

Sustainable Development of China's Intangible Cultural Heritage in Rural Revitalization based on Experience Perspective

Rola zrównoważonego rozwoju niematerialnego dziedzictwa kulturowego Chin w rewitalizacji obszarów wiejskich w oparciu o perspektywę doświadczenia

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Abstract

The protection and inheritance of the local intangible cultural heritage (ICH) holds profound significance, which has the characteristics of oral transmission and the intertwining of time and space, is an important content and means of rural cultural governance in China in the new era. It is significant in value for promoting rural revitalization and passing on the cultural genes of China. As rural society transforms, the change of rural social structure and cultural order leads to some conflicts for rural ICHs in China, such as subjective crises, weakening of values and the impact of modernity. Therefore, this paper combines the advantages of experience with the inheritance needs of ICH and puts its inheritance and protection under the national strategy of rural revitalization. The study focuses on the function of ICH in rural revitalization from the perspective of experience and explores the topic from three levels: the government, universities, and villages. Moreover, we provide sustainable development strategies for integrating intangible cultural heritage into rural revitalization to promote the revival of rural culture. This article explores the mutually beneficial relationship between intangible cultural heritage and rural revitalization, enhancing our understanding of both aspects. The primary contribution lies in providing sustainable development strategies for integrating intangible cultural heritage into rural revitalization at the government, university, and village levels.

Key words: perspective of experiencing, Intangible cultural heritage, rural revitalization, sustainable development

Streszczenie

Ochrona i dziedziczenie lokalnego niematerialnego dziedzictwa kulturowego (ICH) ma ogromne znaczenie, gdyż łączy przekaz ustny z elementami czasu i przestrzeni. Jest ważną formą treści kulturowych a także sposobem zarządzania kulturą na obszarach wiejskich w Chinach w nowej epoce. Ma ogromną wartość dla promowania rewitalizacji obszarów wiejskich i przekazywania genów kulturowych Chin. W miarę transformacji społeczeństwa wiejskiego zmiana struktury społecznej obszarów wiejskich i porządku kulturowego prowadzi do pewnych konfliktów dla wiejskich ICH w Chinach, takich jak kryzysy subiektywne, osłabienie wartości i wpływ nowoczesności. Niniejszy artykuł łączy doświadczenia z potrzebami spadkowymi ICH i wpisuje jego dziedziczenie i ochronę w krajową strategię rewitalizacji obszarów wiejskich. Badanie koncentruje się na funkcji ICH w rewitalizacji obszarów wiejskich z perspektywy doświadczenia i eksploruje temat na trzech poziomach: rządu, uniwersytetów i

wsi. Ponadto sugerujemy strategię zrównoważonego rozwoju mającą na celu włączenie niematerialnego dziedzictwa kulturowego do rewitalizacji obszarów wiejskich w celu promowania odrodzenia kultury wiejskiej.

Słowa kluczowe: perspektywa doświadczania, niematerialne dziedzictwo kulturowe, rewitalizacja obszarów wiejskich, zrównoważony rozwój

1. Introduction

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is an important carrier of national spirit, thinking, and culture. It is also a representative of various traditional cultures. China has established ICHs at the national, provincial, municipal, and county levels (Nie et al., 2022; Ma, 2021). The ICH covers ten categories: folk literature, folk music, folk dance, traditional drama, ballad singing, acrobatics and rodeo, folk fine art, traditional handicrafts, traditional medicine, and folk customs (Xu, 2022). The *Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Doing Well in the Key Work of Promoting the Rural Revitalization in an All-Round Way in 2022* stress the importance of *improving the rural governance to achieve influential results and strengthening the inheritance and protection of farming culture and promoting the protection and use of ICH and important agricultural heritage* in the rural cultural governance. The document points out the direction for Chinese villages in the new era to integrate rural heritage into rural cultural revitalization (Long et al., 2019; Xie et al., 2020). The relationship between the ICH and rural revitalization is not on a one-way track. In fact, they mutually benefit and empower each other. With such two-way positive interaction, people can *protect the rural space for ICH and facilitate rural cultural revitalization* in a sustainable way (Petronela, 2016).

