Research on the Intergenerational Disconnection Dilemma and Path Reconstruction of Youth Inheriting Intangible Cultural Heritage Based on Cultural Identity Theory

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of intensified global cultural competition, the intergenerational inheritance crisis of intangible cultural heritage has risen to a national cultural security issue. Based on the theory of cultural identity, this paper points out the triple intergenerational rupture phenomenon of "cognition-participation-identification" in the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage among young people, and reveals that the defects in curriculum and practice in the intangible cultural heritage education system, the poor communication effects of traditional and digital media in the promotion of intangible cultural heritage, and the lack of innovation in the development form and inheritance mechanism of intangible cultural heritage are the deep-seated reasons for the intergenerational rupture. This study uses the three-dimensional intervention model of "education integration-communication optimization-digital empowerment" to organically penetrate intangible cultural heritage elements and subject courses, reconstruct the dialogue mode of intangible cultural heritage communication, and digitally empower the translation of intangible cultural heritage symbols, aiming to improve the cultural identity system of intangible cultural heritage among young people and provide theoretical support and practical paradigms for strengthening the national cultural security line of defense.

Keywords: Intangible Cultural Heritage, Youth Group, Cultural Security, Intergenerational Gap

1. Introduction

As an important force in social development, young people shoulder the responsibility of cultural inheritance and dissemination, and are important inheritors and promoters of intangible cultural heritage. However, they face a series of difficulties in the process of intangible cultural heritage inheritance, which have become an important cause of cultural identity problems and intergenerational rifts [1]. Under the impact of the waves of globalization, urbanization and digitalization, contemporary young people have grown up in an environment with highly aggregated information and increasingly diverse cultural choices. Their lifestyles, values, aesthetic tastes and even social interaction patterns have undergone profound changes [2]. The traditional intangible cultural heritage inheritance model with "oral transmission and teaching by example" as the core seems to be unable to cope with the young generation who pursue individuality, focus on experience and rely on media. The worries of the older generation of inheritors that they have unique skills but "their skills will be lost after their death" [3], and the real dilemma of the younger generation that they "cannot understand, learn or integrate" intangible cultural heritage, together constitute the intergenerational rift in the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. This rift is not only the interruption of skill transmission, but also the dilution of cultural bloodline and the loss of national sentiment.

In response to the intangible cultural heritage inheritance dilemma faced by young people, academic researchers have proposed a variety of path reconstruction suggestions. The first is the education and dissemination of intangible cultural heritage. The development of digital cultural resources is an important channel for the dissemination of intangible cultural heritage, which helps to enhance interactivity and experience and improve the dissemination effect of intangible cultural heritage. Tang Jinyu et al. explored the effective inheritance of digital intangible cultural heritage through serious games and put forward targeted suggestions for the development and application of serious game projects for cultural institutions such as libraries in my country [4]. The second is to promote the industrialization of

intangible cultural heritage. Zhang Letian et al. combined the current cultural and social environment and proposed to build a diversified cultural innovation ecology so that intangible cultural heritage handicrafts can meet the modern consumption concepts and needs while promoting the industrialization of intangible cultural heritage handicrafts [5]. At the same time, policy support is also key. Wang Zhenyan et al. proposed to build a comprehensive coverage coordination mechanism for the policy objects of intangible cultural heritage empowering rural revitalization; from generalization to precision, to build a comprehensive adaptation mechanism for the policy tools of intangible cultural heritage empowering rural revitalization [6]. Overall, the current research on the intangible cultural heritage inheritance dilemma of young people is characterized by multi-dimensionality and the combination of theory and practice, especially in the application of digital technology and policy support. Significant progress has been made. However, there are still some areas of research that are not well explored, such as the unclear definition of the inheritor "youth", the lack of hierarchy in the current situation of the intergenerational rupture of intangible cultural heritage inheritance, the lack of in-depth research on the causes and path reconstruction of the intergenerational rupture of intangible cultural heritage inheritance, and the lack of research that combines cultural identity theory or stands at the height of national cultural security.

Based on the above research status, this study optimizes the research content from four aspects. First, this study defines the scope of "youth group" as primary and secondary school students and college students, focusing on "youth" who are in the stage of receiving education, reflecting their characteristics in social roles and psychological development in the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage; second, the "cognition-participation-identification" method is used to show the current situation of the intergenerational rupture of the youth group; third, the integration of education system, communication media and inheritance mechanism is used to conduct in-depth causes, and the "education integration-communication optimization-digital empowerment" three-dimensional intervention model is used to explore the path reconstruction; fourth, the cultural identity theory is used as the theoretical basis of this study, and it is based on the height of national cultural security.

