

Economic Empowerment, Modern Media Use and Dissemination: A Research on the Dissemination and Inheritance of Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage in Kwai

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Keywords: intangible cultural heritage; Kwai; dissemination; inheritance

Abstract: This paper interviews 5 intangible cultural heritage artists who use Kwai and send questionnaires to the audiences who use Kwai to watch videos related to intangible cultural heritage programs to investigate the dissemination activities of Chinese intangible cultural heritage in Kwai, trying to clarify the role of Kwai in the dissemination and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. This paper finds that Kwai can promote the spread of intangible cultural heritage, and objectively promote the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. The inheritors of intangible cultural heritage can gain economic benefits and gain fame in Kwai. Kwai has also injects fresh blood into intangible cultural heritage, and a large number of audiences would like to be new generation of successors of certain intangible cultural heritage programs.

1. Introduction

With the development of urbanization and modernization, China's ICH(intangible cultural heritage) is facing the crisis of loss. The rapid progress of urbanization in China has led to the rapid degradation of rural areas, and the majority of ICH in China was born in the soil of farming civilization, which is compatible with the traditional farming livelihood. In just a few decades, under the dual pressures of rapid urban expansion and the impact of modern culture, farming civilization is gradually disappearing, which leads to the fragmentation of the cultural ecology on which ICH depends for its survival and development, and then leads to the decline and change of the ability of most artists of ICH to make a living, and ultimately leads to the loss of a large number of ICH[1].

Kwai's slogan is "capture the world, share your story." It is a social media platform that records life with short videos. It is designed to provide every ordinary person with a stage to show their own life. It isn't a platform for KOL and doesn't set up lists of influencers or hot topics. According to the 2018 Kwai Official Social Value Report, Kwai users' impression towards Kwai is mostly "real" and "warm". The main themes of short videos in Kwai are daily life (28%), beautiful girls (14%), food (11%), skills (8%), vocational skills (8%) and performance (6%). The quality of videos content in Kwai is uneven, and users pay more attention to interact with people that they have followed. According to the penguin research platform data, Kwai's main users are female, younger than 24 years old, mostly living in the third and fourth tier cities of China, and their monthly income are between 3000 and 8000.

In 2018, Kwai launched the "Kwai Classroom" where users can learn and open their own live lessons. If one's live lessons are popular enough, he can make money through Kwai Classroom. Some artists of ICH have participated in Kwai Classroom, and earned money through this way. In the same year, Kwai published the "Kwai ICH leader plan" to further promote the development of ICH projects in Kwai. The state also attaches great importance to the development of ICH in Kwai, with the support of the state, Kwai will focus on building a "Kwai ICH accelerator", excavating 50 rural artists of ICH, with providing business and management education, industry and brand resources.

2. Research Status

2.1 Research on Cultural Space

Domestic scholars have several different understandings of cultural space. Xiang Yunju believes that “cultural space” is an important or main style of ICH[2]. Wu Bingan believes that “cultural space” refers to a place or a series of places where traditional or folk cultural expressions are carried out regularly[3]. Zhang Bo believes that the definition of cultural space needs to be further expanded to fully explain the characteristics of cultural space and its important position in the protection of ICH, that is, the cultural space of ICH should also include the space for the survival, development and inheritance of the heritage[4]. Chen Guibo believes that cultural space refers to the space with a long history, periodic emergence, a variety of interrelated inheritance of ICH, which is characterized by comprehensiveness, periodicity and integrity[5].

The United Nations defines “cultural space” as “a place where popular and traditional cultural activities can be held centrally, or a time when specific activities are usually held regularly, and this event and natural space exist because of the existence of traditional cultural manifestations in space.” Edmond Mukalla, cultural officer of the Beijing Office of UNESCO, explained:”From the point of view of cultural heritage, place refers to the place where the material created by human wisdom can be found, such as monuments or sites. Cultural space is an anthropological concept, which refers to a place or a series of places where traditional or folk cultural expressions are carried out regularly.” [6]