At present, the research on ICH mainly focuses on the concept definition, value discussion, inheritance, development, etc. For example, Tudorache Petronelaz believed that ICH protection was meant to protect human cultural civilization. Thus, it was very important. Julia MH Esfehiani (Esfehiani and Albrecht, 2018) conducted a field survey in the geological park in southern Iran, and three distinct ways showcase the utilization of local intangible cultural heritage within the tourism industry, the attractive ICH promoted local tourism, serving as a protection tool to reflect the cultural significance and promote tourist behavior. Lisa Ruhanen (Ruhanen and Whitford, 2019) discussed the relationship between contemporary indigenous cultural heritage and the tourism industry. She believed that both tangible and intangible cultural heritages aided the tourism industry's long-term development. As Nigeria has numerous cultural heritage resources, Ngozi Ezenagu (Ezenagu, 2020) studied the importance and contribution of Nigeria's heritage resources to Nigeria's cultural tourism industry, these tangible and intangible heritages resources not only reveal unique heritage landscapes, but also allow visitors to immerse themselves in the process of ICH. In addition, the heritages resources make contribution to the sustainable development of cultural tourism. Regarding the protection of cultural heritage in small towns and rural areas, a novel digital method by simulates complex objects is proposed to protect the Bedouin cultural heritage in Petra and Wadi Rum areas (Goussous, 2022). From 2016, when the chapter on sustainable development was added to the *Operational Guide for the Implementation of the Convention on the Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, the development and utilization of ICH has become a more and more important research (Skublewska-Paszowska et al., 2022; Tavares et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2022).

The development and utilization of ICH can not only help the development of cultural tourism from the economic level, but also help rural revitalization from the cultural level (Zhao et al., 2022a; Zhao et al., 2022b). Francisco Barrientos (Barrientos, 2021) deeply studied the rural renaissance paradigm based on heritage, and transformed rural areas into demonstration laboratories for sustainable development by improving the unique potential of its heritage. Regarding the protection of indigenous dance, music and language ICH in Southern Africa, Gwervevde (Gwervevde and Mthombeni, 2023) believes that community-based protection methods are feasible and put forward some targeted suggestions. Ghirardello et al. (Ghirardello et al., 2022) considers the protection of ICH as a way to promote individual solidarity and social inclusion and makes some recommendations for the protection of ICH in the South Tyrol region of Italy, trying to raise awareness of the importance of culture as a pillar of sustainable development. Under the background of China's rural cultural revitalization strategy (Lu and Qian, 2023), an urgent problem is how to better integrate the inheritance of ICH protection with rural revitalization to achieve sustainable development.

From the perspective of experience, this paper combines the advantages of experience with the inheritance needs of ICH and applies its inheritance and protection to the national strategy of rural revitalization. Rural revitalization can be the starting point and destination for the promotion of ICH sustainable development. Therefore, this paper explores the feasible strategies to help rural revitalization from the cultural level, which is a unique research topic with Chinese characteristics, it will help us better understand China's ICH.

2. Related Conceptions

2.1. The strategy of rural vitalization

China is vigorously promoting rural revitalization (Shen and Chou, 2022). General Secretary Xi Jinping's proposal of *implementing rural revitalization strategy and promoting agricultural and rural modernization* guides the direction of rural reform and development. The main strategy for rural revitalization strategy includes agricultural modernization, rural Industrial Development, infrastructure construction, ecological environment protection, cultivated land system reform and Rural Governance System Construction, etc. The report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China explicitly proposes to *promote the creative transformation and innovative development of China's excellent traditional culture*. The 2018 government work report points out that *ICH is an important part of Chinese culture and a living heritage*. Integrating ICH thoroughly and creatively into rural revitalization is a new proposition and an important part of rural revitalization. The *Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Doing a Good Job in Promoting Rural Revitalization in 2022* emphasize the need to *improve rural governance by highlighting actual results and strengthen the inheritance and protection of farming culture and promote the protection and use of ICH and important agricultural cultural heritage* in rural cultural governance. The Report to the 20th CPC National Congress of the Party clearly proposes to *promote the revitalization of rural industry, talents, culture, ecology, and organizations* (2022). ICH is an important part of the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation. How to realize creative transformation and innovative development of rural ICH, as well as how to motivate ICH holders' cultural consciousness, have emerged as primary issues in the investigation of long-term rural ICH protection.

