

Research on Innovative Models of Empowering Rural Revitalization by Universities under the Background of the “Strong Country Action”

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Abstract:

This project focuses on researching innovative models for university-led empowerment of rural revitalization, situated within the context of the “Strong Country Action” (Qiangguo Xing) initiative and guided by Party building principles. Through a combination of practical exploration and theoretical analysis, utilizing the “Strengthening the Nation” special campaign as a practical vehicle, the study investigates a “four-in-one” operational model for university “Dual-Leader” teacher Party branches: “Party Building Guidance – Resource Integration – Service Delivery – Outcome Translation.” The research demonstrates how academic strengths can be effectively transformed into driving forces for rural revitalization. Its objective is to distill innovative pathways for university-led rural revitalization under the guidance of Party building, thereby providing theoretical support for the synergistic development of a “Strong Education Nation” and rural revitalization. The study posits that the construction of the “Party Building Guidance – Resource Integration – Service Delivery – Outcome Translation” pathway is essential. Consequently, it proposes a research framework for “Innovative Models of University-Empowered Rural Revitalization under the ‘Strong Country Action’ Initiative”, specifically grounded in the practical context of the “Strong Country Action” special campaign, and employs a methodology combining empirical surveys and case studies to analyze the innovative practical pathways through which this special campaign fosters the deep integration of grassroots Party building and rural revitalization.

Keywords:

Strong Country Action, Party Building in Universities, Rural Revitalization, Model Innovation, Integration of Party Building and Business

1. Introduction

The Rural Revitalization Strategy constitutes a vital component of advancing Chinese-style modernization in the new era, as well as a key pathway toward achieving common prosperity. The core objective of rural revitalization is to realize the coordinated and integrated economic and social development of urban and rural areas. This is achieved by integrating urban and rural resources, fostering the

industrialization of agriculture and the integrated development of primary, secondary, and tertiary rural industries, enhancing the level of agricultural technology, and boosting the endogenous vitality and comprehensive competitiveness of rural areas. [2] As an important subject of knowledge innovation and talent cultivation, universities possess distinct advantages, including abundant disciplinary resources, robust research capabilities, and a high concentration of talent, and thus play an irreplaceable role in supporting rural revitalization. In recent years, the service provided by universities to rural revitalization has gradually shifted from single assistance to systematic participation, and from short-term support to long-term collaboration. During this process, the party building work in universities played an important organizational and leading role. The “Strong Country Action” Special Action implemented by the Ministry of Education and focused on university teacher Party branch secretaries who serve as “dual leaders” (simultaneously holding academic and Party leadership roles) has encouraged university teacher Party branches to engage deeply with grassroots communities to provide social services. By fostering the deep integration of Party building with teaching and research, this initiative provides new institutional safeguards and practical platforms that empower universities to contribute effectively to rural revitalization.

2. Research Status and Foundation

2.1. Current Status of Domestic Research

The research on “design services for rural revitalization” in China has produced rich results, which can be summarized into two dimensions: theoretical value exploration and practical path exploration. At the theoretical level, scholars generally recognize the key role of design in rural revitalization: Xu Liang emphasizes that artistic design can leverage creative empowerment to facilitate the reshaping of rural imagery, the preservation of cultural heritage, and economic growth [2]. Chen Chi, approaching the subject from the perspective of talent cultivation within higher education institutions, points out that integrating artistic design disciplines with rural resources serves a dual purpose: it not only enhances students’ practical competencies but also drives the endogenous development of rural areas [5]. Furthermore, Guo Yan explicitly asserts that the depth of the design discipline’s engagement directly influences the scientific rigor of “Beautiful Village” construction, encompassing a wide array of fields such as environmental planning and the identification and cultivation of unique local characteristics [3].

In the realm of research on practical pathways, various scholars have proposed differentiated strategies grounded in specific disciplinary characteristics and regional practices. He Peng, focusing on art education within applied universities, proposed a four-dimensional practical model centered on school-local collaboration, curriculum reform, team-based practice, and promotional outreach [4]. Chen Chi, taking Heilongjiang Foreign Language Institute as a case study, emphasized the integration of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) into the curriculum system, as well as its strategic branding and promotion. Drawing upon ICH practices in Zhuanglang County, Jiang Dianheng innovatively designed a service system and mobile application dedicated to ICH transmission [5]. Meanwhile, focusing on the field of art and design, Suo Xiaowen constructed an integrated pathway comprising “teacher-in-residence village studios,” “joint school-village bases,” “industry-education integration curricula,” and “collaborative R&D among schools, villages, and enterprises” [7].

