

Research on the Paths and Strategies for the International Dissemination of China's Intangible Cultural Heritage from the Perspective of Digital Empowerment

Li Mengna^{a,*}, Dr. Nadia Binti Mohd Nasir^b

City Graduate School, Faculty of Creative Industries, City University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

^a123122242@qq.com, ^bnadia.nasir@city.edu.my

**Corresponding author*

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Abstract: In an era of global digitalization and cultural diversity, promoting the internationalization of China's intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is crucial for sharing its traditional culture and strengthening the nation's cultural soft power. This paper examines the cutting-edge background of the internationalization of China's digital ICH, systematically explains the evolving impact of digital technology on the international dissemination of ICH, discusses issues such as the homogenization of dissemination content and insufficient depth of international cooperation, and proposes development pathways including improving digital platform construction, strengthening international cooperation, and enhancing talent cultivation. The study aims to offer both theoretical insights and practical guidance for advancing China's digital ICH onto the international stage.

1. Introduction

As the global digitalization trend and the integration of diverse cultures rise to the horizon, China's ICH, as an important carrier of China's excellent traditional culture, has become an intrinsic requirement for cultural preservation and a strategic pathway for improving the country's cultural soft power. The swift progress of digital technology has brought transformative changes to the dissemination of ICH, transcending time and space, diversifying presentation formats, and creating new opportunities for ICH to reach international audiences. However, the international dissemination of China's ICH currently faces numerous challenges, including homogenization of content, insufficient depth of international cooperation, and inadequate application of digital technology, all of which constrain the further enhancement of the international influence of ICH (ICH). In response, this study investigates effective strategies and pathways for the international promotion of China's ICH through digital empowerment, offering theoretical and practical insights

to support its worldwide recognition and deeper appreciation.

2. Content

The rapid development of information technology has established digitalization as a central driver of development across all sectors. In the cultural field, digital technology has broken through traditional temporal and spatial constraints. The emergence of digital channels such as social media and online video platforms has enabled cultures from around the world to spread rapidly and intertwine, as well as addressing cultural adaptation and authenticity preservation in the internationalization of ICH [1]. Cultural products and artistic expressions from various countries and ethnic groups are now accessible to a global audience through digital networks, significantly enriching public cultural exposure and supporting the flourishing of worldwide cultural diversity. Within this movement, Chinese online literary works, as treasures of traditional Chinese culture, have encountered fresh prospects for international engagement.

On October 17, 2003, the 32nd session of the UNESCO General Conference adopted the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* [2]. As of December 2024, the Convention has 183 signatory states, with China joining in August 2004. China's ICH carries the historical memory, cultural genes, and wisdom of the Chinese nation spanning thousands of years. It serves not only as a distinctive symbol of Chinese culture but also as a cultural asset for all humanity [3]. Promoting these ICH to the international community helps enhance global understanding and recognition of Chinese culture, foster cultural exchange and mutual learning among different cultures, and enhance the influence and appeal of Chinese culture on the international stage. The international dissemination of ICH can also drive the development of related industries, create economic value, and open up broader development opportunities for inheritors and practitioners [4].

Digital technology makes significant difference in the protection and dissemination of ICH. In terms of protection, digital collection, storage, and management technologies can permanently preserve information related to ICH, effectively preventing information loss due to factors such as the passage of time and environmental changes. In dissemination, digital tools have not only reshaped presentation formats but also markedly improved outreach effectiveness [5].

Through technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), audiences can engage directly with the distinctive features of ICH, while emerging formats such as short videos and livestreams spread ICH content vividly and efficiently, demonstrating its contemporary relevance [6] and attracting substantial interest from younger viewers.

A variety of digital platforms have become key channels for the international dissemination of Chinese ICH. On social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Douyin, and video platforms like YouTube, extensive ICH-related content is shared, which covers areas such as paper-cutting, embroidery, Peking Opera, and martial arts and draws considerable attention and engagement from international users. Specialized cultural digital platforms further consolidate rich ICH resources, offering global audiences deeper insight into Chinese ICH [7].

Non-heritage content on Chinese digital platforms exhibits a trend toward homogenization, with a significant portion of content focusing on common non-heritage projects and similar expression forms, lacking innovation and in-depth exploration, making it difficult to sustain the attention of international audiences. In terms of digital ICH dissemination, international collaboration remains limited. Synergies with global partners in digital technology, content creation, and marketing are not fully realized, which restricts the expansion of Chinese ICH in international markets. Gaps in digital technology application are also evident: some ICH digitization projects suffer from underdeveloped technical execution, such as low production quality in VR and AR experiences, while big data

analysis falls short in identifying the interests, preferences, and needs of international audiences, weakening the effect of dissemination strategies.