2.2 Relevant Research on the Inheritance and Dissemination of ICH

The research on the inheritance of ICH is mainly divided into the traditional inheritance of ICH and the modern inheritance of ICH. Wu Bingan put forward that the traditional method of inheritance of ICH is oral transmission, and in some ethnic areas, it also follows the ancient rules of oral transmission or the custom of “stealing art” relying on the spiritual understanding of apprentices themselves. It is different from the “knowledge dissemination education” determined by the large-scale industrial production mode rising in modern civilized society, and can not forcibly push the inheritance of folk art to the modern mode of large-scale teaching in training courses and workshops[7]. Introduction to ICH pointed out that in farming society, artists have a kind of skill unique skill which comes from their ancestors and has been studied and honed for many years, with a kind of broom self-cherishing mentality, in their view, the skills they master are the unique ability to base themselves on society and support their families, which only belongs to their own family or a certain ethnic group. It is strictly confidential and can not be spread outside. In this way, some folk skills have been inherited in a single line, that is, one-to-one inheritance, father to son, mother to daughter, master to apprentice[8].

With the development of the society, the inheritance of ICH needs to change to fit in modern society, resulting in a modern way of inheritance. The Noumenon Research and Modern Inheritance of Wuqin, the ICH of Daur nationality, investigates Wuqin, the ICH of Daur nationality, and puts forward that in modern society, we should broaden other modern ways of inheritance of Wuqin besides oral inheritance, and promote the pluralistic development of Daur traditional culture[9]. The Modern Inheritance and Application Research of Wangkui Shadow Shadow from the Perspective of ICH Protection puts forward the modern inheritance method of using modern design theory and digital media technology to protect Wangkui shadow puppetry[10]. Motive Force and Path of Modern Inheritance of Nuo Dance in Shezhu Town, Liyang studies the Nuo dance in the town of Liyang, Jiangsu Province, and points out that to promote the modern inheritance of Nuo dance in the town of Liyang, we need to rebuild the space and establish the cultural and ecological protection area of Nuo dance in the town of Liyang[11].

As for the study of the dissemination of ICH, Research on the Characteristics and Strategies of the Dissemination of ICH studies several main ways of the dissemination of ICH: personal dissemination, physical dissemination, dissemination through mass media and dissemination through new media, etc. Through the analysis of the characteristics and current situation of the

dissemination of ICH, it claims the measures to enhance the dissemination of ICH are to make good use of and explore the pleasing nature of ICH culture. Using 3D images to transmit ICH culture in a complete and dynamic way; Increase the duplication of information dissemination of ICH; Strengthen the training and guidance of gatekeepers[12]. Research on the Ways of Protecting and Disseminating ICH by Documentary Film points out that documentary film is one of the most effective means of survival and dissemination of ICH in the digital age, which not only meets the requirements of image-based protection and dissemination of ICH, but also, as a form of dissemination, has the functions of recording, preserving and disseminating. The advantage of high credibility[13]. Research on the New Media Communication Mode of ICH in Heilongjiang Province” puts forward that the living environment of ICH is being impacted more and more, and some cultural heritage inherited by oral and behavioral transmission is disappearing. At the same time, the vigorous development of digital media technology provides new opportunities and development space for the dissemination of ICH[14].

2.3 Research on the Association between ICH and Short videos

The short videos industry in new media is a new cultural industry. The inheritance and dissemination of ICH is also deeply valued by academia and industry. The association between ICH and short videos is worth to be studied.

At present, there are few studies on the dissemination and inheritance of ICH by short videos. Among existing research, Peng Cong and Zhao Kun inspected the characteristics of Anxin Reed Painting relying on short videos communication, and proposed that creative editing, street interviews and documentaries in the form of short videos can better stimulate the cultural vitality of ICH and create a strong atmosphere of public opinion to promote traditional culture[15]. Mei Na and Chen Xiaojuan put forward that the short videos platform of tremolo can bring new vitality to the dissemination of ICH, and attract young people’s attention to ICH[16]. Liu Limin and Ma Yun put forward that the emergence of short videos opens up a new way for the dissemination and inheritance of ICH by investigating the role of tremolo in the dissemination of ICH[16].