Collectively, these studies offer practical frameworks examined from diverse perspectives that serve as valuable references for leveraging design to facilitate rural revitalization.

2.2. Current Status of Foreign Research

Compared to China, systematic research on “design services for rural revitalization” is relatively scarce in foreign countries, especially in the exploration of the integration of party building and business. Existing research mostly focuses on the theoretical and construction aspects of the Party. Although it is not directly related to design and rural revitalization, some governance concepts, resource integration methods, and interdisciplinary cooperation models can provide methodological inspiration for local research, such as community participatory design, digital protection of cultural heritage, and other practical experiences, which have certain reference value for design innovation in rural revitalization in China.

2.3. Review of Research Progress at Home and Abroad

Domestically, a substantial body of research has accumulated in the field of leveraging design to facilitate rural revitalization; scholars have not only theoretically elucidated the pivotal role of design in rural development but have also explored a variety of viable pathways and methodologies in practice. While there have been fewer studies abroad specifically dedicated to this precise topic, the relevant practical experiences from other regions nonetheless offer valuable insights for reference. Overall, however, the existing body of research still presents certain areas that warrant further refinement. First, insufficient attention has been paid to the guiding role of Party building in the process of utilizing design services to facilitate rural revitalization, particularly regarding cross-departmental collaborative advancement, as well as mechanisms for resource coordination and integration, where systematic research remains notably lacking. Second, existing practical case studies tend to be concentrated within specific regions or single disciplinary fields; while these cases possess representative value, they have yet to yield mature experiences that are replicable and scalable, or to establish relatively standardized practical pathways. Again, in the current context of deepening digitalization, there is still insufficient attention paid to the new forms of design services for rural revitalization, such as the specific application of metaverse scenarios, the development and implementation of intelligent design tools, and other directions, with significant room for expansion. Future research needs to further strengthen theoretical innovation in the integration of party building and business, deepen interdisciplinary research, and explore practical paths for digital technology to empower rural revitalization.

3. The Significance of Universities Participating in Rural Revitalization

3.1. Constructing an integrated and collaborative theoretical framework for university party building to lead rural revitalization

In the process of promoting the integration of party building and business, it is necessary to further clarify and deepen it from a theoretical perspective. By leveraging the "Dual Leadership" mechanism within universities which designates Party branch secretaries as academic leaders as well, we can more closely align the political guidance responsibilities of Party secretaries with the specific strengths of their

academic disciplines. Through practical application, we aim to gradually establish an operational model characterized by “organizational synergy, resource sharing, and mutual promotion of development.” This endeavor seeks to continuously explore collaborative pathways through which Party building and disciplinary development can jointly serve the cause of rural revitalization, thereby offering fresh research perspectives on how Party leadership can guide grassroots governance and rural development.

At the same time, relevant practices can also be summarized and expanded from the perspective of the path of universities serving society. Special actions have to some extent verified the feasibility of interdisciplinary and cross disciplinary collaborative participation in rural revitalization. For example, the Art School of XX College relies on the advantages of its art and design major to participate in rural cultural construction, gradually forming a working mode of “organizational joint construction, cultural co creation, and talent co education”, which better connects party building work with local needs and promotes the effective integration of the two. This type of exploration also provides valuable practical experience for universities in the new era to better fulfill their social service functions. (Figure 1)



Figure 1. “Study to Strong Country Action” Event Site.

3.2. Establishing a practical support system for universities to serve the coordinated development of rural revitalization

Against the backdrop of the “Strong Country Action”, the mode of universities participating in rural revitalization is constantly being explored and adjusted. Based on the practical experience of relevant special actions, it can be mainly understood from three aspects: firstly, actively responding to the problem of imbalanced urban-rural development around the actual needs of national development, and seeking more practical and feasible solutions in specific services. Rural revitalization is an inevitable requirement for achieving common prosperity, but currently rural areas generally face difficulties such as talent shortage, technological lag, and insufficient resource integration. The “dual leaders” of universities, through the mechanism of party building and joint construction, accurately connect the intellectual resources of universities with the needs of rural areas, and promote the revitalization of rural industries and culture through practices such as digital protection of red resources. Secondly, it aims to foster the deep integration of Party building with core institutional operations, thereby innovating educational models within higher education institutions. The Ministry of Education emphasizes the use of targeted initiatives to develop exemplary courses in ideological and political education, as well as platforms for industry-academia-research collaboration, thereby translating the achievements of Party building into tangible educational outcomes. Thirdly, it seeks to respond to the educational mission of the new era by reinforcing the social

responsibilities of universities. This research offers a systematic methodology enabling universities to contribute effectively to rural revitalization, thereby resolving the issue of fragmentation that has historically plagued aid and support projects. By distilling a model characterized by “joint Party building, mutual resource exchange, and sustainable empowerment”, the initiative encourages universities to transition from a unidirectional “blood transfusion” approach to a reciprocal, win-win partnership, thereby injecting practical momentum into the national strategy of building a leading power in education.

