Digital Communication Perspectives on Enhancing the Inheritance and Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage

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Abstract. This study explores the current and historical aspects of safeguarding China's intangible cultural heritage by leveraging digital industries. The goal is to assess the potential of enhancing heritage preservation through digitization. By investigating the impact of digital communication on the protection and dissemination of intangible cultural heritage and conducting in-depth case analyses, the article highlights the profound role of digitalization in cultural heritage preservation. Additionally, it provides recommendations and feasibility references for the digital development of intangible cultural heritage, aiming to secure our cultural legacy and promote the ongoing inheritance of Chinese culture. The research suggests that digitization can revitalize intangible cultural heritage, accelerate its creative transformation, and integrate it seamlessly into modern life while preserving its core role in heritage conservation [1].

Keywords: Intangible Cultural Heritage, Digitization, Protection and Inheritance, Dissemination, Digital Media.

1. Introduction

China is well known for having a vast and diverse range of intangible cultural heritage, which is derived from the diverse ethnic groups that make up the nation. People in China have a deep awareness of Chinese culture thanks to the inheritance and maintenance of intangible cultural treasures. A new area of study has emerged: investigating creative strategies to rejuvenate intangible cultural heritage in light of the economy's and modern technology's rapid progress. By utilizing cutting-edge technology and techniques, the use of digital tools in the inheritance and preservation of intangible cultural assets not only makes it easier to restore and replicate cultural treasures, but it also allows them to be presented to the public in whole new ways.

This study provides an overview of the accomplishments and existing challenges in the digitization, preservation, and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage in China. It highlights the current status and limitations of digitization in preserving and inheriting intangible cultural heritage. Based on a thorough analysis of the current situation, this paper discusses fresh approaches to preserving and inheriting intangible cultural heritage and clarifies the future directions and efforts required to digitize intangible cultural heritage, serving as a guiding framework for future endeavors in heritage preservation.

In 2023, scholar Wang Dong conducted research on the practical pathways for digitizing intangible cultural heritage, suggesting that the rapid development and widespread application of information technology and digital technology offer richer pathways and platforms for protecting and disseminating intangible cultural heritage [2]. This study further confirms the feasibility of digitization in the inheritance and protection of intangible cultural heritage.

2. Digitization Empowering the Inheritance and Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage

2.1 Concept of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Digitization

The distinctive cultural resources that a nation or region has amassed over a long period of time are referred to as intangible cultural heritage. It includes the customary wisdom, abilities, and

methods unique to a given field [3]. Intangible cultural heritage is a wealth of civilization, a reflection of human thought on the world, the culmination of human wisdom, and a significant byproduct of human social activity.

The digitization of intangible cultural heritage involves digitally protecting, restoring, and exhibiting movable and immovable cultural artifacts. Digitizing intangible cultural heritage is a significant means and emerging cultural communication method for revitalizing and disseminating exceptional traditional Chinese culture. Since 2005, thousands of national-level representatives of intangible cultural heritage have been recorded using digital multimedia methods under the auspices of China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism, progressively promoting research, utilization, and social sharing of outstanding recording results [4].

2.2 Significance of Digitizing Intangible Cultural Heritage

In the context of digitization, new formats, models, and scenarios are rapidly emerging, and digital technologies will further facilitate the development and utilization of intangible cultural heritage. Digitization breaks free from the limitations of traditional cultural heritage protection methods, providing a wider range of technological options for recording, preserving, and showcasing existing cultural heritage. It also enables the digital reproduction and restoration of cultural heritage that has been damaged or lost, thereby contributing to the regeneration and application of cultural heritage.

Since the inception of China's work on intangible cultural heritage, particularly in the past five years, efforts in communication studies and public education have widely disseminated the recognition of intangible cultural heritage's utility value and the awareness of its preservation [5]. As a result, the visibility, reach, and sharing of intangible cultural heritage resources have steadily increased, leading to the emergence of numerous intangible cultural heritage projects in social science innovation. This expansion and transformation of the significance and social ideology of intangible cultural heritage have elevated its role in society, attracting extensive attention and support.