From the existing research point of view, on the one hand, the inheritance and dissemination of ICH research results are rich, which lays a good theoretical foundation for the author to explore the use of short videos platform for protecting the inheritance and dissemination of ICH. On the other hand, the research on the association between ICH and short videos in the perspective of ICH protection has not yet been widely concerned by academia, the existing research in this direction has not yet been full, and the few research results are mostly short, lack of in-depth thinking, detailed exposition and comprehensive and systematic demonstration and investigation. There is still much room for research on the correlation between ICH and short videos from the perspective of ICH protection. Based on this, this paper studies the use of short videos of ICH in Kwai to systematically demonstrate and explore.

3. Research findings

3.1 Media use of ICH artists in Kwai

Nowadays, ICH lacks attention of public, and ICH artists are marginalized in China, which is reflected in their low income, single relationship network and low social status. ICH artists use Kwai to increase income and get a sense of achievement which is also effort to break away from social exclusion.

The artists of ICH in Kwai are divided into three categories, the first category is interest-oriented, sharing their own videos recording ICH skills in Kwai. The second category is the artists of ICH who initially share ICH skills videos on the Internet with interest orientation and gradually gain economic benefits from the Kwai. The third category is interest-oriented artists, and they record videos as a tool of advertising.

3.1.1 Economic benefits

The ICH artists increased their income through Kwai. According to the interview, there are several ways to obtain income through Kwai. First, offering a Wechat account in their Kwai account, the audience in Kwai would contact the artists through Wechat and some of them would even buy the products made by the artists. The second way is to get rewards from the audience through the Kwai live, but this way of talent show is only applicable to the traditional music, traditional folk art and other projects with the nature of performance in the ICH. The third way is that ICH artists get the benefits of selling products by opening Kwai stores in their Kwai account. The fourth method is to sell online courses through Kwai classroom. The first and second methods are the most common because they are easy to operate in Kwai. The third and fourth methods are less common.

ICH artists will show their skills through short videos as a low-cost advertising marketing means, and audiences may buy their products. The way they get economic benefits is to transfer the offline relationship network to Kwai, and use the strong relationship to sell products. At the same time, artists use the weak relationship in Kwai to obtain economic benefits. With the support of fans in Kwai, artists Wei Shengguo has open a training course offline, and followers of Wei have formed a support network, actively re-post Wei's works on various social media platforms to attract new students for Wei's training course. In this case, artists can not only earning money but also find apprentice for ICH program. And some of the artists has abandoned their original work because they find new way to earn much more money through Kwai.

The videos of ICH in Kwai is not only beneficial to the artists of ICH, but also plays an important role in the region where the artists of ICH are located. The general economic development of the cultural space where the ICH is located is backward, and the development of the ICH videos in Kwai has a role in promoting the economy of the region where the ICH is located. Yang Yanjiao and her sisters, inheritors of Dong culture, opened Kwai shops in their accounts to sell Dong embroidery and local products for her village, and have earned more than 300,000 yuan in 2018 to improve income of their ethnic village.

3.1.2 Spiritual benefits

ICH artists can get spiritual satisfaction and sense of achievement by sharing short videos in Kwai. Artists Zhang can not make much money by sharing videos and Kwai live but he still spends time to record videos and live streams every week."Every time I interact with the audience, I have a sense of satisfaction. And it gradually form a habit, when there is time, I would open the live stream to chat with everyone."Suona artist Chen Libao sold Suona teaching videos at 129 yuan per lesson at first, but ended up with setting the price down to 9 yuan per lesson, hoping to make more people understand Suona culture.

Kwai empowers the ICH artists economically, and at the same time, it enables the ICH artists to have more leisure time for artistic creation. Artist Wei Shengguo used to sell sugar paintings offline, because he had to sell enough products to earn money, he cannot spend much time to improve his skill. Now that he has set up a training course and has leisure time, he can slow down to make big works with more complex techniques without going out to sell every day under the pressure of his livelihood. It can be seen that Kwai can not only improves the living standard of ICH artists, but also gives them more time to improve their skills.

3.2 Modernization of ICH programs in Kwai

3.2.1 Modernization of modes of inheritance

Kwai can make ICH find more successors and promote the inheritance of ICH. Because of the long economic return cycle, ICH has produced the dilemma of no successor. Lacking dissemination channels, ICH is far away from daily life. It's hard for artist of ICH programs to earn money, which is a survival problem that can not be ignored.