As the theoretical basis of this study, the theory of cultural identity emphasizes the formation process of the sense of belonging and self-identity of individuals or groups in a specific cultural background. This theory is highly consistent in explaining the issue of youth intangible cultural heritage inheritance. The current integration and game of cultural identity and cultural change is an inevitable way for cultural self-reflection, self-renewal, and creative development. Starting from the perspective of cultural identity, this study helps to enrich and develop the application of cultural identity theory in the protection of intangible cultural heritage, and better explore the role and function of youth groups in intangible cultural heritage inheritance. In addition, this study also integrates narrative theory to explore the dissemination and acceptance mechanism of traditional intangible cultural heritage among young people, which helps to deepen the understanding of cultural dissemination paths and provide a new perspective for theoretical research on intangible cultural heritage inheritance. By constructing practical paths such as "education integration-communication optimization-digital empowerment", it is helpful to promote the transformation of intangible cultural heritage protection from a single protection model to an educational and living inheritance model.

2. Analysis on the current situation of the intangible cultural heritage inheritance dilemma among young people

2.1 Educational fragmentation and insufficient teaching staff lead to shallow cognition

Based on the definition of youth groups in this article, when exploring the issue of intangible cultural heritage inheritance from the educational perspective, it is divided into primary and secondary school stages and higher education stages. On the one hand, the fragmentation of intangible cultural heritage courses in primary and secondary schools and higher education is an important reason for the shallow cognition. At present, there are serious deficiencies in intangible cultural heritage education in primary and secondary schools. The curriculum is fragmented and lacks systematicity. The course content mostly stays at the inculcation of symbolic knowledge such as paper-cutting and facial makeup, lacking in-depth interpretation of the connotation of skills and cultural context. This fragmented education makes young people's cognition of intangible cultural heritage remain superficial, and it is difficult to understand the cultural value and historical significance behind it. At the university level, except for a few folklore majors, there are insufficient courses related to intangible cultural heritage. Intangible cultural heritage education is often used as an elective or interest expansion project, lacking systematicity and long-term planning, which makes it difficult for students to deeply understand the cultural connotation and

historical value of intangible cultural heritage. On the other hand, due to the lack of professional teachers related to intangible cultural heritage in primary and secondary schools and higher education, many schools often rely on non-professional teachers or short-term training when offering relevant courses. The teaching content is superficial and it is difficult to deeply explore the cultural logic and social significance behind the intangible cultural heritage skills. This cognitive bias has led to a relatively one-sided understanding of intangible cultural heritage among Chinese youth and even the general public, making it difficult to form a true cultural identity.

2.2 Inheritance of skills and institutional barriers lead to insufficient youth participation

In terms of the skills of intangible cultural heritage inheritance, my country's intangible cultural heritage inheritance mostly relies on the traditional physical practice of "oral transmission and heart-to-heart teaching", which conflicts with the learning habits of young people living in the digital age today. Today's young people prefer digital learning and theoretical learning to quickly master knowledge or key points, and it is difficult to adapt to the traditional inheritance model. This skill inheritance gap is not only a lack of technical level, but also a break between cultural memory and physical practice, which makes it difficult for young people to truly master the essence of intangible cultural heritage skills and achieve the transformation from "knowing" to "doing". In addition, intangible cultural heritage skills are highly practical, and today's young people generally lack practical opportunities, which further aggravates the difficulty of skill inheritance [7].

In terms of the mechanism of intangible cultural heritage inheritance, some traditional intangible cultural heritage inheritance organizations are highly closed, which constitutes an institutional barrier to the participation of foreign youth. At the same time, my country's intangible cultural heritage inheritance is also faced with the dilemma of lack of systematic education mechanism and incentive mechanism, and insufficient participation of social forces. Although my country's school education has covered some intangible cultural heritage-related knowledge, overall, the multi-subject coordination mechanism of cooperation among the "government", "schools" and "enterprises" has not yet been fully formed and improved, resulting in a lack of institutional guarantees and resource support for young people's intangible cultural heritage inheritance, making it difficult for them to continue to participate in depth. This lack of mechanism makes it difficult for young people to find a path for the sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage inheritance, and also limits the innovation and dissemination of intangible cultural heritage [8].

