

Study on Factors Influencing University Students' Awareness of Intangible Cultural Heritage Transmission

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Abstract: In the context of contemporary globalization, the preservation and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage has assumed heightened significance. Serving as a pivotal cultural asset, intangible cultural heritage plays an essential role in upholding cultural diversity and fostering societal progress. This study combines micro and macro-level management practices, student engagement theory, and cultural-historical activity theory to conduct quantitative research on 500 art and design students from 16 universities in Shaanxi Province, China. The primary research findings reveal a positive correlation between students' sense of responsibility and cultural heritage awareness, indicating deepening responsibility with heightened awareness. However, general knowledge and student-teacher interactions, though positively correlated, lack statistical significance. The study underscores the crucial role of institutional support and pragmatic education in enhancing students' intangible cultural heritage transmission awareness. Practical, hands-on learning experiences and strong institutional backing drive a deeper understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage among students. These insights have implications for educational policy and curriculum design, emphasizing the need for a multi-faceted approach to intangible cultural heritage education that incorporates both theoretical knowledge and practical experiences, and underscores the importance of institutional support in this endeavor.

Keywords: Cultural Transmission; Intangible Cultural Heritage; Student's Awareness.

1. Introduction

The global significance of preserving intangible cultural heritage is widely acknowledged for its pivotal role in safeguarding cultural diversity amidst globalization, serving as a vital tool for sustainable development across economic, social, and environmental dimensions [1]. Its distinctive attributes, including interactivity, dynamism, inclusivity, and cohesion, underscore its profound importance [2].

Despite the emphasis on tangible heritage in legal frameworks and cultural heritage discussions, intangible cultural heritage faces challenges in garnering full recognition in academic discourse and practical application [3]. The framework for intangible cultural heritage and protective mechanisms represents a recent addition to the global cultural heritage system established in the 1970s [3].

The pivotal milestone was the adoption of the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1972, emphasizing the preservation of immovable artifacts and sites. However, concerns about safeguarding intangible cultural phenomena emerged as the international convention was implemented [4]. In contrast to tangible cultural heritage, cultural identity in intangible cultural expressions is not conveyed through physical objects but rather defined by inherent connections and specific practices [14].

Various interpretations of "cultural heritage" have sparked discussions on the fundamental issues and conceptual frameworks of intangible heritage, covering folklore, language, handicrafts, religion, beliefs, and national histories [5, 13]. The transition from tangible to intangible heritage was a protracted process [6].

In 1989, UNESCO adopted the Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore as the first specific international legal instrument on intangible cultural heritage [7]. Due to its limited scope, the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage was formally established in 2003, recognizing the intangible dimension of cultural heritage. The convention outlined five domains, including oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, knowledge about nature, and traditional craftsmanship [8], emphasizing narratives of mutual understanding [15].

The UNESCO concept of intangible cultural heritage underscores inclusivity, representativeness, and community-based traditions that combine historical inheritance with contemporary vitality. This definition embraces both past traditions and current rural and urban practices involving diverse cultural groups. Globally, governments and scholars actively promote this "living" culture, vying for UNESCO recognition [9].

Countries like Poland categorizes intangible cultural heritage into domains such as social practices, oral traditions, and performance traditions, following UNESCO's criteria [10]. Hungary adds a unique category for "food" beyond the standard domains [8, 10].

While China has registered the majority of its intangible cultural heritage with UNESCO, the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China [11] offers a more detailed classification. This encompasses traditional oral literature and language, traditional art forms (calligraphy, music, dance, drama, folk art, and acrobatics), traditional techniques (medicine and calendar), traditional etiquette, festivals, other folk customs, traditional sports and entertainment, and additional intangible cultural heritage.

In recent years, the Chinese Ministry of Education has recognized the importance of preserving and promoting intangible cultural heritage through the "Intangible Cultural Heritage on Campus" campaign. This initiative seeks to instill a sense of pride in cultural heritage among students while fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of traditional practices. By integrating intangible cultural heritage into educational curricula, universities in China and around the world play a pivotal role in safeguarding these invaluable cultural assets for future generations [12].

The primary objective of this study is to identify the factors influencing university students' awareness of intangible cultural heritage transmission in Shaanxi Province, China, with the perception of the intangible cultural heritage curriculum as a mediating factor.

2. Fundamental Theories and Conceptual Framework

This section examines pivotal theories pertinent to intangible cultural heritage development, covering micro, meso, and macro levels, including management practices, student engagement, and cultural-historical activity theory. These theoretical frameworks provide valuable insights into various management practices, dynamics of student engagement, and broader cultural-historical contexts relevant to intangible cultural heritage studies. They facilitate a nuanced exploration of the subject matter, deepening understanding of its complexities and contemporary societal significance. Through comprehensive analysis, this section aims to enhance appreciation of the multifaceted nature of intangible cultural heritage and its implications for conservation and transmission efforts.