Artists of ICH have found a large number of students willing to learn ICH in Kwai. Take Wei Shengguo, the successor of sugar painting, as an example."Since I upload the videos of making sugar paintings through Kwai, many audiences have learned about sugar paintings, added my

Wechat account, and wanted me to teach sugar paintings, so I opened a sugar painting studio.”It can be seen that through Kwai, more people can understand the ICH culture, and they are willing to learn the ICH culture program, and as a result, the ICH can be inherited.”

3.2.2 Modernization of the content of ICH

Through Kwai, ICH is innovated in the dissemination, and ICH is gradually integrated into modern elements. Most of the ICH inherited by modern times has a history more than 100 years, which are inherited from the era of agricultural civilization, the content and form of which meet the aesthetic and needs of people in the period of agricultural civilization, but out of fashion for modern people, it is difficult for young people to admire, Kwai injects fresh blood into it. Wei’s has invented new shapes figures of sugar paintings to meet modern people’s interest. He also created a new kind of sugar painting, which can be framed and hung on the wall for decoration for 100 years. Artist Zhang Xiaofei also revised the content and form of Shanbei Storytelling: “I add some new paragraphs, new musical instruments, change the form of storytelling, add arias, to innovate, and keep pace with the time.”

3.2.3 Modernization of the mode of dissemination of ICH

The traditional way of spread of ICH programs is to perform in specific festivals or temple fairs, but which in Kwai is the innovation of the means of spread of ICH.

Kwai can promote the spread of ICH and promote the diffusion of ICH in the society. In 2018, according to 2018 Annual Kwai Social Value Report released by Kwai, the number of daily active users of Kwai exceeded 160 million in 2018. As a popular short videos platform, Kwai provides a large flow of promotion platform for ICH culture. ICH artists perform ICH in Kwai, which makes ICH programs enter people's daily life. Most of the ICH artists in the interview held a positive attitude towards the dissemination of Kwai, believing that Kwai are an excellent platform for the dissemination of ICH culture.

Kwai also expands the cultural space of ICH programs, and extend the traditional offline field cultural space to cyberspace.

3.2.4 Disputes over the modernization of ICH programs

There is a conflict between the traditional way of teaching ICH successors and modern methods to teach successors. The traditional way of imparting ICH to apprentices is to teach them orally and heart-to-heart, and to teach them free of charge by bringing them around. In Kwai, artists can teach their apprentices through online Kwai classroom. At the same time, Sugar Painting Artist Wei Shengguo trains Sugar Painting Artists set up a Sugar Painting Studio and train his apprentices there and asked for reward. However, some ICH artists can not understand the way of opening training courses to train the apprentices, and they still insist on oral way and just teach their relatives. Such ICH artists are unwilling to teach outsider through Kwai or other channels.

At the same time, the content of ICH programs has been gradually changed, on the one hand, it is an innovative development of traditional culture to adapt to modern society, but on the other hand, the original content of the ICH programs has been partly changed.

3.3 videos Audience Characteristics of Non-material Cultural Heritage in Kwai

The author issued a questionnaire to investigate the audience of ICH videos in Kwai, and collected 304 questionnaires. In terms of age group, it is concentrated in the 16-35 age group (73%), which is consistent with the overall age group of the Kwai audience. Geographical location is concentrated in the eastern and central regions, using Kwai to watch ICH videos accounted for 67%, mainly watching music, dance, drama kind of ICH videos, which is in line with the current Internet era of aesthetic and leisure ways. However, the audience's choice of categories of ICH programs has not paid attention to a few boring and old ICH programs. As for the reasons for watching, the interesting content of the videos and the cultural content behind the ICH have become the main reasons for the audience to watch, which also reflects that the ICH programs should be adjusted accordingly on the new media and short videos platform to adapt to the audience's viewing interests

and habits.