2.2. Experiencing Perspective

Experiencing perspective refers to the exploration and construction of ICH scenarios with the help of Chinese and Western experiential and experiential learning theories (Morris, 2020). In China, the word *experience* originates from Zhuang Zi's *You achieve it in your hands, and those respond to the mind. I can't put it into words, but there is some fixed principle there*. Experience is an acquisition in practice that can only be understood but not explained in words. According to *'The Book of Rites, Doctrine of the Mean'*, *we should learn broadly, examine closely, reflect carefully, discriminate clearly, and practice earnestly*. The *practice earnestly* mentioned in the sentence is more than just *practice*. It is a summary of learning, asking, thinking, and arguing, emphasizing the role and importance of experience. Therefore, the understanding of experience in China's traditional aesthetics has risen to the level of cognitive theory. In the history of western education and philosophy, Dilthey, Heidegger, Piaget, Dewey, and other people's research shed new light on our understanding of experience. Dilthey studies experience in a systematic way. He believes that, as human beings, we experience our existence as a psychophysical life-unit. Dewey says that experience is primarily an active-passive affair. Dewey conceptualizes experience as a twofold affair, namely as *an active and a passive element peculiarly combined*. The active element being *trying* and the passive being *undergoing*. Piaget's genetic epistemology and Kohler's learning by insight theory have laid a theoretical foundation for the development of experiential learning. By reviewing the history of education and philosophy, we know the characteristics and advantages of experience discourses: Experience itself is progressive, and it has various forms; the results of experience are personalized, and experience has lasting effects.

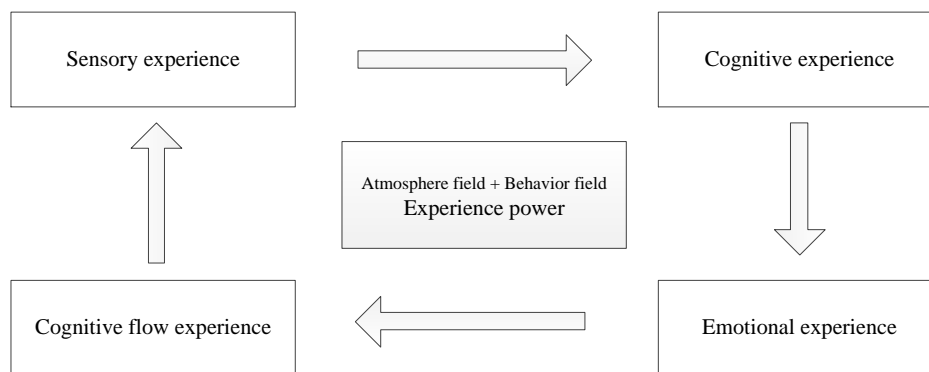


Figure 1. Mutually reinforced *experience power* mode, source: authors own work

Figure 1 shows that this paper focuses on the *the experience power* formed by *the atmosphere field* and *behavior field*. The perspective of experiencing in the paper emphasizes the aesthetic experience that evokes emotions. Instead of shallow cognition, ICH activities influence people by giving them progressive experience. By providing multiple chances for people to participate in the activities, the ICH experience taps into people's nostalgia, creates a memorable experience for local culture, and deepens their knowledge and understanding of local intangible culture.