2.1. Micro-Meso-Macro Level of Management Practices

The micro-level analysis concentrates on individuals or students, delving into their perceptions and comprehension of intangible cultural heritage [16]. Through this examination, researchers acquire insights into individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and levels of knowledge, thereby informing the development of tailored educational strategies.

Moving to the meso-level, the analysis focuses on institutions such as universities, investigating how factors like leadership, communication, and cultural ambiance impact student involvement with intangible cultural heritage [16]. It delves into the mechanisms through which university management facilitates the transmission and preservation of heritage.

At the macro-level, the analysis extends to national or global dimensions, scrutinizing government policies and international endeavors aimed at safeguarding intangible cultural heritage [17]. This level of analysis furnishes valuable insights for fostering international collaboration and exchange amidst diverse political and cultural milieus.

2.2. Students' Involvement Theory

The Student Involvement Theory, developed by Alexander Astin in 1984, explores the intricate relationship between students' academic engagement and their interactions within the university community. Astin emphasizes the significant impact of student engagement on cognitive and non-cognitive functions, fostering positive learning attitudes and knowledge acquisition. A nurturing learning environment is essential for

cultivating robust student engagement, crucial for holistic development [18]. Chickering and Garrison propose pedagogical strategies to enhance student engagement, including meaningful interactions, collaboration, and accommodating diverse learning styles [19, 20]. Rafiq, Triyono, and Djatmiko characterize active and collaborative learning as deliberate efforts by students to construct knowledge through participation in various activities [21]. Participation theory underscores the importance of creating an inclusive environment across learning activities to ensure quality teaching and learning experiences.

2.3. Cultural-Historical Activity Theory

In cultural-historical activity theory, human development and learning are seen as products of social interactions and cultural practices, shaped by historical and cultural contexts. The theory emphasizes the importance of activities and mediating tools in shaping both developmental and learning processes. Additionally, it recognizes the profound impact of cultural-historical events on societies and individuals [22]. Connections among micro, meso, and macro levels of management practices, students' involvement theory, and cultural-historical activity theory are apparent.

This study endeavors to integrate these theories comprehensively to comprehend their interrelationships and influence on students' awareness of cultural heritage preservation. By delving into the complex interplay among individual engagement, group dynamics, organizational practices, and cultural-historical context, a holistic perspective emerges, shedding light on the multifaceted influences on students' perception and engagement with intangible cultural heritage preservation.

2.4. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework, illustrated in Figure 1, serves as the theoretical backbone of our study, providing a structured approach to understanding the phenomena under investigation. It delineates the overarching principles, theories, and constructs that guide our research inquiries and analysis. Our conceptual framework draws upon diverse disciplines, integrating theories from sociology and education to illuminate the complexities of the subject matter. It encompasses key concepts such as cultural-historical activity theory, micro-meso-macro levels of management practices, and students' involvement theory. In this framework, students' perceptions of intangible cultural heritage curriculum design serve as mediating variables. On the left-hand side, micro-meso-macro level factors identified through literature review are listed. The dependent variables are students' awareness of intangible cultural heritage transmission. These theoretical frameworks converge to provide a comprehensive lens for examining the interplay between individual engagement, group dynamics, organizational practices, and the broader cultural and historical context. Through the application of this conceptual framework, we aim to unravel the intricate connections and interdependencies inherent in our research domain, fostering a deeper understanding of the factors shaping students' awareness of cultural heritage preservation.

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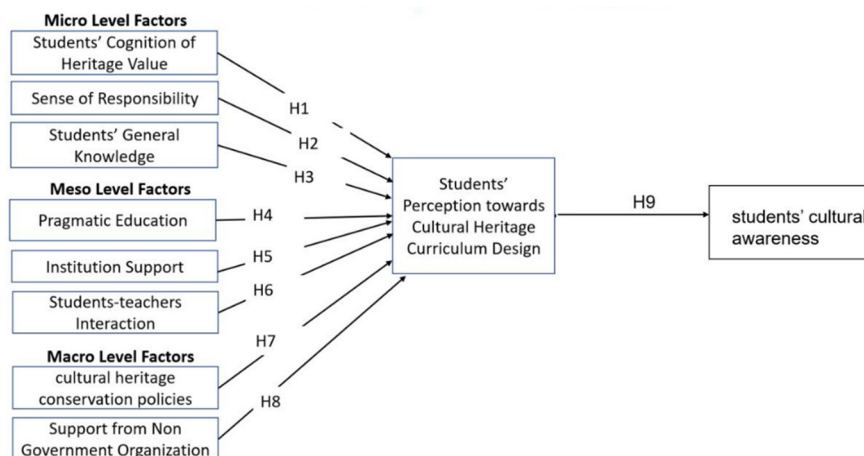


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

First, identify the problem statements and research objectives, formulate research questions, conduct a comprehensive literature review, propose hypotheses, determine the research methodology, identify the unit of analysis, establish the sampling strategy, conduct a pilot test, and proceed with reliability and validity analysis. Subsequently, perform the actual testing and, finally, conduct data analysis.