4. Research Content and Path Construction of Empowering Rural Revitalization by Universities under the Background of the “Strong Country Action”

4.1. Research Content

This study focuses on innovative models for university-led rural revitalization within the context of the “Strong Country Action” initiative. Through a combination of practical exploration and theoretical analysis, utilizing the “Strong Country Action” special campaign as a practical vehicle, the research investigates a “four-in-one” model employed by university Party branches led by “dual-leader” faculty members. This model encompasses “joint Party building, educational services, design empowerment, and experiential education,” aiming to transform academic strengths into driving forces for rural revitalization. Ultimately, the study seeks to distill innovative pathways for university Party organizations to spearhead rural revitalization, thereby providing theoretical support for the synergistic development of a leading educational power and a revitalized countryside. (Figure 2)

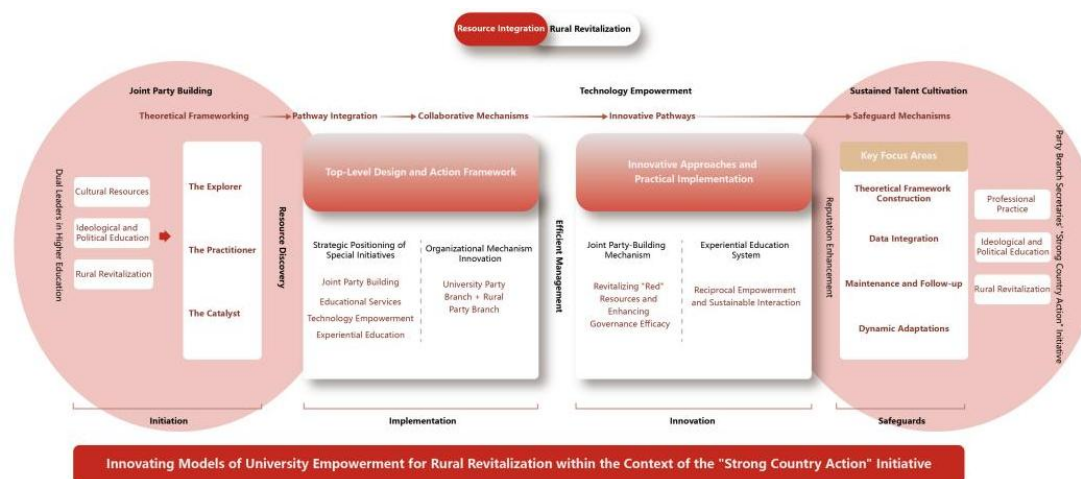


Figure 2. Main Content Framework Mind Map.

4.2. Top-Level Design and Path Innovation

Under the overall deployment of the “Strong Country Action”, universities have gradually formed an effective path to serve rural revitalization by continuously improving top-level design and organizational operation mechanisms. The “dual leaders” of the teacher party branch not only play a political leading role, but also effectively promote the implementation of disciplinary and professional advantages. Through the pairing and joint construction of “university party branches and rural party branches”, the exchange of resources and complementary advantages between

schools and rural areas have been achieved; Deepen the collaboration between industry, academia and research through the model of “Party building+disciplinary teams”, making all work more in line with the actual development of rural areas. In the practical implementation process, emphasis is placed on revitalizing "Red Culture" resources and leveraging digital technologies to optimize the environment for talent cultivation and development, thereby providing sustainable momentum for rural revitalization. University faculty and students venture into the rural frontline to conduct field research, collaborating with grassroots communities on planning, design, and construction. This approach has not only yielded tangible results, such as the establishment of “Science and Technology Courtyards”, but has also cultivated a cohort of specialized professionals deeply rooted in the countryside and dedicated to serving at the grassroots level.