2.3. Sustainable development of Intangible Cultural Heritage

Since it was put forward in the 1980s, the strategy of sustainable development (Sharpley, 2020; Guo et al., 2019) has been an important guiding principle for national political, economic, and cultural development. The connotation of sustainable development lies in achieving balance and harmony among the three dimensions: economy, society, and environment. Intangible heritage is an important inheritance of traditional culture. It looks at how successfully a country has implemented its sustainable development strategy. On August 12, 2021, the General Office of the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council jointly issued, for the first time, the document on better protection of ICH. *Opinions on Further Strengthening the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage* proposed to improve the protection and inheritance system, intensify the publicity of ICH and enhance safety precautions. The inheritance and development of ICH should be integrated with sustainable development. ICH should be promoted based on an in-depth investigation of the evolution and survival form of rural areas. China's efforts in the sustainable development of ICH align with the broader goals and principles set forth by the United Nations

3. Logical Compliance of Sustainable Development of ICH in Rural Revitalization

3.1. The relationship between ICH and rural China

China is an earthbound society, so Chinese culture is essentially an earthbound culture. According to *From the Soil* by Fei Xiaotong, *the roots of local China are in the soil, and they make a living in the soil, and they have grown a glorious history from the soil*. The earthbound society is the mother of traditional Chinese culture. Local culture also grows from the soil. ICH represents the diverse traditional culture and guarantees the sustainable development of rural areas. It embodies local natural resources, living styles, aesthetic standards, spiritual beliefs, and other concentrated expressions. ICH develops throughout farming and rural life, unlocking the potential of rural development.

During rural urbanization, ICH's development space keeps shrinking. On the one hand, traditional culture is eroded by the impact of industrialized culture and faces a danger of exhaustion. On the other hand, the new culture is not absorbed by the countryside. As rural areas face complex difficulties during social transition in the new era, when we promote the revitalization of rural culture, we should look at it from multiple dimensions. We should strive to protect and inherit rural ICH and make it a new engine in the revitalization of rural culture and economy. ICH is mostly embodied in local literature, folk customs, traditional craftsmanship, music, and drama. Such traditional habits have a distinct aroma of soil and reflect the whole picture of China's agrarian civilization. ICH is crucial for carrying forward China's excellent traditional culture and establishing a traditional moral system.

3.2. The rural revitalization strategy providing new opportunities for ICH

As the rural revitalization strategy is put into practice, the economic value of ICH has been discovered alongside its cultural value. For example, ICH creative goods and other products gradually gain popularity. The Forbidden City has launched multiple innovative cultural products with huge commercial potential. Local genres of Chinese opera performance, which are mainly participated in by group artists, and local tourism, have become more and more popular. ICH contains a variety of cultural connotations, among which folk knowledge, symbols, classic images, and artistic pursuits are materials that can be used as references. To meet public consumption demands and lay a foundation for the industrialization of ICH, we should explore local-style ICH products that combine traditional craftsmanship with modern technologies.

China has published a number of documents to enhance its ability to practice traditional craftsmanship. To encourage involvement from the public, it also organized an ICH job workshop. In addition, China learns from Japan's experience and introduces the concept of *one product for one village*. When developing agriculture and the economy, all localities set up targeted support funds and encouraged personnel exchange. They vigorously explored local ICH resources, and gradually turned the resources into local business cards.

3.3. Role of ICH under rural revitalization

Currently, scholars and local governments have reached a consensus on ICH's industrial value. They believe that ICH provides villagers with a way to increase their income. During the exploration of ICH protection, local regions come out with many innovative ideas and have successfully applied them into practice. For example, Zhuang Nationality Brocade of Binyang, Guangxi Province has integrated modern fashion into traditional hand-woven craftsmanship and developed a standardized production method. The brocade is sold as regional specialties in local tourism with good economic results. With the model of *company+ base+ inheritor*, Dong brocade weaving, or Dong brocade, in Tongdao Dong Autonomous County of Hunan Province grows rapidly, and the joint innovation between schools and localities has further injected vitality to this ICH. Qinzhou Nixing Pottery is produced in Qinzhou City located in the south of Guangxi Province. The city has built an industrial tourism demonstration site, where visitors are allowed to personally experience the creation of pottery. Moreover, the locality has developed diverse pottery brands with enterprises and turned local tourism into a pillar industry. Beijing Gaobeidian village

has adopted stilt performance as a steppingstone to community-driven cultural revitalization. The village uses this newly invented ICH to revive old traditions and overcome difficulties from the loss of cultivated land. The exemplars above show how localities find their own way to promote industrial development through in-depth investigations of the cultural and economic values of local ICH.