3.2. Research Method

This study employs a quantitative analysis approach, which enables the collection of numerical data necessary for statistical inferences and generalization to a broader population [23]. The use of quantitative methods enhances the rigor and reliability of the study's findings, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

3.3. Method of Data Collection

The study focuses on undergraduate from sixteen universities in Shaanxi Province, China, specifically targeting those currently enrolled in Arts and Design programs for more targeted research outcomes. Information is collected through the use of questionnaires with a five-point Likert scale that have been modified by other researchers.

3.4. Sampling Method

Considering the diverse enrollment sizes across arts and design programs in various schools, alongside the voluntary nature of student participation in the survey, convenience sampling was selected as the most suitable sampling method. This approach allowed for the inclusion of participants who were readily available and willing to participate, facilitating the collection of data from a broad spectrum of students within the target population. While convenience sampling may introduce some limitations in terms of generalizability, it provided practical advantages in reaching a sufficient sample size within the constraints of the study's resources and timeframe [24].

3.5. Questionnaire Development

Developing an effective questionnaire is paramount in ensuring the acquisition of precise and dependable data, serving as the cornerstone for insightful analysis and interpretation in research endeavors [25].

The questionnaire encompasses a comprehensive range of aspects, including cognition of intangible cultural heritage value, perceptions of responsibility, general knowledge, teaching and learning activities, institutional support, student-teacher interaction, intangible cultural heritage conservation policies, and non-government organization involvement. Each item within the questionnaire is meticulously crafted to uphold clarity and mitigate response bias, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the data collected.

3.6. Data Collection

The questionnaire was distributed electronically using the "Questionnaire Star" in WeChat. A total of 573 students from 16 universities in Shaanxi Province actively participated in the survey. After careful review, some questionnaires were excluded due to excessively short completion times or questionable data. Consequently, 500 valid questionnaires were retained, exceeding the minimum threshold of 384 participants and fulfilling the study's basic requirements.

Before commencing the survey, participants provided informed consent, ensuring their confidence in the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. This study meticulously adheres to ethical research guidelines, guaranteeing informed consent, data privacy, and voluntary participation. Participants' identities and responses are treated with the utmost confidentiality, and all data are securely stored in compliance with ethical standards.

4. Results and Findings

4.1. Descriptive Analysis

The study conducted a demographic descriptive analysis of the questionnaire data using SPSS version twenty-seven. Demographic information, including gender, age, university, year of study, and program, was utilized to create a comprehensive profile of the research subjects.

Among all respondents, as depicted in the bar chart, there

were 169 male participants, accounting for approximately 33.8% of the total sample. In contrast, there were 331 female participants, comprising the majority at approximately 66.2% of the total sample.

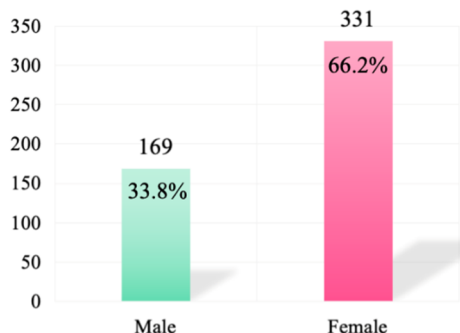


Figure 2. Description Gender

Examine the overview of the distribution of students based on the year of study in the pie chart, providing a comprehensive snapshot within the study's sample. The results reveal a diverse representation of students across different academic years. Year 3 stands out as the most prominent, encompassing 173 students and constituting 34.6% of the total. Following this, Years 2 and 4 are represented, while Year 1 has the least representation. This distribution underscores the varied participation of students from different stages of their academic journey, providing valuable insights into the demographic makeup of the sample and the potential implications for the research findings.