5. Approaches and Implementation Pathways for Higher Education Institutions to Support Rural Revitalization in the Context of the “Strong Country Action” Initiative

This study is structured around the logical framework of “describing the status quo, analyzing problems, and proposing countermeasures.” Guided fundamentally by Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, it employs a comprehensive mix of research methodologies, including literature reviews, questionnaire surveys, and quantitative analysis. With Party building leadership serving as the central lever, the study focuses on strengthening the political guidance and organizational support functions of Party branches among university faculty. Furthermore, through joint Party-building initiatives between the university and local communities, it aims to facilitate the mutual exchange of resources and the reciprocal sharing of experiences.

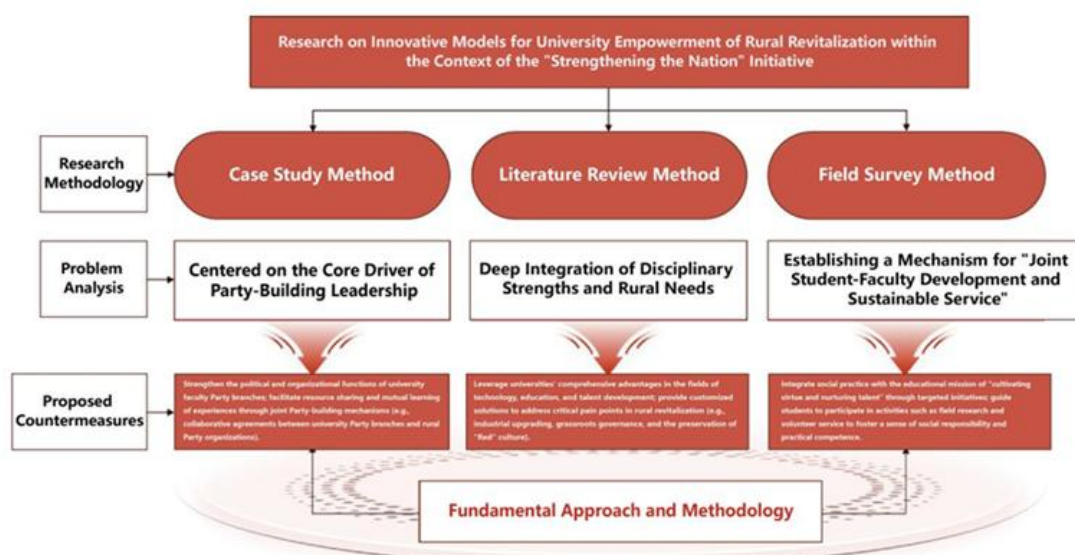


Figure 3. Fundamental Approach and Methodology.

The research prioritizes the precise alignment of the university’s disciplinary strengths with the actual developmental needs of rural areas, thereby fully leveraging the core advantages of higher education institutions in providing technological support, educational empowerment, and talent supply. Finally, it strives to establish a working mechanism characterized by “collaborative cultivation involving both faculty

and students, and the sustainable operation of service initiatives,” thereby deeply integrating rural social practice into the entire process of talent development. Through such practice, the study seeks to cultivate a profound sense of patriotism and dedication to the nation, while simultaneously enhancing students’ professional practical skills and their sense of social responsibility. (Figure 3)

6. Approaches and Implementation Pathways for Universities to Support Rural Revitalization in the Context of the “Strong Country Action” Initiative

6.1. Collaborative Model Innovation under the Guidance of Party Building

University Party branches and rural Party organizations are engaging in “pairing and co-development” initiatives; through joint organizational efforts and resource sharing, they are effectively breaking down resource barriers. The collaboration between XX College and Guzhu Village, for instance, serves as a quintessential example of this practice; it not only catalyzes operational models such as “Party Building + Service” and “Party Building + Technology”, but also ensures that the intellectual resources of higher education institutions are genuinely aligned with the practical needs of rural development. Furthermore, within the broader context of rural governance, the excavation, compilation, and digital preservation of “Red Culture” have emerged as a vital component of these efforts. The red education base jointly built by XX College and Guzhu Village, as part of the province’s “100 Art Department Branches Joint Village Construction” project, organically combines ideological and political education with rural revitalization, further strengthening rural cultural identity under the guidance of party building. Relying on the disciplinary advantages of universities, especially the deep participation of design and other professional forces, and receiving practical support from think tanks such as policy consultation and industrial planning, an innovative service path of “party building+investigation+service” has been formed, providing strong support for the multi-party coordination and overall promotion of rural revitalization.