2.3 The impact of commercialization has created a crisis of youth cultural identity

At present, the impact of commercialization has become one of the major challenges facing the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage by young people in my country. With the prevalence of consumerism, the dissemination of intangible cultural heritage has gradually been incorporated into the "cultural industry" system. Its authenticity and uniqueness have been eroded in the market-oriented operation, showing phenomena such as entertainment, homogenization and distortion [9]. This trend not only weakens the intrinsic value of intangible cultural heritage, but also reduces its sense of identity among young people, thus triggering an identity crisis.

From the perspective of cultural value, as an important carrier of national memory and cultural genes, the dissemination of intangible cultural heritage should focus on the integrity of its cultural ecology and the maintenance of its subjectivity. However, in the current process of intangible cultural heritage dissemination, the tendency to over-emphasize economic benefits and ignore cultural connotations has caused intangible cultural heritage projects to gradually lose their original spiritual core and social significance in the market-oriented operation. This identity crisis is even more obvious among young people. Under the influence of consumer culture, compared with achieving identity confirmation through the practice and experience of intangible cultural heritage, today's young people are more inclined to construct self-identity through material consumption. Therefore, the commercial impact faced by young people in inheriting intangible cultural heritage is not only reflected in the distortion of cultural values, but also in the crisis of identity recognition among young people. To solve this problem, it is necessary to balance cultural value and economic benefits in the process of intangible cultural heritage dissemination, promote the transformation of intangible cultural heritage from "symbolic consumption" to "cultural practice", and enhance its identity and sense of belonging among young people.

3. The deep-seated reasons for the intergenerational rupture of youth intangible cultural heritage inheritance

3.1 Deficiencies in curriculum and practice in the education system

In terms of the arrangement of intangible cultural heritage courses, the utilitarian distortion of educational goals has further promoted the alienation of the value logic of intangible cultural heritage inheritance. Due to the pressure caused by the competition for admission, the intangible cultural heritage courses have become a political achievement project for quality education. The intangible cultural heritage courses focus on the expression of short-term results, but it is difficult to touch the cultural implications behind them. This deviation in educational goals has reduced intangible cultural heritage to a task-based instruction in the cognitive scope of students, rather than a cultural treasure worthy of exploration and discovery. After being influenced by this educational environment for a long time, the emotional connection between primary and secondary school students and intangible cultural heritage has been eliminated, and the cognitive foundation of intergenerational inheritance has been eroded from the starting point.

In terms of the arrangement of intangible cultural heritage practice, primary and secondary schools are facing the "Matthew effect" of resource allocation in carrying out intangible cultural heritage practice. High-quality schools in cities can carry out a series of "intangible cultural heritage into school" activities based on resources such as museums, intangible cultural heritage workshops, and inheritors' studios, but schools in rural and remote areas have been in a stagnant state of intangible cultural heritage practice for a long time due to limited teachers and lack of funds. The gap in urban and rural practice resources has triggered the emergence of "urban niche and rural desertification" in the intangible cultural heritage inheritance among young people. Even with abundant practical resources, the effect of intangible cultural heritage inheritance is still poor due to the lack of cultural depth in intergenerational interaction [10]. The cultural memory behind the intangible cultural heritage craftsman spirit retains the emotional warmth and technical skills of intergenerational inheritance, but due to the lack of intergenerational interaction practice, intangible cultural heritage inheritance has fallen into a situation of mechanical technical training, making it difficult to plant the seeds of cultural identity in the hearts of young people.

3.2 Traditional and digital media are not effective in promotion

At present, the dissemination of intangible cultural heritage in my country faces the dual dilemma of traditional media and digital media. Neither of them has been able to effectively reach the youth group, resulting in the obstruction of the inheritance and development of intangible cultural heritage in modern society.

The dissemination dilemma of traditional media is mainly reflected in the lag of form and content. The dissemination of intangible cultural heritage still relies on oral narration, written reports and physical display, while contemporary young people are more accustomed to digital methods such as short videos, movies, and games. For example, intangible cultural heritage documentaries often use long narratives, which are inconsistent with the "short, flat and fast" consumption habits of young people; the text pile-up of newspaper columns is difficult to attract young readers. In addition, traditional media often emphasize the "endangered" and "traditional" nature of intangible cultural heritage, creating an image of "ancient and fragile" and lacking connection with modern life [11].

