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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## Research on the Dissemination of Local Characteristic Culture through Short Videos: Taking Beach-combing Culture of Yancheng as an Example

**Decheng Zhang**

*School of Information Engineering, Yancheng Normal University, Yancheng, Jiangsu, China*

**Corresponding Author:** Decheng Zhang, **E-mail:** [zhangdc@yctu.edu.cn](mailto:zhangdc@yctu.edu.cn).

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**ABSTRACT**

Going beach-combing after tide has been a major means of life and work for fishermen by the sea for thousands of years. These fishermen picked up and accumulated wisdom in their work, thus shaping a unique culture of beach-combing. Based on the analysis of the characteristics of seafood-collecting video clips produced by the current self-media platforms, the essay first studies the elements affecting beach-combing from the perspectives of YanCheng's geographical locations, beach characteristics, and Marine resources and then digs into new potential forms of beach-combing suitable for YanCheng so as to evolve a distinctive local beach-combing culture. The essay also attempts to expand the popularity and reach of Yancheng City and boost its economy and culture by integrating its beach-combing culture into other local cultures, such as its sea-salt culture, wetland culture, culture of celebrities and History, food culture, and popularizing and promoting its beach-combing culture through various kinds of channels.

**KEYWORDS**

YanCheng City; going beach-combing after tide; characteristic analysis; cultural integration; spirit of beach-combing.

**ARTICLE INFORMATION**

**ACCEPTED:** 01 October 2024

**PUBLISHED:** 19 October 2024

**DOI:** 10.32996/jhsss.2024.6.10.14

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### 1. Introduction

Human beings are products of the natural environment, and only by adapting to the environment can they survive. Therefore, there is a way of survival and lifestyle that relies on "eating from mountains and drinking from water; adapting to the situation and adapting to local conditions." The water and soil on one side nourishes the people on the other side. The vitality and boldness of the sea have shaped the hardworking, brave, and indomitable spirit of fishermen. The sea is rich in shellfish, crabs, fish, and other seafood resources. People living on the coast, according to the laws of the rising and falling tides, catch up with the ebb and flow and go to the mudflat and reefs on the coast to salvage or collect seafood, which is called the process of beach-combing [Beach-combing, 2024]. Going beach-combing after tide is a labor production method that coastal fishermen rely on for survival, which has been thriving since ancient times. Various activities such as shouting for the sea and going to markets are carried out around the beach-combing, forming a unique culture of beach-combing. However, with the rapid development of the coastal economy and excessive exploitation of fishery resources, significant damage has been caused to the intertidal zone of coastal waters, especially the destruction of biodiversity. At the same time, with the continuous improvement of people's living standards, the purpose of making a living by going beach-combing after tide is gradually being forgotten by the new generation.

The development of new technologies, such as smartphone video shooting and editing, has led to a shift in video production from specialization to grassroots popularization. The duration of videos has gradually become shorter, with short videos lasting only a few minutes or even seconds, becoming an important way for people to entertain and convey emotions. Short video platforms such as "Record a better life," "Record the world record you," Tiktok, Kwai, etc., realize convenient video shooting and fragmented content recording, becoming an important carrier for expressing oneself, showing nature, and recording life, as well as a new tool

for shaping social culture [Zhang, 2019]. Short video platforms such as Tiktok, Kwai, Goodlooking Video, Watermelon Video, and other short video creators, such as Fisherman Afeng, Laosi, and Alin, used short videos to record the process and harvest of their journey to the sea and highlighted a large number of broadcasts, becoming an online celebrity, so that the journey to the sea from subsistence work to experience the sea can regain people's attention.

## **2. Analysis of the Characteristics of the Rise of Beach-combing Culture**

'Going beach-combing after the tide ' is a way of production and life for human survival. Through labor, wisdom is accumulated, and human gratitude, joy, and freedom bestowed by nature are accumulated. [Kaiyun, 2012] Many coastal areas organize sea going activities to inherit the culture of beach-combing. Experienced influencers who use short video platforms for live streaming have become internet celebrities, sometimes reaching hundreds or even millions of followers and likes for a short video.

