hariram et al., 2023). The model is built on three core pillars: cultural preservation, community engagement, and sustainable development.

Cultural preservation is the first pillar of the RCDM. It involves documenting and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, such as traditional crafts, folklore, and rituals (Ghose and Ali, 2023). This can be achieved through initiatives like cultural mapping, where the unique cultural assets of a community are identified and recorded. Additionally, establishing cultural centres and museums can provide a space for preserving and exhibiting cultural artefacts. These efforts protect cultural heritage and promote cultural tourism, which can generate economic benefits for rural communities.

Community engagement is the second pillar of the RCDM. It recognises that the preservation of cultural identity is a collective effort that requires the active participation of community members (Mpuangnan and Ntombela, 2024). This can be facilitated through educational programs that raise awareness about the importance of cultural heritage and encourage community involvement in preservation activities. Furthermore, the model advocates for including residents in decision-making processes related to cultural preservation and development (Moayerian et al., 2022). By empowering communities to take ownership of their cultural heritage, the RCDM fosters a sense of pride and responsibility among residents.

Sustainable development is the third pillar of the RCDM. It seeks to balance cultural preservation and economic growth (Hariram et al., 2023). This can be achieved through the promotion of eco-friendly practices and the development of sustainable tourism initiatives. For example, the model encourages using traditional agricultural techniques that are environmentally sustainable and culturally significant. Additionally, the development of cultural tourism can provide a source of income for rural communities while promoting the preservation of cultural heritage (Liu et al., 2023). By integrating cultural preservation with sustainable development, the RCDM ensures that rural communities can thrive economically without compromising their cultural identity.

In conclusion, the Rural Culture Development Model (RCDM) offers a comprehensive approach to preserving cultural identity in rapid urbanisation. By focusing on cultural preservation, community engagement, and sustainable development, the model provides a

framework for balancing modernisation with safeguarding cultural heritage. Implementing the RCDM in Huangpu District, Guangzhou, can serve as a blueprint for other rural communities facing similar challenges. Through innovative methods and a commitment to cultural preservation, rural communities can maintain their unique cultural identities while embracing modernisation opportunities.

The Importance of Rural Culture

Rural culture is deeply rooted in history, encompassing traditions, values, and lifestyles unique to specific regions. Rural culture has evolved in China as a cornerstone of social identity, reflecting harmony with nature and community values (Fu and Lv, 2023). This cultural heritage is a source of pride for rural communities and a vital component of the nation's intangible cultural heritage. However, urbanisation has led to significant challenges, such as declining traditional practices and loss of cultural heritage (Yang and Huang, 2020). The erosion of rural culture threatens these communities' social fabric and identity, making it imperative to find innovative ways to preserve and integrate these traditions into modern society.

Challenges in Cultural Preservation

Rural areas face numerous challenges in maintaining cultural heritage, including economic disparities, migration, and insufficient resources (Giglietto et al., 2022). The economic gap between urban and rural areas often results in limited funding for cultural preservation initiatives. Migration, particularly the movement of younger generations to urban centres in search of better opportunities, further exacerbates the decline of traditional practices. As a result, many rural communities struggle to sustain their cultural heritage, gradually eroding their unique identities.

The underdevelopment of the cultural industry in rural areas further exacerbates these issues. Many rural communities lack the infrastructure and resources to promote and sustain their traditions (Liu et al. 2020; Bian et al. 2022). This includes the absence of cultural centres, museums, and educational programs that can help preserve and showcase local heritage. Additionally, the lack of economic incentives for cultural preservation often leads to neglecting traditional practices and prioritising more immediate economic needs.

Benefits of Cultural Integration

Integrating rural culture into modern frameworks can enhance cultural preservation and economic development. Initiatives such as rural tourism and cultural industries can stimulate local economies and foster cultural pride among residents (Lei and Jialing, 2024). By promoting rural culture as a valuable asset, these initiatives can create new opportunities for economic growth and community development.

Rural tourism, for example, can attract visitors interested in experiencing traditional lifestyles, crafts, and festivals. This generates income for rural communities and raises awareness about the importance of cultural preservation (Pardosi et al., 2024). Cultural industries, such as the production of traditional crafts and local products, can also provide economic benefits while preserving cultural heritage. By creating a market for these products, rural communities can sustain their traditions and pass them on to future generations.