3.4. The relationship between the sustainable development of China's ICH and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This article explores the sustainable development of China's ICH in the context of rural revitalization, and this theme is closely related to the United Nations SDGs. Firstly, many SDGs directly involve the sustainability of culture and communities, such as Goal 11 (Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable), Goal 8 (Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth), and Goal 10 (Reduce inequality). The inheritance and development of China's ICH can provide valuable experiences and examples for achieving these goals.

Secondly, the preservation of ICH is directly relevant to Goal 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education). By passing down traditional skills, artistic forms, and values, ICH offers educational opportunities to community members, fostering knowledge transfer and cultural exchange within communities.

Furthermore, the sustainable development of China's ICH is also linked to Goal 1 (No poverty) and Goal 2 (Zero hunger). By exploring and promoting the value of ICH, employment opportunities can be created, improving the livelihoods of rural residents, and promoting sustainable economic development in rural areas.

In summary, the sustainable development of China's ICH is closely connected to the United Nations SDGs because it directly involves various aspects of society, economy, and the environment. It provides a unique contribution to achieving global sustainable development goals.

4. Sustainable Development of ICH in Rural Revitalization

We need to find a suitable ecological function for ICH in modern society and overcome the dilemma between protecting ICH's primitive features and promoting its sustainable development. The ICH system is subject to a cultural ecosystem, which can be divided into internal factors, such as natural resources and geological distribution, and external factors, such as the public, technology, and policies. From the perspective of experience, how do we integrate ICH's protection and inheritance into the national strategy of rural revitalization? We can discuss strategies for ICH's long-term development from the following perspectives:

4.1. Organizing, guiding, and strengthening support at the government level

ICH is a public cultural resource. Its protection and use cannot be separated from the government. The government is the driving force behind ICH, providing the necessary organization and guidance. The revitalization of local culture has never been one-dimensional, but been integrated with the local natural environment, culture, and psychology. The government can increase capital investment, cultivate inheritors, improve the security system, explore ICH resources, create intangible experience sites, and introduce new cultural concepts. These efforts will affect the overall development of local culture, traditional handicrafts, folk arts, tourism, and other industries, and form a virtuous circle for the dynamic development of local culture. To build such a mechanism, the government needs to take the lead and improve relevant policies based on on-site investigations. A mechanism for cultivating inheritors should be formed with a long-term and effective development model.

4.2. Cooperating actively at the university level to create an interactive platform

For higher education and the local culture to form a synergy, much work remains to be done. Universities have fully used their advantages in resources and human capital to carry out targeted assistance. The year 2021 was remarkable for it symbolized a new stage in expanding the achievements of poverty alleviation and connecting with rural revitalization. The number of universities that provided ICH assistance increased significantly during this special year. In their assistance, universities paid great attention to the positive role of ICH and innovation development in promoting rural revitalization and sustainable development. We have sorted out the cases of universities' ICH assistance between 2018 and 2021. According to Table 1, the number of cases has increased as ICH's potentials in economic, social, and cultural development are further tapped into.

With advanced academic research power, a large audience group consisting of teachers and students, and the advantages of information exchange, universities can serve as a brand-new interactive platform for the protection and use of ICHs. Based on ICH activities, traditional craftsmanship can be upgraded to form an immersive experience for learning and studying. Such immersive experiences include artists' demonstration, hands-on operation, discussion and obtaining tourism products. Cultural centers or showrooms are set up to contain ICH-related exhibits, including pictures, context analysis, production tools, finished products, etc. The ICHs can be displayed with the help of holographic imaging technology. Visitors can experience the traditional craftsmanship and communicate with the locals. In this way, tourists' experiences of ICH culture can be significantly enhanced.