The reasons why the short videos of "Beach-combing" have received a lot of attention from netizens, in addition to the authenticity of the behavior, the uniqueness of content planning, and the convenience of selling goods, are analyzed. The short videos themselves generally have the following characteristics:

### **2.1 Harvesting Diversity and Expanding Knowledge through Beach-combing**

The coastline of the Chinese Mainland starts from the Yalu River Estuary in the north and ends at the Beilun River Estuary in the south, with a total length of more than 18000 kilometers. [China Coastal Zone, 2024] Watching Beach-combing short videos, people have seen various tools for fishing, learned about their usage methods and techniques, and witnessed diverse marine creatures such as crabs, octopuses, groupers, shrimp, scallops, sea urchins, kelp, and even nationally protected animals such as the Chinese horseshoe crab. Sometimes, some sea fishermen even popularize the habits and functions of seafood, breeding methods, selection precautions, and cooking methods for the public, which provides people with different knowledge for leisure and entertainment and has a certain positive significance for children's understanding of the ocean.

### **2.2 Experiential and Sustainable Development of Beach-combing**

Life experience comes from accumulation, and people always hope to experience a different life and work. The surging waves of the sea during high tide and the rushing waves during low tide, capturing shrimp, crabs, and fish swimming in clear seawater, digging out razor clams and clams under the beach, etc., allow people to experience the grandeur of nature and the joy of labor. In many short videos about beach-combing, one can see the environmental and sustainable development awareness of the people who rush to the sea. When encountering discarded items such as plastic bottles and garbage belts, they will casually take them away. When encountering octopuses and crabs that give birth, small fish and shellfish that are too small, they will also be released back into the sea, benefiting future generations.

### **2.3 The Fun of Beach-combing and the Entertainment Value of Participation**

With the rapid development of the economy, people's work competition is fierce, the pace of life is accelerating, and the pressure of life is increasing, which makes many people lack leisure time to travel and release stress. Watching short videos of beach-combing allows people to see the ocean in their hearts without leaving their homes, giving them a feeling of "facing the sea, warm spring flowers blooming." During the process of rushing to the sea, in addition to common seafood such as crabs, shrimp, and scallops, interesting scenes such as hermit crabs in conch shells, bulging pufferfish, dancing money snails, and uniquely shaped shells make people feel the fresh and primitive vitality. Taking children to the sea has enabled them to gain knowledge through play, acquire skills and achievements through labor, cultivate their exploratory personality, increase family cohesion, and invisibly release stress. It has also brought joy to people's emotions and healed their pain and helplessness.

## **3. Historical Changes and the Current Situation of Beach-combing in Yancheng**

### **3.1 Historical Changes in Yancheng**

Yancheng is one of the earliest coastal areas in China to be developed and utilized. About 7000 years ago, the Earth's climate warmed, turning Yancheng, which formed land about 20000 years ago, into a sea. Later, a large amount of sediment transported into the sea by the Yangtze River and Huai River gradually accumulated at the bottom of shallow bays, forming offshore sand embankments. In the Neolithic Age five to six thousand years ago, the ancestors of Yanfu had already worked and lived on this land. In 119 BC, Emperor Wu of Han began to establish Yandu County. In 411 AD, Emperor An of Eastern Jin renamed Yandu as Yancheng. Yancheng has a history of over 2100 years of county building and over 1600 years of city building. Because the city resembles a ladle and is also known as a "Piaocheng," it is only 500 meters away from the sea, hence the poem "Piaocheng looks east at the endless water" (author: Gao Gu's "Yancheng Watching the Sea" from the Ming Dynasty). In 1128 AD, the Yellow River captured the Huai River, which lasted for more than 700 years and brought a huge amount of sediment into the sea. The sediment from the mouth of the Yangtze River flowed northward and converged, causing the coastline of Yancheng to rapidly silt eastward and gradually turn into land, causing Yancheng County to gradually move away from the sea. [Overview of Yancheng, 2024]