Furthermore, integrating rural culture into modern education systems can help raise awareness and appreciation for cultural heritage among younger generations (Li and Zhong, 2022). Educational programs incorporating traditional practices, values, and history can instill pride and responsibility in preserving cultural identity. This can also encourage young people to remain in or return to their rural communities, contributing to revitalising these areas.

Preserving rural culture is essential for maintaining rural communities' social identity and heritage (Shen and Chou, 2022). While urbanisation presents significant challenges, innovative approaches to cultural integration can help address these issues. Rural communities can achieve sustainable development while preserving their unique identities by promoting rural tourism, developing cultural industries, and incorporating cultural heritage into education. The efforts to preserve rural culture benefit the communities and contribute to the broader goal of safeguarding the nation's intangible cultural heritage (Knapik and Król, 2023). Through economic incentives, community engagement, and educational initiatives, it is possible to create a sustainable model for cultural preservation that balances tradition with modernisation.

Location of this Study

Huangpu District in Guangzhou is renowned for its rich cultural heritage and traditional rural practices. The district's history reflects a blend of agricultural, spiritual, and artistic traditions integral to its identity (Tan and Nguyen, 2024). This unique cultural tapestry is woven from various elements preserved and cherished by the local community over generations. Despite the rapid pace of urbanisation, Huangpu District has retained its cultural essence, making it an ideal location for this study.

One of the most notable aspects of Huangpu District's cultural heritage is its architectural heritage (Huang and Li, 2023). The district is home to numerous traditional Lingnan-style buildings characterised by their intricate designs, elegant structures, and unique construction techniques. These buildings testify to the district's rich history and symbolise its cultural identity. The effort to preserve and restore these architectural treasures is crucial in maintaining the district's cultural landscape (Wang and Zakaria, 2025). Preserving these buildings also provides an opportunity for cultural tourism, attracting visitors interested in experiencing the district's historical and architectural heritage.

Festivals play a significant role in the cultural life of Huangpu District. Events such as the Polo Temple Fair and the Dragon Boat Festival are celebrated enthusiastically and are integral to the district's cultural identity. These festivals allow the community to unite and celebrate their shared heritage (Wood and Homolja, 2021). The Polo Temple Fair, for example, is a traditional event that features various cultural activities, including folk performances, traditional games, and local delicacies. On the other hand, the Dragon Boat Festival is celebrated with dragon boat races, a thrilling spectacle and a way to honour the district's historical and cultural traditions. These festivals also attract tourists, contributing to the local economy and raising awareness about the district's cultural heritage (Quan-Baffour, 2023).

Folk art is another important aspect of Huangpu District's cultural heritage (Huang and Li, 2023). Practices such as Cantonese opera and paper cutting are deeply rooted in the district's history and continue to be cherished by the community. Cantonese opera, with its distinctive

music, costumes, and performances, is a traditional art form passed down through generations. On the other hand, paper cutting is a traditional craft that involves creating intricate designs by cutting paper (Chen et al., 2022). These art forms are a means of artistic expression and a way of preserving and passing down cultural traditions. Initiatives to promote and support folk art are essential in ensuring that these practices are not lost to future generations.

Despite the challenges posed by rapid urbanisation, Huangpu District has retained its unique cultural essence (Wang, 2024). The district's efforts to balance modernisation with cultural preservation serve as a model for other regions facing similar challenges. By integrating traditional practices with modern development, Huangpu District has created a sustainable approach to cultural preservation (Sheng et al., 2022). This approach involves the active participation of the community in cultural preservation efforts, as well as the promotion of cultural tourism and the development of cultural industries.

Huangpu District's rich cultural heritage and traditional rural practices make it an ideal location for this study. The district's commitment to preserving its cultural identity amidst rapid urbanisation is commendable (Teklemariam, 2024). Through innovative approaches to architectural preservation, festival celebrations, and the promotion of folk art, Huangpu District has successfully maintained its unique cultural essence. This study aims to explore these approaches and propose a model that can be applied to other regions facing similar challenges. By doing so, it hopes to contribute to the broader goal of preserving cultural heritage in the face of modernisation. The efforts to preserve rural culture benefit the communities and contribute to the broader goal of safeguarding the nation's intangible cultural heritage (Knapik and Król, 2023). Through economic incentives, community engagement, and educational initiatives, it is possible to create a sustainable model for cultural preservation that balances tradition with modernisation.