The dissemination disadvantages of digital media are superficiality and commercialization. Although short videos and social platforms cover a large number of young people, the content of intangible cultural heritage is often simplified into "spectacular" performances or symbolic fragments. For example, the mortise and tenon technique only shows the "structure without nails" but does not convey the philosophical wisdom behind it, making intangible cultural heritage a visual gimmick. In addition, commercial capital has been over-involved, packaging intangible cultural heritage into a "traffic code". Models such as "intangible cultural heritage co-branding" and "Internet celebrity IP" have attracted attention but weakened the cultural connotation. In the long run, young people's understanding of intangible cultural heritage remains superficial, and it is difficult to establish a true cultural identity.

In summary, traditional media are out of touch with young people's needs due to rigid forms and outdated content, while digital media affect cultural depth due to shallow interpretation and commercial alienation. In the future, it is necessary to combine new media technology, explore the connection points between intangible cultural heritage and modern life, balance commerciality and culturality, and build a more attractive and in-depth communication system.

3.3 Lack of innovation in development forms and inheritance mechanisms

At present, the inheritance and development of my country's intangible cultural heritage faces the dilemma of insufficient innovation, which is mainly manifested in the three aspects of content form, inheritance mechanism and innovation incentive. These problems have caused a clear generational gap between intangible cultural heritage and contemporary youth groups.

In terms of content form, intangible cultural heritage projects generally have a "fundamentalist" tendency, over-emphasizing the originality of traditional skills, patterns and themes. For example, traditional paper-cutting is limited to wedding and funeral themes, and opera performances stick to classic repertoires, lacking innovative content that reflects the lives of contemporary teenagers. This kind of content solidification has made intangible cultural heritage lose its relevance to the times. In addition, the display methods are still mainly static exhibitions and stage performances, which fail to meet the preferences of young people for immersive experience and interactive participation, further weakening the appeal of intangible cultural heritage to young groups.

In terms of inheritance mechanism, there is an obvious "intergenerational connection vacuum". The traditional master-apprentice system has a limited scope of inheritance and can only cover a few willing individuals; campus inheritance is difficult to form a complete inheritance closed loop due to fragmented courses and inconsistent practices. More importantly, under the influence of realistic factors such as the pressure of further studies, most young participants find it difficult to continue to invest, and long-term incentive mechanisms are generally lacking, making it difficult to maintain the inheritance chain.

Insufficient incentives for innovation and a lack of an inclusive inheritance environment are the deep-seated reasons that restrict the living inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. Conservative cultural concepts often suppress young people's innovative attempts, just as the "intangible cultural heritage and science fiction combination" cultural creation designed by young people was criticized for "destroying the meaning of the pattern"; the youth version of "Peony Pavilion" adapted by the campus opera club was complained by old artists for "distorting the classics." This lack of inclusive inheritance environment not only hits the creativity of young people, but also hinders them from gaining recognition in innovation, and ultimately falls into the dilemma of "it is difficult for old people to pass on their skills and difficult for new people to take over." To break through this dilemma, it is necessary to establish a more inclusive and innovative inheritance mechanism based on respect for tradition [12].

4. Optimizing strategies for youth intangible cultural heritage inheritance paths

4.1 Innovate the teaching system to popularize basic knowledge

In terms of the education system, the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage needs to break through the fragmented model and make intangible cultural heritage teaching an integral part of the overall curriculum. It is necessary to establish the structural status of intangible cultural heritage in the national curriculum system and achieve the systematic transmission of cultural genes through subject penetration [13].

In the basic education stage, the deep integration of intangible cultural heritage and subject teaching should be promoted. History courses should integrate specific historical facts with intangible cultural heritage in the teaching process, increase students' interest in learning intangible cultural heritage, and strengthen students' understanding of the laws of civilization evolution. Art courses should break the limitations of the original textbooks and guide students to understand the folk beliefs and aesthetic paradigms behind handicrafts while teaching intangible cultural heritage skills such as paper cutting and batik. Chinese courses can combine ancient poetry and classical Chinese with relevant intangible cultural heritage performing arts, which can not only make ancient texts easy to understand, but also deepen students' understanding of intangible cultural heritage. At the higher education level, intangible cultural heritage general and professional courses should be offered to promote interdisciplinary integration and build three types of practice platforms: on-campus workshops, school-enterprise laboratories, and field workstations. Schools should set up special projects to support research on digital protection and technological innovation. Through systematic training, we can cultivate compound inheritance talents and inject new impetus into the development of intangible cultural heritage [14].