### **3.2 Current Situation of Yancheng's Beach-combing**

Yancheng is bordered by the Yellow Sea to the east, with the northern Jiangsu Irrigation Canal as the boundary. The Yellow Sea is divided into subtropical and warm temperate climates to the north and south. The deep and bottom layers of the depression in the central part of the Yellow Sea form cold water masses, which are very suitable for the growth of seafood such as shrimp, scallops, and sea cucumbers. The economic shellfish resources mainly include oysters, mussels, clams, scallops, and abalone, and the aquatic products are very abundant. Due to the fact that most of the areas in Yancheng were formed by the sedimentation of the past sea, the ancestors of Yancheng had rich experience in beach-combing. In May 2022, the science and education channel of CCTV, Geography · China, broadcast the documentary "The Magic Tidal Tree" and "Secrets in the mudflat," showing the magical natural landscape of Yancheng mudflat and the scene of Dongtai Jianggang going to the sea. Search on short video platforms such as Tiktok and Kwai with the key word "Yancheng Beach-combing". There are beach-combing videos displayed at ports such as Dongtai Jianggang, Dafeng Port, Sheyang Huangsha Port, Binhai Yueliang Bay, Xiangshui Chenjia Port, and nearby coasts, but there are not many people like it, and the author's attention is not high. Even the current local people in Yancheng do not know which beach-combing is the most appropriate, let alone other related beach-combing activities and the beach-combing culture that rises to Yancheng is even less talked about.

### **4. Factors Affecting Yancheng's Beach-combing**

The coastline of Yancheng is 582 kilometers long. With its super long coastline, numerous mudflat, and rich natural resources, it should attract a large number of people to beach-combing and take videos to publicize the beach-combing culture of Yancheng. However, why is the beach-combing of Yancheng so low in popularity and attention on short video platforms such as Tiktok and Kwai? I believe there are several reasons for this.

#### **4.1 Turbidity of Seawater Affects the Visual Pleasure of Beach-combing**

In the minds of most people, the sea is blue, which can help people relax and unwind. However, the sediment carried by the Yellow Sea has dyed the nearshore seawater yellow, and coupled with the influence of tides, the seawater has become even more turbid and yellowish. Even low-lying areas with low tides have lower visibility, which affects the visual pleasure of beach-combing.

#### **4.2 Muddy and Silty Beaches Increase the Difficulty and Danger of Beach-combing**

Unlike the bedrock coasts of provinces such as Zhejiang, Fujian, Taiwan, and Guangdong south of the Shandong Peninsula, Liaodong Peninsula, and Hangzhou Bay, as well as the silver beach sandy coasts of Yalong Bay on Hainan Island and Beihai in Guangxi, the beaches in Yancheng are affected by the dual effects of sediment from the Yellow River's capture of the Huai River and the northward movement of the Yangtze River estuary into the sea, forming a silty coastline with silt in the upper layer and silt in the lower layer. This type of silty beach has a wide area and thick sediment deposition, which is wet and slippery. Although it is delicate and soft, it has a high viscosity. It is difficult to dig clams, mud snails, etc., for a long time, which increases the difficulty and also increases the risk of getting stuck in the silt.

#### **4.3 Flat Terrain and Limited Variety of Products Due to Distance from the Sea**

Compared to the diurnal tide patterns in the South China Sea, such as Shantou and Qinhuangdao in the Bohai Sea, as well as the mixed tide patterns in the South China Sea, the Yellow Sea tide in Yancheng is an irregular shallow semi diurnal tide pattern, with the ebb tide lasting longer than the flood tide. The time to beach-combing is short, and it is difficult for outsiders to grasp the timing of tides. At the same time, Yancheng is the only city in China without mountains, with a flat terrain. The sea depth of the Yellow Sea in the east is relatively shallow, with an average depth of only 44 meters. The seabed is flat, and the tidal range is large. During ebb tide, the distance between the sea and the coast can sometimes reach several kilometers. Due to the lack of rocks, islands, and other obstructions, the beach lacks large marine treasures such as fish and shrimp and can only dig for clams, mud snails, etc. The variety of seafood is relatively single, making it difficult and enjoyable to beach-combing.

### **5. Measures to Enhance Yancheng's Beach-combing Culture**

At present, most of the functions of Ganhai have shifted from production and daily life to leisure and entertainment. Various activities related to beach-combing have been carried out to explore the deep cultural connotations of beach-combing, integrate beach-combing culture into local characteristic culture, and play an important role in enhancing local visibility and influence.