Materials and Methods

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to analyse cultural preservation in Huangpu District, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods to understand the subject comprehensively. This approach ensures a thorough examination of the various factors influencing cultural preservation and allows for a more nuanced analysis of the data collected.

Field visits are a crucial component of this study. These visits involve firsthand observing cultural practices and landmarks, providing valuable insights into the residents' daily lives and the cultural activities integral to their community. By immersing themselves in the local environment, researchers can better understand the cultural context and identify key elements that contribute to preserving cultural identity (Taecharungroj and Prasertsakul, 2023). Observations made during these visits are meticulously documented, providing a rich source of qualitative data for analysis. These field visits also allow researchers to witness the interactions between community members and their cultural heritage, offering a unique perspective on how traditions are maintained and adapted (Isaac et al., 2023).

Surveys are another essential method used in this study. These surveys are administered to collect data from residents and stakeholders, gathering information on various aspects of

cultural preservation. The surveys capture the residents' perceptions of their cultural heritage, their challenges in maintaining it, and their attitudes towards modernisation (Li et al., 2023). The surveys also seek to understand the role of stakeholders, such as local authorities, cultural practitioners, and community organisations, in the preservation efforts. The quantitative data (421 respondents) collected through these surveys are analysed to identify trends and patterns that can inform the development of effective preservation strategies. By incorporating the perspectives of a diverse range of participants, this study ensures a holistic understanding of the cultural preservation landscape in Huangpu District.

In-depth interviews are conducted with cultural practitioners and local authorities to gain a more detailed understanding of the cultural preservation efforts in Huangpu District from May 2024 to July 2024. These interviews provide an opportunity to explore the perspectives of individuals directly involved in preserving cultural heritage. Cultural practitioners, such as artists, performers, and craftsmen, share their experiences and insights into the traditional practices being preserved (Xiao and Bhengsri, 2024). Local authorities provide information on the policies and initiatives to support cultural preservation. The qualitative data obtained from these interviews are analysed to identify best practices and areas for improvement. These interviews also highlight the challenges cultural practitioners and local authorities face, offering valuable insights into the complexities of cultural preservation in a rapidly urbanising environment.

This study employs Social Cognitive Theory as its theoretical framework to understand how cultural values are transmitted and preserved (Fu and Ma, 2020). The Social Cognitive Theory emphasises the role of observational learning, imitation, and modelling in transmitting cultural values. By applying this framework, this study seeks to understand how cultural practices are passed down from generation to generation and how they are adapted to changing social and environmental conditions. The theoretical framework also helps to identify the factors that influence individuals' engagement with their cultural heritage and the mechanisms through which cultural values are reinforced or weakened (Ababneh, 2021). By integrating social cognitive theory into the analysis, this study provides a deeper understanding of the processes that underpin cultural preservation in Huangpu District.

The mixed-methods approach employed in this study provides a comprehensive and multi-faceted analysis of cultural preservation in Huangpu District. This study aims to develop a holistic understanding of the factors contributing to cultural identity preservation by combining field visits, surveys, interviews, and a robust theoretical framework. The insights gained from this research can inform the development of effective strategies for cultural preservation that balance tradition with modernisation, ensuring that the unique cultural heritage of Huangpu District is safeguarded for future generations. This study offers a nuanced perspective on the challenges and opportunities associated with cultural preservation in a rapidly changing world through qualitative and quantitative methods.

Results

The provided demographic data offers a comprehensive insight into a specific population, shedding light on various socio-economic indicators (Table 1). Gender distribution is balanced, with men representing 47.3% and women 52.7%. The age distribution is predominantly middle-aged, with the largest group being 45-54 years (43.7%), followed by 55-64 years

(33.0%). Marital status shows that nearly half the population is married (47.3%), while 29.9% are divorced or separated. Education levels indicate that most individuals have completed secondary education (40.6%), with a significant proportion having vocational or technical education (32.3%).