6.2. Safeguards and Directions for Deepening Path Innovation

Driven by the “Strong Country Action” special initiative, the establishment of long-term operational mechanisms and the construction of digital platforms have emerged as pivotal pillars for innovating rural revitalization models. By refining phased planning and strengthening mechanisms for the translation of achievements and the evaluation of impact, the sustainability of various services is enhanced, thereby ensuring that rural revitalization efforts are sustained over the long term, effectively implemented, and yield tangible results. Furthermore, the establishment of a digital platform has also provided a new shared path for the activation and utilization of red resources, as well as the empowerment of rural areas through design, promoting the widespread dissemination of typical cases and practical experiences in a digital way. This platform effectively realizes a synergistic, tripartite advancement of “Party Building—Service—Development,” not only boosting the overall efficiency of rural revitalization efforts but also laying a solid technical foundation for subsequently deepening resource sharing and expanding multi-stakeholder collaboration. (Figure 4)

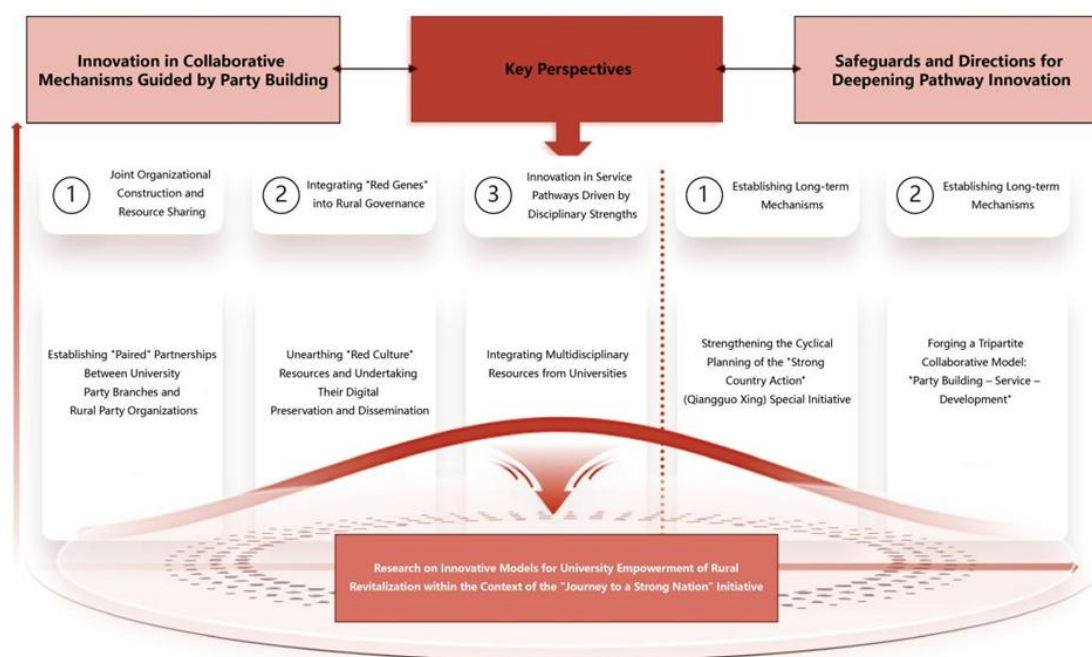


Figure 4. Operating Mechanism Mind Map.

7. Conclusions

This study conducts an in-depth exploration into innovative models for university-led rural revitalization empowerment, set against the backdrop of the “Strong Nation Journey” initiative. It clearly establishes the pivotal role of Party building leadership as a core driving force in universities’ efforts to serve rural revitalization. The research confirms that by utilizing “dual-leader” teacher Party branches as a connecting link, and by constructing a four-in-one model encompassing “joint Party building, educational services, design empowerment, and experiential education”—universities can effectively resolve the persistent challenge of Party building and professional work remaining disconnected, thereby facilitating a precise alignment between university intellectual resources and the specific needs of rural communities. The practical path of “Party building leading - resource integration - service sinking - achievement transformation” not only deepens the theoretical connotation of the integration of Party building and business, but also provides a replicable operational paradigm for the coordinated development of schools and villages. At the same time, measures such as digitizing red resources and establishing practical education bases have injected new momentum into the inheritance of rural culture and industrial upgrading. In the future, it is necessary to further strengthen the construction of long-term mechanisms and digital platforms, promote the transformation of universities’ empowerment of rural revitalization from phased assistance to sustainable development, and provide more solid practical support for comprehensively promoting the rural revitalization strategy and assisting in the construction of an education powerhouse.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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