3. Intangible Cultural Heritage Inheritance Digitization and Integration

3.1 The Current State of Digitalization in Intangible Cultural Heritage

We are currently in the digital age, where advancements in technology have facilitated the seamless integration of digital media arts and technology. This integration has brought about significant changes in aesthetic preferences. With the advent of the digital age and the rapid development of digital technologies, there are now numerous opportunities to record, preserve, exhibit, and produce intangible cultural heritage.

Digitalization has become a new trend in the preservation, transfer, and advancement of intangible cultural assets in recent years. The protection and inheritance of our traditional culture have gained new dimensions and relevance as a result of our integration of digital technologies like blockchain, 5G, and AI with traditional intangible cultural heritage [6]. Since 2021, the public's awareness of NFT and the metaverse has grown, and the digitization of intangible cultural assets has been greatly impacted by the development of NFT digital collections. In China alone, there are more than thirty digital collection platforms, with 4.56 million intangible cultural heritage products sold and a total sales volume exceeding 150 million yuan in 2021 [4].

3.2 Difficulties in Digitally Distributing Intangible Cultural Heritage

Firstly, the foundation of digitalization in intangible cultural heritage is relatively weak. Digital transmission relies on corresponding digital resources. However, the process of digitizing China's intangible cultural heritage has been relatively slow, resulting in limited content available for digital dissemination and application. Currently, performance-based intangible cultural heritage projects

have better conditions for digital dissemination due to the availability of rich visual materials, making them popular on online platforms such as Douyin, Kuaishou, and Bilibili.

Secondly, there is a significant intergenerational imbalance in intangible cultural heritage inheritance. intangible cultural heritage represents the product of historical development and the core of our cultural heritage. However, in the context of context of rapid internet development, there is a clear intergenerational imbalance, and intangible cultural heritage inheritance faces various challenges. The younger generation, who are the "natives" of the internet, tends to favor the efficiency, speed, and abundance of information provided by the internet, while intangible cultural heritage progresses slowly and presents a more traditional form, which may be less appealing to them. Additionally, the relatively low level of marketization hampers the efforts of young people. Most intangible cultural heritage projects lack characteristics that align with pure market economy conditions, making it challenging to integrate them with the market, resulting in a marginalized status and hindering their sustainable development.

Thirdly, there is a lack of influential digital brands for dissemination. In our modern society, intangible cultural heritage has become a relatively independent industry, and digital dissemination plays an increasingly important role in the survival and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. Although numerous intangible cultural heritage inheritors of different types and levels have participated in digital dissemination nationwide, influential digital dissemination brands have yet to be established, and achieving economies of scale remains a challenge. International communication is particularly weak, necessitating the urgent establishment of influential communication platforms with international discourse power and abundant resources.

4.　Recommendations

The development of digitalization provides a broader space for the inheritance and development of intangible cultural heritage, presenting Chinese intangible cultural heritage in a new light and exploring new paths for its protection. However, the process of digitalizing China's intangible cultural heritage still faces numerous challenges. To address these issues, the following points should be considered: Firstly, it is crucial to enhance the appeal of intangible cultural heritage to young people and gradually narrow the intergenerational imbalance. The digital inheritance of intangible cultural heritage can enhance its appeal to young people by leveraging the popularity of electronic games among the younger generation [7]. Users' interest in intangible cultural property and their identification with its brand value are gradually developed through the distribution of knowledge and communication within the gaming community, thanks to the immersive "circle culture" of electronic games. Through addressing the social and sharing demands of users on the internet and utilizing multi-level user dissemination, cultural brands with intangible cultural heritage can significantly enhance their social communication and influence. Second, it's critical to use digital transmission to boost the intangible cultural heritage's commercial viability. Intangible cultural heritage should be developed and commercially protected while maintaining the core of the culture. Traditional intangible cultural heritage should also be conserved in order to give them cultural worth, as they are not appropriate for market entry.

5.　Conclusion

In today's era of advanced digital media technology, society is swiftly entering the digital age, injecting newfound vitality into intangible cultural heritage through digitization. Beyond its role in socializing and entertainment, digital media has become a crucial tool for safeguarding and preserving our intangible cultural legacy. Utilizing digital formats, we can enhance the continuity of heritage vitality. The digitalization of China's intangible cultural heritage offers valuable experiences and lessons in inheritance and protection, contributing to the dissemination of Chinese culture. This underscores the practicality of digital dissemination in safeguarding and inheriting

intangible cultural heritage.

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