Occupational data reveals that government employees form the largest group (29.2%), followed by business owners or entrepreneurs (22.1%) and farmers (19.7%). Income levels are concentrated in the middle-income range, with most individuals (54.4%) earning between US\$1,000 and US\$1,499. Household size data indicates that most individuals live in households with three members (41.3%), followed by households with four members (28.0%).

Residency data shows that a significant portion of the population has lived in their current location for an extended period, with 37.1% residing for 6-10 years and 35.9% for 11-20 years. This indicates a stable and long-standing community.

In summary, the demographic data highlights a balanced gender distribution, a primarily middle-aged and married population, a workforce with substantial vocational and technical education, diverse occupational sectors, a middle-income bracket, smaller household sizes, and long-term residency. These findings are valuable for policymakers, community planners, and social service providers in addressing the needs and priorities of this demographic.

Table 1
The Demographic of the Respondents

	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	199	47.3
Female	222	52.7
Age		
18-24	23	5.5
25-34	30	7.1
35-44	18	4.3
45-54	184	43.7
55-64	139	33.0
65 and above	27	6.4
Marital Status		
Single	51	12.1
Married	199	47.3
Divorced/Separated	126	29.9
Widowed	45	10.7
Education Level		
No formal education	13	3.1
Primary education	63	15.0
Secondary education	171	40.6
Vocational/Technical Education	136	32.3
Bachelor's Degree	30	7.1
Master's Degree	8	1.9
Occupation		
Business owner/Entrepreneur	93	22.1

	Frequency (<i>n</i>)	Percentage (%)
Private sector employee	56	13.3
Government employee	123	29.2
Farmer/Agricultural worker	83	19.7
Retired	40	9.5
Unemployed	13	3.1
Student	10	2.4
Other	3	0.7
Income Level		
Less than US\$500	48	11.4
US\$500 - US\$999	106	25.2
US\$1,000 - US\$1,499	229	54.4
US\$1,500 - US\$1,999	33	7.8
US\$2,000 and above	5	1.2
Household Size		
1 (Live alone)	23	5.5
2	68	16.2
3	174	41.3
4	118	28.0
5 or more	38	9.0
Residency		
Less than 1 year	3	0.7
1-5 years	56	13.3
6-10 years	156	37.1
11-20 years	151	35.9
More than 20 years	55	13.0

Discussion

Factors Influencing Cultural Preservation

Community involvement is a cornerstone of cultural preservation, as local participation is critical for sustaining cultural practices (Qin and Leung, 2021). When community members actively preserve their cultural heritage, they ensure that traditions, values, and customs are passed down through generations. This involvement can take various forms, such as participating in cultural festivals, maintaining traditional crafts, and educating younger generations about their heritage. By fostering a sense of ownership and pride in their cultural identity, communities can create a supportive environment for preserving their unique cultural practices (Wasela, 2023). Additionally, community involvement encourages collaboration and the sharing of knowledge, which can lead to innovative approaches to cultural preservation.

Government policies play a significant role in supporting cultural preservation efforts. Initiatives like the Strategic Plan for Rural Revitalization have positively impacted cultural preservation by providing a framework for sustainable development and resource allocation (Wang and Zhang, 2024). These policies often include measures to protect cultural heritage sites, promote traditional crafts, and support cultural tourism. By prioritising cultural preservation in their development plans, governments can create an enabling environment for communities to thrive while maintaining their cultural identity. Furthermore, government policies can provide financial support and incentives for cultural preservation projects, ensuring that resources are available to maintain and promote cultural heritage (Gong et al.,

2024). The involvement of local authorities in these initiatives also helps to ensure that preservation efforts are aligned with the needs and priorities of the community.

Economic integration is another crucial factor in cultural preservation. Rural tourism and cultural industries provide financial support for heritage conservation, creating economic opportunities for local communities while promoting their cultural heritage (Huang and Cao, 2022). By developing cultural tourism, communities can attract visitors interested in experiencing traditional lifestyles, crafts, and festivals. This generates income for the community and raises awareness about the importance of cultural preservation. Cultural industries, such as traditional crafts and local products, can also provide economic benefits while preserving cultural heritage (Ariffin et al., 2023). By creating a market for these products, rural communities can sustain their traditions and pass them on to future generations. Additionally, economic integration can help to address the economic disparities between urban and rural areas, providing a more balanced approach to development.