#### **5.1 Exploration of Yancheng's Beach-combing Culture**

Culture plays a decisive role in the success of a society. Culture refers to the history, geography, customs, traditional practices, way of life, literature, art, behavioral norms, ways of thinking, values, etc., of a country or nation. [Culture. Baidu Baike, 2024]. It is a social phenomenon, a product created and formed by people over a long period of time, and an accumulation of social history. The same goes for the beach-combing. The beach-combing in Yancheng has a history of thousands of years. The annual sea sacrifice activities of the beach-combing people, the prayers and shouts before going out to sea, the shouting and labor methods during the beach-combing process, and the celebration of the harvest after returning with a full load, all form a unique culture of

beach-combing. It is deeply excavated and promoted, becoming a characteristic culture of various places. This culture is the most charming, valuable asset with huge social influence and economic value.

### **5.2 Integration of Yancheng's Beach-combing Culture and Local Characteristic Culture**

The culture of beach-combing in Yancheng belongs to a niche culture with obvious regional characteristics. To promote, we must rely on the free riding of other characteristic cultures in Yancheng in order to be accepted by more people. If integrated with the white sea salt culture of Yancheng, Yancheng is the "Root of Huai Salt" and still the main production area of sea salt in China. Yancheng Xiangshui Chenjiagang Guandong Salt Field is known as the first sea salt production base in southeastern China, close to the sea. People can experience the joy of sea salt culture while also experiencing the pleasure of beach-combing. Integrating with the green wetland culture of Yancheng, Yancheng is known as the capital of eastern wetlands. The world's largest wild milu deer population finds food and plays in the mudflat wetlands, and groups of migratory birds inhabit here. The combination of observing nature and beach-combing makes going to the sea no longer monotonous. Integrating with the celebrity culture of Yancheng, literati and scholars have left many praises for the seafood of Yancheng, the most famous of which is the "freshest in the world," written by Emperor Qianlong after tasting the delicious clams in Dongtai during his visit to Jiangnan.

### **5.3 Multi Channel Promotion of Yancheng's Beach-combing Culture**

On the one hand, the Yancheng Municipal Government should fully understand the impact of the beach-combing culture on people's lives, plan and construct beaches suitable for mass beach-combing, organize forces to explore and promote the characteristics and features of Yancheng's beach-combing culture, make the beach-combing series activities normalized and serialized, and deeply integrate them with other characteristic cultures to create a distinctive brand for Yancheng's beach-combing activities. On the other hand, leveraging the aggregation effect of media, carefully planning Yancheng's sea racing videos in integrated media, self media, and new media to tell the story of Yancheng's beach-combing On Tiktok, Kwai, and other influential We Media platforms, consciously guide the live broadcast of Yancheng's beach-combing scene, and display the scene of Yancheng's beach-combing when selling local specialties of Yancheng.

## **6. Conclusion**

The strength of a country or a nation is always guided by ideology and supported by spirit. [Gu, 2024] Beach-combing is a mode of production, and beach-combing culture is also an inheritance of historical culture. At different levels, beach-combing culture has different spiritual connotations. Facing the sea, one can see that it encompasses all kinds of rivers. With tolerance comes greatness, and it makes one's mind empty like a valley. Watching the tides rise and fall while facing the sea is not only a natural phenomenon but also a summary of scientific laws that have been passed down for thousands of years. It is the driving force behind the continuous growth and development of humanity. Facing the sea, watching the waves behind, and pushing the waves ahead, each generation is stronger than the next. This is the spirit of the nation's continuous pursuit of survival and liberation and not afraid of sacrifice. In order to achieve harvest in the sea, we are not afraid of storms, forge ahead, and have the spirit of unity and struggle. Catching the big while rushing through the sea, benefiting future generations, is the wisdom of sustainable development. The new era has endowed beach-combing with a new spirit of a "community with a shared future for mankind." Therefore, Yancheng needs to explore its local culture of beach-combing in the new wave of rushing to the sea and write a new chapter for regional development and cultural inheritance.

## **Statements and Declarations**

**Funding:** Yancheng philosophy and social sciences research project in 2023: Research on the Characteristics of Yancheng Beach-combing Culture (Project No.: 23skc129)

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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