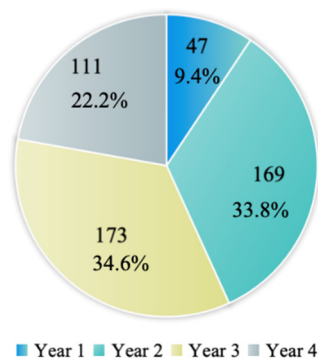


Figure 3. Overview of the distribution of students based on Year of Study

Demographic analysis has unveiled the inherent diversity within the representative sample, enriching the generalizability of research findings to a broader population. Understanding participants' demographic characteristics is pivotal for interpreting research outcomes and gaining meaningful insights into the factors influencing college students' awareness of intangible cultural heritage transmission. By delving into demographic data, researchers can discern patterns, trends, and disparities across various segments of the population, providing valuable context for the study's findings. Furthermore, demographic insights facilitate the development of targeted interventions and policies aimed at fostering greater awareness and appreciation of intangible cultural heritage among diverse student populations.

4.2. Hypothesis Testing Analysis

The p-value analysis yielded compelling insights into the

statistical significance of the hypotheses investigated, highlighting robust relationships among the variables under investigation. However, it is noteworthy that a subset of hypotheses, including H1, H3, and H6, did not achieve statistical significance. These results imply that the proposed associations outlined by these hypotheses may be tentative or inconclusive. Consequently, it is imperative to conduct a thorough examination of the intricate interplay between variables and to recognize any potential limitations in the relationships delineated within the study. This underscores the importance of adopting a nuanced approach to data analysis and interpretation, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the research findings.

Table 1. Hypothesis Result

Hypothesis	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Results	
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
H1	Cognition of Intangible Cultural Heritage Value	.023	.044	.023	.514	.607	Rejected
H2	Perceptions of Responsibility	.216	.056	.204	3.839	.000	Accepted
H3	General Knowledge	.024	.051	.022	.479	.632	Rejected
H4	Institutional Support	.137	.051	.140	2.692	.007	Accepted
H5	Pragmatic Education	.229	.058	.210	3.954	.000	Accepted
H6	Student-lecturers Interaction	.014	.041	.015	.342	.732	Rejected
H7	Intangible Cultural Heritage Conservation Policies	.126	.048	.133	-2.596	.010	Accepted
H8	Non-Government Organization	.435	.045	.462	9.654	.000	Accepted
H9	Curriculum Design	.442	.040	.441	10.965	.000	Accepted

Note: *** p<0.001, significance level of 0.05

Table 1 presents the outcomes of hypothesis testing conducted in this study, with the objective of probing the relationships among various variables. The analysis unveils several noteworthy discoveries:

1. Institutional support, pragmatic education, conservation policies, support from non-governmental organizations, and students' sense of responsibility significantly and positively influenced awareness of intangible cultural heritage transmission.

2. Significant observations were made concerning curriculum design, accompanied by unexpected findings related to the cognition of intangible cultural heritage value, general knowledge, and student-teacher interaction. These findings underscore the intricate nature of intangible cultural heritage education, emphasizing the vital role of a comprehensive approach.

This involves integrating institutional support, practical learning experiences, and policy frameworks to elevate cultural heritage awareness, ensuring the sustained protection and transmission of intangible cultural heritage.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study assessed various factors related to intangible cultural heritage, including cognition of its value, sense of responsibility, general knowledge, pragmatic education, institutional support, student-lecturer interaction, intangible cultural heritage conservation policies, and support from non-governmental organizations. The findings indicate the significance of students' sense of responsibility, institutional support, pragmatic education, cultural heritage conservation policies, and support from non-governmental organizations in the design of cultural heritage curricula. These factors elucidate the determinants of students'

awareness of intangible cultural heritage transmission in Shaanxi Province, China. Understanding these factors can guide educational institutions, policymakers, and cultural organizations in formulating more effective strategies to enhance heritage awareness and promote the preservation and transmission of valuable cultural traditions. These efforts contribute to the sustainable development of cultural heritage and foster societal and cultural prosperity and advancement.

The research underscores the critical importance of advancing educational reforms, reinforcing institutional roles, expanding social participation, implementing practical projects, and offering policy support for heritage education. These proposed measures play a pivotal role in enhancing cultural heritage education initiatives and making substantive contributions to the preservation of cultural heritage for future generations. By nurturing a deeper comprehension and appreciation of cultural heritage, future generations can effectively inherit and safeguard their rich cultural legacy, ensuring its enduring relevance and significance amid the evolving global landscape. These concerted efforts not only foster stronger societal bonds but also facilitate the sustainable development of diverse cultural landscapes on a global scale.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who have contributed to the successful completion of this research.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Lee Khiam Jin, for his guidance, feedback, and continued support throughout the research process, which has been pivotal in my academic learning and research progression.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to my friends who provided assistance during the data collection phase. Their valuable contributions and support were instrumental in the successful completion of this research endeavor.

I also extend my heartfelt appreciation to my family for their unwavering support and encouragement throughout the PhD journey.

I am sincerely grateful to all individuals and organizations who contributed significantly to this study. Their invaluable support made this research possible.

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