Community involvement, government policies, and economic integration are essential to cultural preservation (Putra and Saleh, 2024). By actively preserving their cultural heritage, communities can ensure that their traditions, values, and customs are passed down through generations. Government policies provide a supportive framework for cultural preservation efforts, offering financial support and incentives for projects that promote cultural heritage (Ma and Guo, 2023). Through rural tourism and cultural industries, economic integration creates economic opportunities for local communities while promoting their cultural heritage. Together, these factors contribute to the sustainable development of rural areas, ensuring that cultural identity is preserved amidst the pressures of modernisation. By adopting a holistic approach to cultural preservation, communities can maintain their unique cultural essence while embracing the opportunities of the modern world.

Challenges Identified

Urban encroachment is a significant challenge to cultural preservation, particularly in rapidly developing regions. As cities expand, rural areas often lose cultural spaces due to urban development (Wu and Zhang, 2023). This encroachment can destroy historical sites, traditional buildings, and communal spaces integral to rural communities' cultural identity. The pressure to accommodate growing urban populations and infrastructure needs often precedes preserving cultural heritage. Consequently, the unique cultural landscapes of rural areas are at risk of being overshadowed or wholly erased by modern urban developments (Florescu and Coheci, 2023). This loss not only diminishes the cultural richness of these areas but also disrupts the social fabric and sense of community among residents.

Talent drain is another critical issue affecting cultural preservation. The migration of younger generations to urban centres for better educational and employment opportunities reduces the pool of cultural practitioners in rural areas (Rosvall et al., 2022). This migration leads to a decline in traditional knowledge and skills transmission, as fewer young people remain in rural communities to learn and continue cultural practices. The younger population's departure also means fewer individuals can participate in and support cultural events, festivals, and rituals (Causadias et al., 2022). As a result, the continuity of cultural traditions is threatened, and the rich heritage of rural communities faces the risk of being forgotten. Efforts to address the talent drain must focus on creating opportunities for young

people within rural areas, such as promoting cultural industries and providing incentives for cultural practitioners to remain in their communities.

Resource limitations pose a significant barrier to cultural preservation efforts. Insufficient funding for cultural initiatives hampers the ability of rural communities to maintain and promote their cultural heritage (Lei and Jialing, 2024). Many rural areas lack the financial resources to support cultural projects, such as restoring historical sites, organising cultural events, and documenting intangible cultural heritage. These initiatives struggle to sustain themselves without adequate funding, gradually eroding cultural practices and traditions. Additionally, lacking financial support can discourage community members from actively participating in cultural preservation efforts, as they may prioritise more immediate economic needs (Giglietto et al., 2022). To overcome resource limitations, securing funding from various sources, including government grants, private donations, and partnerships with cultural organisations.

Urban encroachment, talent drain, and resource limitations are significant challenges to cultural preservation in rural areas. The loss of cultural spaces due to urban development threatens rural communities' unique cultural landscapes and social cohesion (Knapik and Król, 2023). The migration of younger generations reduces the pool of cultural practitioners, jeopardising the transmission of traditional knowledge and skills. Insufficient funding for cultural initiatives hampers the ability of rural communities to maintain and promote their cultural heritage (Yu et al., 2024). Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach that includes protecting cultural spaces, creating opportunities for young people within rural areas, and securing adequate funding for cultural projects. By adopting a holistic strategy, it is possible to preserve rural communities' rich cultural heritage while accommodating modernisation's demands. Through concerted efforts and collaboration among stakeholders, the cultural identity of rural areas can be safeguarded for future generations.

Implications for Cultural Identity Preservation

The findings suggest that preserving cultural identity in Huangpu District requires a multi-faceted approach, addressing various aspects of cultural preservation to ensure a comprehensive and sustainable strategy. This approach encompasses education, infrastructure development, and policy support, each crucial in maintaining and promoting the district's rich cultural heritage.