Table 1. The cases of universities' ICH assistance from 2018 to 2021

Year	ICH cases	University	Implementation	Assistance results
2018	Excavate, inherit and develop the ICH culture and build a beautiful countryside	Central South University	Develop Yao culture and guide villagers to develop and create Yao characteristic ICH creations and dance dramas.	(1) Investigate the Yao Long Drum Dance; (2) Sort out more than 70 dance sets;
2019	ICH of Honghe Hani terrace	Sun Yat-sen University	The innovative integration of ICH and tourism industry promotes the integrated development of poverty alleviation and rural revitalization.	(1) Establish a company and the income belongs to the whole village;(2) Formulate detailed rules for village protection; (3) Preserve cultural landscapes such as mushroom houses and terraces and develop ICH tourism industry.
2020	Promote the protection of ICH, revitalize traditional technology, and help targeted poverty alleviation	Central Academy of Fine Arts	Take the inheritance and development of traditional crafts as the core, cultivate ICH talents, inherit and improve skills.	(1) Set up traditional craft workshops to carry out traditional craft training; (2) Carry out general investigation of traditional processes.
2021	Aesthetic education of <i>spring seedlings</i> - ICH rural tour, experience education and moisten the soul	Shandong University	Combine experience with ICH. Explore the implementation strategy of <i>academic lectures+cultural experience+cooperative learning</i> .	(1) Customizing characteristic ICH experience courses;(2) Establish a volunteer service team for college students; (3) Set up ICH training courses.
2021	Carry forward the <i>Red Candle Spirit of the West</i> and build a new engine for rural revitalization in Langao, Shaanxi Province with a ICH tourism town	Shaanxi Normal University	Take the ICH of Langao village in Shaanxi Province as the principal part, and plan and design the cultural tourism town.	(1) Sponsored the preparation of <i>Langao History and Culture Series</i> ; (2) Design the nostalgia hall of cultural tourism town; (3) Set up training courses for ICH; (4) Develop immortal tree planting industry.

4.3. Making full use of resources and exploring the path of integration at the rural level

ICH is a type of regional culture. Its protection and use should return to local soil because this is where it originates. With accurate positioning, ICH can evoke villagers' sense of identity, improve their income, promote the development of local culture, and facilitate rural revitalization. ICH is fragile in its nature and environment. Therefore, in the new period of rural transformation, China should wisely select the strategies for ICH industrialization. Rural areas can learn from other regions, and carefully analyze local advantages when developing specific measures for ICH conservation.

To sum up, the study focuses on the function of ICH in rural revitalization from the perspective of experience. It explores the topic from three levels: the government, universities, and villages. ICH protection is a practice that boosts rural revitalization at the cultural level. On the other hand, rural revitalization also promotes the sustainable development of ICH. They are in a dynamic cause-effect relationship. From experiencing perspective, we have concluded that ICH conservation should conform to the strategy of rural revitalization. To achieve a sustainable development of ICH, multiple subjects should participate in this large project and form an interactive relationship. Moreover, joint coordination and co-governance are also necessary for the efficient use of local ICH resources (Wang and Yin, 2022).

5. Conclusion

This study argued that ICH for rural revitalization constitutes a unique research topic with Chinese characteristics. It is not only an important content and means of rural cultural governance in China in the new era. Moreover, it is of great value to stimulate the intrinsic vitality of rural culture, revitalize rural culture. On the one hand, ICH protection is a practice that boosts rural revitalization at the cultural level. On the other hand, rural revitalization also promotes the sustainable development of ICH. They are in a dynamic cause-effect relationship. From experiencing perspective, we have concluded that ICH conservation should conform to the strategy of rural revitalization. To achieve a sustainable development of ICH, multiple subjects should participate in this large project and form an interactive relationship. Moreover, joint coordination and co-governance are also necessary for the efficient use of local ICH resources. This study established that the ultimate goal of ICH research is to seek ways to achieve

ICH sustainable development so as to maintain cultural diversity and satisfy the public's increasing cultural demands.

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