Moreover, differences in cultural background and aesthetic traditions across countries and regions can create barriers to understanding Chinese ICH. Items with profound Chinese cultural connotations may be difficult for international audiences to interpret, thus diminishing the effectiveness of communication.

To address these challenges, it is essential to improve the development and operation of digital platforms. Comprehensive digital platforms that integrate display, communication, exchange, and transaction functions for diverse ICH resources should be established. These platforms should provide multilingual versions and utilize artificial intelligence recommendation systems to accurately push digital document resources based on users' browsing history and preferences. Professional institutions and creators should be encouraged to explore ICH cultural meanings deeply and produce high-quality, original digital content, using animation, microfilms, interactive games, and more, to convey ICH's unique appeal. Interactive functions such as user comments, sharing, and online discussions can be incorporated, and virtual ICH experience activities, such as craft workshops and ICH lectures, can be organized to boost user participation and retention.

Digital technology provides more possibilities for the innovation of ICH content. Through live streaming and short videos, ICH projects can interact directly with overseas audiences, showcase the production process, and enhance the appeal of cultural communication. For example, an ICH project showcasing Shu embroidery techniques through YouTube live streaming has attracted a large number of overseas fans. Integrating ICH with contemporary popular culture, such as using ICH patterns in fashion design or embedding ICH techniques into animation and game content, can refresh its appeal. Developing immersive narrative experiences, like moving beyond conventional display methods to explore the human stories, historical context, and cultural meaning behind ICH, can also be effective. Short documentaries focusing on the lives of ICH inheritors and the transmission of their skills can illustrate the living heritage and contemporary value of ICH. Through first-person perspective video blogs, international audiences can closely experience the creation process of ICH, thereby enhancing emotional resonance. Digital Technology Empowerment Innovative presentation methods for the inheritance and innovation of ICH through digital technology: VR, AR, and AI allow international users to experience ICH in new ways. VR can reconstruct traditional ICH workshops for full immersion, while AI can support customized ICH content creation, such as collaborations between international musicians and traditional Chinese folk artists to produce cross-cultural works [8].

Establishing an International Digital ICH Cooperation Alliance, in partnership with cultural bodies, tech firms, and ICH research institutions worldwide, can help coordinate digitization initiatives and support the standardized and sustained global presence of Chinese ICH. Organizing international digital cultural events, such as cultural exhibitions, digital art fairs, and dedicated Chinese ICH zones, showcases recent ICH achievements. International ICH digital competitions and forums can attract global talent and foster cross-country exchange. Collaborating with globally recognized platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime can further the digitization and distribution of ICH content, leveraging their established operational expertise and user reach to expand the global influence of Chinese ICH [9].

Introducing relevant professional courses, such as Digital Heritage and International Communication of Ethnic Culture, in vocational and higher education institutions can help train interdisciplinary talent skilled in ethnic culture, digital technology, and cross-cultural communication. The curriculum should cover multiple aspects, including ethnic culture research, digital media technology, and cross-cultural communication [10]. Training and practice: Provide training in digital technology application and international communication skills for national

heritage inheritors and relevant professionals, and organize practical activities [11].

Recruiting international talent and drawing on global experience in ICH digitization and communication can provide valuable support for the international development of Chinese ICH.

Using big data analytics to understand the cultural backgrounds, interests, preferences, and consumption patterns of audiences in different countries enables precise audience targeting. Tailored communication strategies and customized ICH content can then be developed for specific audience segments [12].

Incorporating globally popular cultural elements into ICH dissemination can increase its international attractiveness. For example, combine traditional Chinese music with modern electronic music, or integrate non-cultural heritage elements into fashion design. Sharing ICH through compelling storytelling, such as narratives about ICH inheritors or the historical evolution of ICH practices and using internationally relatable narrative styles can evoke emotional connections among global viewers.

3. Conclusion

The internationalization of China's intangible cultural heritage is a significant initiative for promoting Chinese traditional culture and enhancing national cultural soft power. Although numerous challenges remain, through improving the construction and operation of digital platforms, strengthening international cooperation and exchange, cultivating professional talent, and innovating dissemination strategies, we can achieve the widespread dissemination and sustainable development of China's intangible cultural heritage on the international stage. These efforts will not only improve worldwide understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture and support intercultural dialogue, but also stimulate growth in related sectors, thus allowing the unique value of China's intangible cultural heritage to shine on the world stage.

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