Education is a fundamental component of cultural preservation, as raising awareness about cultural heritage among younger generations is essential for the continuity of traditions and values (Chen et al., 2021). By incorporating cultural education into the school curriculum, students can learn about their community's history, customs, and practices from an early age. This fosters a sense of pride and identity and encourages active participation in cultural activities. Additionally, extracurricular programs, such as workshops and cultural clubs, can provide hands-on experiences that deepen students' understanding and appreciation of their heritage. By engaging young people in cultural preservation efforts, the community can ensure its traditions are passed down and adapted to contemporary contexts (Gregg et al., 2022).

Infrastructure development is another critical aspect of preserving cultural identity. Enhancing facilities for cultural activities can provide the necessary spaces for the community to gather, celebrate, and practice their traditions (Lin et al., 2022). This includes the construction and maintenance of cultural centres, museums, and performance venues that can host events, exhibitions, and workshops. These facilities serve as hubs for cultural activities and as symbols of the community's commitment to preserving its heritage. Furthermore, improving infrastructure can support cultural tourism development, attracting visitors interested in experiencing the district's unique cultural offerings. By investing in infrastructure, the community can create a supportive environment for cultural preservation and promote economic growth through tourism (Li et al., 2024).

Policy support is essential for creating an enabling environment for cultural preservation. Strengthening government policies to protect and promote cultural heritage can provide the necessary framework and resources for practical preservation efforts (Zhou and Chuangprakhon, 2023). This includes the implementation of regulations that safeguard historical sites, traditional buildings, and cultural landscapes from urban encroachment and development pressures. Policies that provide financial incentives and grants for cultural projects can encourage community members to engage in preservation activities (Rahman et al., 2024). Government support can also facilitate partnerships between the public and private sectors, fostering collaboration and resource-sharing for cultural initiatives. By prioritising cultural preservation in policy-making, the government can ensure that the community's heritage is protected and promoted for future generations.

Preserving cultural identity in Huangpu District requires a multi-faceted approach integrating education, infrastructure development, and policy support. The community can ensure the continuity of its traditions and values by raising awareness about cultural heritage among younger generations (Giglietto et al., 2022). Enhancing facilities for cultural activities provides the necessary spaces for the community to gather and practice their traditions while promoting cultural tourism. Strengthening government policies to protect and promote cultural heritage creates an environment for practical preservation efforts. Together, these strategies contribute to a comprehensive and sustainable approach to cultural preservation, ensuring that the rich cultural heritage of Huangpu District is safeguarded for future generations. The community can maintain its unique cultural identity through concerted efforts and stakeholder collaboration while embracing modernisation opportunities.

The Rural Culture Development Model (RCDM)

The proposed Rural Culture Development Model (RCDM) for Huangpu District is a comprehensive framework designed to preserve and promote cultural identity while fostering sustainable development. This model encompasses three key components: cultural innovation, economic synergy, and community empowerment (Figure 1). Each component ensures the district's rich cultural heritage is maintained and integrated into modern development efforts.

