A Study on Synergistic Innovation in the Preservation and Tourism Activation of the Li Nationality's Intangible Cultural Heritage Handcrafts in Hainan

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ABSTRACT
Li nationality's intangible cultural heritage handicrafts are the most representative cultural carrier of Li nationality in Hainan. However, due to the impact of globalization, large-scale production and new technology, its competitiveness in the tourism market is declining. Through literature review, on-the-spot investigation and in-depth interview, this study analyzes the difficulties faced in the process of activation and integration of Li intangible cultural heritage handicrafts and tourism, and puts forward the activation principles and methods to promote the return of Li intangible cultural heritage handicrafts to the tourism market.

Keywords: *Intangible cultural heritage handicrafts, Tourism activation, Collaborative innovation, Intangible cultural heritage tourism.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The value of handicraft intangible cultural heritage lies in its rarity and cultural inheritance (Wang Tong, Bai Guixi, 2021). However, under the impact of globalization and mechanized production, handcrafts intangible cultural heritage is no longer competitive (Yao Wenbing, 2023). To this end, the academic community proposes to strengthen the creative transformation and innovative development of intangible cultural heritage (Zeng Shuqing, 2025), while maintaining its cultural characteristics to achieve active inheritance (Ji Zhongyang, Chen Yu, 2019; Ma Zhen, 2014).

There are many kinds of traditional handicrafts of the Li nationality in Hainan, which is a vivid embodiment of the unique artistic style and traditional skills of the Li nationality. Among them, the traditional handicraft of Li brocade, which is considered to be one of the oldest textile, dyeing, weaving and embroidery skills in the world, was listed as the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage in 2006 (Fu Liping, Wu Xiaohuai, 2014), and was listed as a representative of the United Nations intangible cultural heritage in 2024 (Liu Xiaohui, 2024).

Although the integration of Hainan Li nationality intangible cultural heritage handicraft inheritance and tourism activation has attracted the attention of many scholars, there are less than 10 academic papers related to it on the HowNet so far. Therefore, on the basis of discussing the dilemma in the process of the integration of Li's intangible cultural heritage handicrafts and tourism activation in Hainan, this paper puts forward relevant suggestions on the activation principles and methods of the synergy between intangible cultural heritage craftsmen and tourism activators to promote the return of Li's intangible cultural heritage handicrafts to the market.

2. RELATED CONCEPTS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Inheritors of Intangible Cultural Heritage Handicrafts

In order to define the inheritors of intangible cultural heritage handicrafts, it is necessary to clarify the concept of handicrafts first. This article adopts the verb definition of "handmade" in the "Modern Chinese Dictionary (7th Edition)", that is, creative production through skilled skills, especially manual production. In view of the ambiguity of the boundary between art and handicrafts, this paper defines handicraft as "the interactive practice of hands and materials under the guidance of professional skills and knowledge system", aiming to emphasize the creative intervention of producers in the production process.

Because the academic research on intangible cultural heritage handicrafts is generally transferred from the three dimensions of cultural inheritance, social function and practical cognition. Therefore, the intangible cultural heritage handicraft inheritors defined in this paper refer to the indigenous people who have mastered the skills, materials and traditional methods inherited from generation to generation, and thus maintain local culture, community relations and practical functions.

2.2 Value of Intangible Cultural Heritage Handicrafts

The word "value" refers to the usefulness and importance that "object" (tangible or intangible) provides for subjective entities. From the above definition of traditional handicrafts, we can derive three dimensions to measure the value of intangible handicrafts. In the dimension of business development, the unique regional culture, aesthetics and high-skilled labor of traditional handicrafts can be transformed into competitive advantages in the tourism market. In the dimension of community building, traditional handicrafts help to increase local income, strengthen social relations, collective identity and sense of belonging. In the dimension of self-development, traditional handicrafts can promote the harmonious development between local community traditional culture, individual spirit and local economy.

2.3 Value Creation of Intangible Cultural Heritage Handicraft Activation Collaboration

In recent years, relevant studies have found that inheritors of intangible cultural heritage handicrafts still face difficulties in innovation and market adaptability after completing the mission of "maintaining cultural ontology". In this regard, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization proposes to revitalize the intangible cultural heritage handicraft through the integration of intangible cultural heritage handicraft inheritance and tourism activation, and maximize their respective advantages.

Subsequent academic research shows that this integration can indeed create value for the revitalization of intangible cultural heritage handicrafts from three dimensions. In terms of business development, integration can enhance the market competitiveness of intangible cultural heritage handicraft products; in terms of community building, integration can promote local community participation and promote social well-being and cultural identity; in terms of self-development, integration can help inheritors of intangible cultural heritage handicrafts transform from pure producers to more independent creative leaders.

3. RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION

In order to deeply analyze the challenges in the current activation of Li intangible cultural heritage handicraft tourism, and explore how to understand each other and establish connections, this paper focuses on the theme of "How do you think the activation of Li intangible cultural heritage handicraft tourism needs to be improved to achieve collaborative innovation", and conducts semi-structured in-depth interviews. During the interview process, data collection and analysis were carried out simultaneously to avoid the emergence of new topics, which was regarded as the saturation of information. The recorded content was transcribed into text within 48 hours of the end of the interview, and the text was analyzed by thematic analysis. The specific steps include reading the text and manually correcting and improving it, performing process coding and factual coding on the interview content to capture valuable information, and merging and recombining the codes with the same or similar

meanings, and finally classifying them into relatively abstract concepts.

This paper adopts the purpose sampling method to select the interviewees, that is, the interviewees must be those who have the experience of planning and hosting the intangible cultural heritage handicraft tourism activation project, or at least have participated in the whole process of the intangible cultural heritage handicraft tourism activation project. Finally, 13 people were selected as interviewees. From the perspective of professional composition, it is composed of five Li intangible cultural heritage handicraft heirs, four tourism activators, two entrepreneurs, one scholar and one tourism competent department leader. Among them, intangible cultural heritage handicraft inheritors and tourism activators account for the largest proportion in the research sample, which can present a wide and valuable content in a more comprehensive way.

4. INTERVIEW RESULTS

4.1 Problems in the Activation of Li Nationality's Intangible Cultural Heritage Handicrafts in Hainan

At the level of cooperative relationship, the core contradiction lies in the dominance of product development. In the interview, the inheritors of the intangible cultural heritage handicrafts of the Li nationality spoke more specifically: the production of the intangible cultural heritage handicrafts of the Li nationality, such as Li brocade and bark cloth, represents the unique understanding of the Li nationality culture of Hainan by the non-genetic people, so the whole process from product conception to production must be dominated by it alone. However, large-scale production focuses on professional division of labor and cooperation, that is, design and production are separated. Both interviews and data analysis point to the same thing. Intangible cultural heritage people need to be led by the whole process, while the operation mode of tourism activation needs to be separated from this process.

At the level of knowledge structure, the Li nationality in Hainan lacks a writing system, and its intangible cultural heritage handicrafts are passed on by word of mouth between masters and apprentices, and more emphasis is placed on the legitimacy of inheritance. This kind of knowledge belongs to tacit knowledge, which is difficult to convey, and needs to be repeatedly speculated in imitation and attempt. However, the knowledge system of tourism activation practitioners comes from modern tourism education, emphasizing economic benefit orientation, and their design and production knowledge can be systematically disseminated through explicit forms such as drawings and text descriptions.

At the level of cultural value, the aesthetics of the inheritors of Li intangible cultural heritage handicrafts are deeply influenced by ethnic history and local culture. For example, the rich and varied colors and strong visual impact of Hainan Li brocade reflect the cultural expression of Li people for a better life. However, this primitive and rough aesthetic style is significantly different from the abstract and simple aesthetics emphasized by contemporary popular culture.

5. THE COLLABORATIVE INNOVATION PROCESS OF LI'S INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE HANDCRAFTS AND TOURISM ACTIVATION

Through in-depth interview and analysis of successful cases of collaborative innovation between Li intangible cultural heritage handicraft inheritors and tourism activation practitioners, this study extracts three key processes: “building connection”, “knowledge integration” and “value innovation”. In the in-depth interview, "building connection" is conceptualized as "transcending boundaries", that is, collaborative innovation subjects need to transcend the boundary of individual interests, build collective relations, integrate each other's superior resources, and form interactive collective consciousness. Therefore, in the process of collaborative innovation, Li intangible cultural heritage handicraft inheritors and tourism activation practitioners need to create a cooperative atmosphere that transcends individual utilitarianism, so as to break through the relationship barriers and realize the collaborative creation of value.

"Knowledge integration" is conceptualized as “knowledge co-creation” in in-depth interviews. The main body of collaborative innovation needs to adjust their cognition of the traditional crafts and culture of Li intangible cultural heritage to the same level through cooperation, so as to ensure the consensus of the knowledge system. At the same time, both sides should actively share individual knowledge that is conducive to collaborative

innovation, and support each other, embed individual knowledge into innovation results, and build collective knowledge that integrates the advantages of both sides. Therefore, in the process of collaborative innovation, Li intangible cultural heritage handicraft inheritors and tourism activation practitioners need to help each other to break through the barriers of knowledge.

"Value innovation" is conceptualized as "value resonance" in in-depth interviews. The collaborative innovation subject needs to use the traditional objects containing the traditional cultural values of the Li nationality and the modern objects reflecting the contemporary aesthetic concepts at the same time to guide its innovative design theme and sample production, in order to realize the resonance of different cultural values in the collaborative innovation of inheritance and activation. Therefore, in the process of collaborative innovation, Li intangible cultural heritage handicraft inheritors and tourism activation practitioners need to introduce items with multiple value elements to promote "value innovation" and achieve the goal of value co-creation.

6. DISCUSSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

6.1 Principles of Activation Innovation

Under the framework of the inheritance and activation innovation of intangible cultural heritage handicrafts, the fundamental problems faced by the inheritors of Li intangible cultural heritage handicrafts and the practitioners of tourism activation in the collaborative creation are rooted in the conflict between traditional culture and modern consumer culture. In the in-depth interview, five inheritors of Li intangible handicrafts emphasized that black symbolizes rebirth and demise in Hainan Li culture, and indigo symbolizes the blessing of deities. Therefore, they often use black and indigo as the background color to express this simple belief in the marriage customs of the Li nationality. If the cultural connotation of reverence for nature is eliminated due to the activation and innovation, the cultural image of the intangible handicraft elements of the Li nationality will change, which may not only mislead tourists, but also cause harm to the cultural heritage groups of the Li nationality. It can be seen that the blind pursuit of innovation leads to the disconnection between content and form, which will not be able to balance the relationship between innovation and inheritance, and will easily damage the cultural core of intangible cultural heritage handicrafts. In view of this, the intangible cultural heritage handicraft carries the collective memory and cultural symbol of the ethnic group, and its activation and integration innovation should follow the principle of inheritance guiding activation and innovation.

6.2 Methods of Collaborative Innovation

In the process of collaborative innovation, "building connection" makes the main body of collaborative innovation, that is, the inheritors of Li intangible cultural heritage handicrafts and the practitioners of tourism activation, transcend the limitations of individual interests, resources and power fields, evaluate the co-creation goals from a neutral perspective, and maintain relative openness. Therefore, "neutral perspective" and "relative openness" integrate different interests, resources and power relations. "Knowledge integration" helps collaborative innovation subjects to accelerate the acquisition of individual knowledge needed in cross-domains and build it into a new knowledge system across knowledge boundaries. Therefore, the collaborative innovation subject under "knowledge integration" has formed an integration between different knowledge systems. "Value innovation" allows the collaborative innovation subject to cross the gap of value level and guide the innovative design theme and sample production through the traditional objects containing the traditional cultural values of the Li nationality and the modern objects reflecting the contemporary aesthetic concepts. Therefore, the object as a bridge forms an integration between different cultural value elements. Based on the above analysis, this paper summarizes this model as an integrated collaborative innovation model.

The integrated collaborative innovation model can promote the main body of tourism activation practice to re-examine the balance between tradition and innovation, especially in the collaborative innovation of intangible cultural heritage handicraft activation, when there is tension between intangible cultural heritage inheritance and innovation development. Therefore, the inheritors of intangible cultural heritage handicrafts and the practitioners of tourism activation can use the integrated collaborative innovation model to think about how to use the integration effect, build a common understanding, and invest in superior resources.

In addition, the integrated collaborative innovation model helps the tourism activation practice subject to look at the intangible cultural heritage handicraft culture with a more objective attitude, and assists the intangible cultural heritage handicraft inheritors to establish cultural self-confidence in learning. Finally, for the relevant management departments, it is suggested in the integrated collaborative innovation model that they should tend to implement infrastructure that is conducive to cultural confidence when formulating policies. Only when the inheritors of intangible cultural heritage handicrafts have sufficient cultural confidence and cultural awareness, can they play an integrated role in the process of collaborative innovation of tourism activation, show cohesion, and actively export culture to the main body of tourism activation practice.

7. CONCLUSION

As a representation of the collective memory and cultural symbol of the Li nationality in Hainan, the intangible cultural heritage handicraft of the Li nationality is an important carrier to reflect its social and cultural life. However, under the impact of consumer culture transformation, large-scale production, new materials and new technologies, the competitiveness of Li's intangible cultural heritage handicrafts in the consumer market is declining. Therefore, through on-the-spot investigation and in-depth interview, this study reveals that there are irreconcilable contradictions in the three dimensions of cooperative relationship, knowledge structure and cultural value in the process of the activation and integration of Li intangible cultural heritage handicraft and tourism. In view of the above problems, this study puts forward the principle of "inheritance, guidance, activation and innovation". Finally, according to the interview content, this paper extracts three key processes of "building connection", "knowledge integration" and "value innovation", and summarizes the integrated collaborative innovation model of Li intangible cultural heritage handicraft inheritance and tourism activation system innovation.

However, the object of in-depth interviews in this study mainly focuses on the costume handicrafts of the intangible cultural heritage of the Li nationality. And the activation and innovation needs of other categories of handicrafts such as the production skills of the Li nationality's bark cloth, the original pottery skills, and the construction skills of the Li nationality's ship house can not be ignored. The collaborative innovation process and co-creation mode of these intangible cultural heritage handicraft inheritors and tourism activation practitioners need further empirical research. In addition, the in-depth interview method may have information bias, and some contradictions and suggestions may not be fully presented, which needs to be improved in subsequent research. Despite the above limitations, the research results of this paper can still provide valuable reference for the inheritance of Hainan Li intangible cultural heritage handicrafts and the practice of tourism activation guided by innovative intangible cultural heritage culture.

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