Of the 202 people who have watched the ICH videos on Kwai, 78% of the audience support the dissemination of ICH on Kwai, and they will express their support by reposting, watching live stream, rewarding and learning art. Among the audience who watched the ICH videos in Kwai, 71% of the audience said that they would repost the ICH videos in Kwai to other social platforms, 54% of the audience used the Kwai classroom, and 58% of the audience said that after watching the ICH videos, they would want to find performers to learn ICH program. The main reason for learning ICH program is learning this ability to earn money, and most of them are willing to pay. Among the audience who have seen the ICH videos in Kwai, 75% of the audience will seek methods to learn about the ICH in other ways. Of the 111 audiences who used Kwai classroom, 82% said they would pay to learn about ICH. Of the 145 audiences who watched the live stream of ICH artists, 75% of them tipped less than 50 yuan each time.

The main performer of ICH videos watched by the audience are ordinary folk artists who perform ICH programs, and the performers who perform ICH videos in Kwai are highly evaluated, with 78% giving good and very good evaluations. Audiences generally hold a positive attitude towards the dissemination of ICH projects in Kwai, and they are willing to participate in the dissemination of ICH programs. In addition, the change from viewing to action behavior shows that the short videos mode not only meets the audience's psychological demands, but also uses its social attributes to expand the communication space of ICH projects, promote and encourage the online and offline realization of ICH projects.

3.4 The difficulty of the artists of ICH in Kwai

Although Kwai plays an important role in promoting the spread and inheritance of ICH, some phenomena also plague the artists. In Kwai, there are fake artists of ICH. Some “semi-amateurs” enter the Kwai, pretending to be the artists of ICH, deceiving the audience and seeking economic benefits. Because Kwai has not taken any movement to protect the artists of ICH, such as real-name certification and official certification, there is a trend of pretending to be the artists of ICH projects for economic benefits.

In addition, many artists of ICH lack start-up funds and commercial knowledge, and do not know how to transform the social benefits into economic benefits. Zhang Xiaofei, a story-telling inheritor in northern Shanxi, has 422,000 fans in Kwai, but he has not found a way to turn these online traffic into economic benefits. The reason is his lack of experience and knowledge in the commercialization and management of ICH and he does not have enough funds to open an offline studio.

There is a vicious competition in Kwai. Peer competitors will give negative comments toward artists' videos to mislead audiences.

4. Research and discussion: media use of ICH artists and cultural development of ICH

The contradiction between economic empowerment and the change of ICH original content. For ICH artists, Kwai is a platform for them to speak out and help them get out of the marginal position of society. Kwai empowers the economy of ICH artists, solves the economic problems of artists of ICH, and enables them to create works and find successors at ease. At the same time, artists and fans can communicate with each other online, which also brings a sense of achievement and satisfaction to ICH artists. For the ICH program itself, the rapid development of the ICH program has attracted a large number of audiences' attention, and enhanced the commercial value of the ICH program. However, in Kwai, ICH artists will adjust the content of ICH according to the taste of modern audiences. Whether this change to the ICH program destroys the purity of the ICH program itself, and in the long run, if this adjustment is beneficial other than harmful, all need further consideration.

The conflict between the traditional way of inheritance and modern inheritance methods in Kwai. Audiences who watch ICH videos are willing to find ICH artists through Kwai, and learn it. ICH artists also run training courses to train successors. However, this modern large-scale training

course method conflicts with the traditional “oral teaching” way. Wu Bingan believes that the inheritance method of ICH is oral teaching, which is different from the “knowledge spread education” determined by the large-scale industrial production mode rising in modern civilized society, and can not forcibly push the inheritance of folk art to the modern mode of large-scale teaching in training courses and workshops. Whether such a training course mode of ICH is correct or not needs further observation and research[18].

The audience in Kwai has a high acceptance and attention to the ICH videos, but the time of the emergence of the ICH in Kwai is not long, this kind of attention to the ICH videos is mostly due to curiosity. However, the author's questionnaire survey shows that the majority (75%) are driven by the motivation of “learning this program and making money through it”. After watching the short videos of ICH in Kwai, respondents will learn about the ICH project itself through other ways, and are willing to find ICH artists to learn (58%) or online through the Kwai classroom (82%). This shows that the future ICH videos can still be further developed on Kwai and other platforms.

The commercial value of ICH videos is an important driving force for ICH artists to create ICH videos and ICH videos audience to watch videos. An important factor for ICH artists to create ICH videos in Kwai is to obtain economic rewards, and the driving force for ICH videos viewers to watch ICH videos to learn from their masters is also to obtain economic benefits.

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