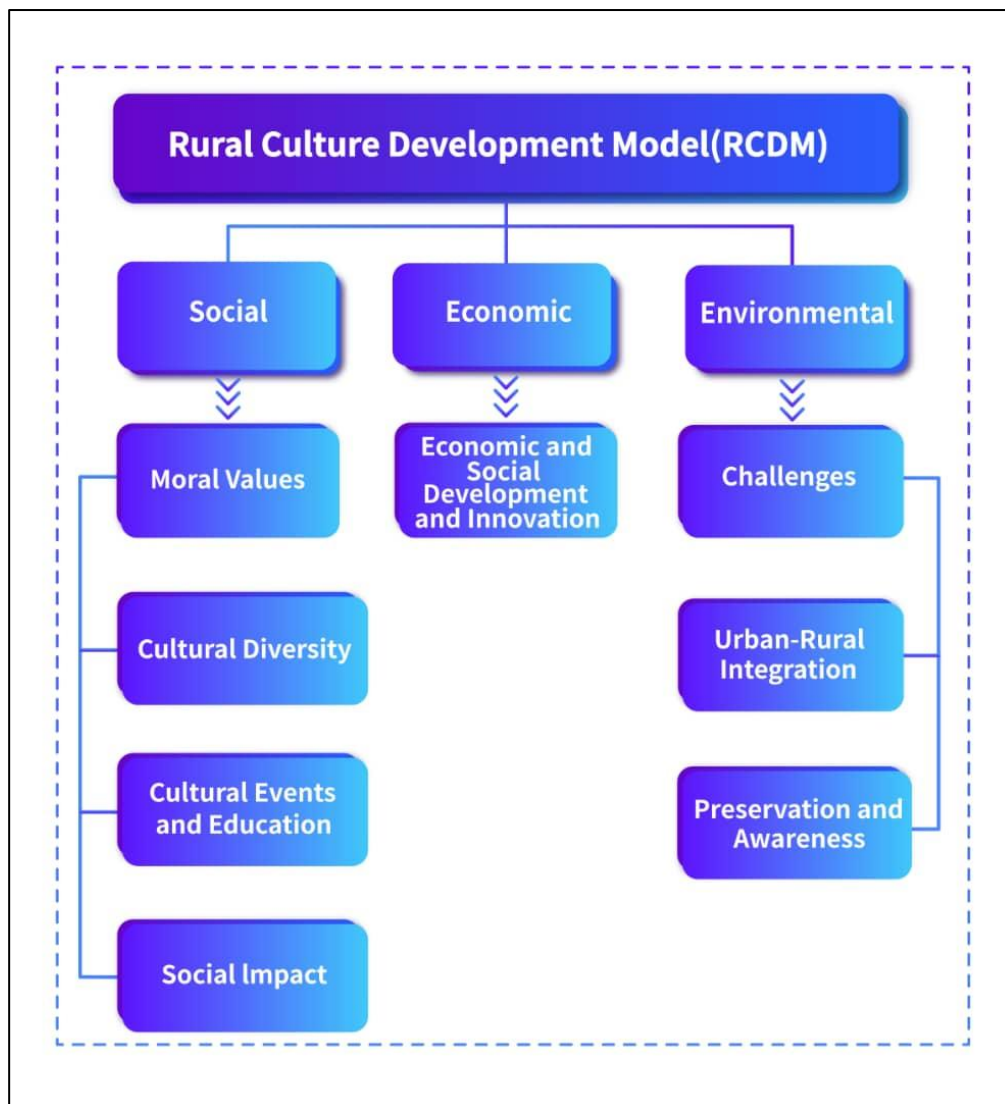


Figure 1. Proposed Rural Culture Development Model (RCDM).

Cultural innovation is vital to the RCDM, focusing on integrating modern elements into traditional practices (Karia and Davadas Michael, 2022). This approach recognises that culture is dynamic and constantly evolving and seeks to find ways to adapt traditional practices to contemporary contexts. By incorporating modern technology, design, and methodologies, cultural innovation can breathe new life into age-old traditions, making them more relevant and appealing to younger generations. For example, digital platforms can document and share traditional crafts, performances, and rituals, ensuring they are accessible to a broader audience. Additionally, contemporary art forms and media can reinterpret and celebrate traditional cultural expressions, creating a fusion of old and new that resonates with locals and visitors (Zheng, 2024). This not only helps to preserve cultural heritage but also fosters creativity and innovation within the community.

Economic synergy is another critical component of the RCDM, emphasising the importance of leveraging cultural assets for tourism and industry (Zhang and Wei, 2024). By recognising the economic potential of cultural heritage, the model seeks to create opportunities for sustainable development that benefit the local community. For instance, cultural tourism can attract visitors interested in experiencing the district's unique traditions,

festivals, and historical sites. This influx of tourists can generate income for local businesses, artisans, and cultural practitioners, providing them with the financial resources needed to sustain their practices. Furthermore, developing cultural industries, such as traditional crafts, local cuisine, and performing arts, can create jobs and stimulate economic growth (Quan-Baffour, 2023). By promoting and marketing these cultural products, the district can establish itself as a cultural destination, attracting domestic and international tourists. This economic synergy supports cultural preservation and contributes to the community's prosperity.

Community empowerment is the third pillar of the RCDM, focusing on engaging local stakeholders in decision-making processes (Heuninckx et al., 2022). This approach recognises that the preservation of cultural heritage is a collective effort that requires the active participation and collaboration of the community. By involving residents, cultural practitioners, and community organisations in the planning and implementation of cultural preservation initiatives, the model ensures that these efforts align with the community's needs and aspirations. This participatory approach fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among community members, encouraging them to preserve their cultural heritage actively. Additionally, community empowerment can be facilitated through educational programs, workshops, and capacity-building initiatives that equip residents with the skills and knowledge needed to manage and promote their cultural assets (Dushkova and Ivlieva, 2024). By empowering the community, the RCDM creates a supportive environment for cultural preservation and sustainable development.

The proposed Rural Culture Development Model (RCDM) for Huangpu District offers a holistic and sustainable approach to cultural preservation. The model provides a comprehensive framework for maintaining and promoting the district's rich cultural heritage by focusing on cultural innovation, economic synergy, and community empowerment (Ma and Guo, 2023). The RCDM ensures that cultural identity is preserved while fostering economic growth and community development by integrating modern elements into traditional practices, leveraging cultural assets for tourism and industry, and actively engaging local stakeholders. This multi-faceted approach benefits the local community and contributes to the broader goal of safeguarding cultural heritage in the face of modernisation. By adopting the RCDM, Huangpu District can serve as a model for other regions seeking to balance tradition with progress, ensuring their unique cultural identities are preserved for future generations.

Conclusions

Huangpu District's cultural heritage embodies the essence of traditional Chinese rural life, reflecting a rich tapestry of traditions, values, and practices passed down through generations. This heritage is a source of pride for the local community and a vital component of the nation's intangible cultural heritage. By addressing challenges and leveraging opportunities, the RCDM can serve as a blueprint for cultural preservation, ensuring that the unique cultural identity of rural communities is maintained amidst the pressures of modernisation.

One of the primary challenges faced by Huangpu District is urban encroachment, which threatens the preservation of cultural spaces and landmarks. Rapid urbanisation often leads to the destruction of historical sites and traditional buildings, undermining the cultural fabric

of rural communities. To address this challenge, the RCDM emphasises protecting and restoring cultural heritage sites, ensuring they are preserved for future generations. This involves physical restoration and the documentation and promotion of the cultural significance of these sites.

Another significant challenge is the talent drain, where younger generations migrate to urban centres for better opportunities, leaving behind a dwindling pool of cultural practitioners. This migration disrupts the transmission of traditional knowledge and skills, posing a risk to the continuity of cultural practices. The RCDM addresses this issue by creating opportunities for young people within rural areas, such as promoting cultural industries and providing incentives for cultural practitioners to remain in their communities. By fostering a supportive environment for cultural preservation, the model ensures that traditions are passed down and adapted to contemporary contexts.

Resource limitations also pose a significant barrier to cultural preservation efforts. Many rural communities lack the financial resources to support cultural projects, such as restoring historical sites, organising cultural events, and documenting intangible cultural heritage. The RCDM seeks to overcome this challenge by securing funding from various sources, including government grants, private donations, and partnerships with cultural organisations. The model ensures that resources are available to maintain and promote cultural heritage by providing financial support and incentives for cultural preservation projects.

Leveraging opportunities is equally important in the RCDM. One such opportunity is the development of cultural tourism, which can attract visitors interested in experiencing traditional lifestyles, crafts, and festivals. This generates income for the community and raises awareness about the importance of cultural preservation. By promoting and marketing cultural tourism, the district can establish itself as a cultural destination, attracting domestic and international tourists. Developing cultural industries, such as traditional crafts, local cuisine, and performing arts, can create jobs and stimulate economic growth, providing financial support for heritage conservation.

Future research should focus on scaling the RCDM to other regions, ensuring the sustainable preservation of rural culture across China. By adapting the model to the specific needs and contexts of different communities, it is possible to create a flexible and practical framework for cultural preservation. This involves conducting comparative studies to identify best practices and areas for improvement and developing community engagement and capacity-building strategies. By sharing knowledge and experiences, rural communities can learn from each other and collaborate on cultural preservation initiatives.

In conclusion, Huangpu District's cultural heritage embodies the essence of traditional Chinese rural life. By addressing challenges such as urban encroachment, talent drain, and resource limitations and leveraging opportunities like cultural tourism and industry development, the RCDM can serve as a blueprint for cultural preservation. Future research should focus on scaling this model to other regions, ensuring the sustainable preservation of rural culture across China. Through concerted efforts and collaboration among stakeholders, the unique cultural identity of rural communities can be safeguarded for future generations.

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