At the same time, the teaching method should not be limited to one-way teaching by teachers, but should draw on the constructivist learning theory, use specific intangible cultural heritage projects as carriers, design practical tasks such as "information collection", "field research", "hands-on practice", and

"results reporting", so as to cultivate students' problem-solving ability and collaborative spirit while allowing students to deeply experience the inheritance value of intangible cultural heritage. At the same time, through the situational learning model, students can use role-playing, scene simulation and other methods to experience the inheritance value of intangible cultural heritage in specific situations. Government departments should also carry out in-depth cooperation with schools, support them through special funding and the promulgation of relevant policies, and ensure the material basis of practical teaching.

4.2 Optimize communication thinking and improve dialogue mode with young people

The biggest pain point of the current intangible cultural heritage dissemination is the one-way output of "textbook-style" dissemination, which is being eliminated by the participatory culture of Generation Z. Digital dissemination allows intangible cultural heritage content to be combined with the digital platforms used by Generation Z in their daily lives, especially social media, which has interactive functions and allows users to like, comment, share or repost content. This instant feedback mechanism encourages users to participate more actively [15]. Therefore, the intangible cultural heritage dissemination thinking for young people should change from "cultural preaching" to "youth co-creation".

Specifically, it can be started from the following three levels. First, build a UGC (user-generated content) creation platform. For example, the "Intangible Cultural Heritage Partner" plan initiated by Douyin encourages young users to create intangible cultural heritage-related short videos through traffic support, and its topic playback volume has exceeded 12 billion times. Second, develop immersive digital experience products. The "Digital Patron" project launched by the Dunhuang Research Institute uses AR technology to allow users to "repair" murals through their mobile phones, with more than 3 million participants. Third, build an online and offline interactive activity system. For example, the "Forbidden City Lantern Festival Night" held by the Palace Museum in Beijing attracted a large number of young audiences through the combination of light shows and digital projection. By combining cutting-edge technology, it can not only preserve the uniqueness and aesthetic charm of handicraft intangible cultural heritage skills, but also provide an opportunity for the audience to immerse themselves in intangible cultural heritage skills [16].

4.3 Digital empowerment and innovative development

At present, digital technology provides an innovative path for the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. At the protection level, by building a digital archive system, the detailed characteristics of intangible cultural heritage projects such as endangered languages, traditional crafts, and folk music can be fully recorded, realizing the permanent preservation and accurate inheritance of cultural information [17]. At the inheritance level, digital technology has significantly improved the participation experience of young people. On the one hand, the Metaverse Intangible Cultural Heritage Museum uses scene restoration technology to allow learners to participate in intangible cultural heritage activities with virtual avatars, realizing embodied cognition in an immersive experience. On the other hand, the "digital inheritors of intangible cultural heritage" created using AI speech synthesis and motion capture technology can achieve real-time interaction with learners, which not only enhances the fun of the learning process, but also effectively stimulates young people's interest in intangible cultural heritage. This technology-enabled innovation model not only expands the time and space dimensions of intangible cultural heritage inheritance, but also reconstructs the way young people connect with cultural traditions through interactive experience.

To further deepen digital integration, it is recommended to implant intangible cultural heritage elements into e-sports scenes that young people like, create cross-border IPs, and enhance young people's participation experience in intangible cultural heritage. For example, intangible cultural heritage elements such as Miao costumes and Dunhuang flying fairy can be embedded in games that are more attractive to young people, so that intangible cultural heritage can be integrated into youth entertainment scenes [18]. At the same time, "intangible cultural heritage challenge" activities are launched on major domestic short video platforms to encourage young people to perform intangible cultural heritage in the form of cross-dressing, dancing, rap, etc., and obtain game benefits. This can not only naturally integrate intangible cultural heritage into the daily life scenes of young people, but also strengthen cultural identity through interactive participation, and achieve the "breaking circle" effect of intangible cultural heritage inheritance.

4.4 Enhance cultural confidence and reshape inheritance mechanism

As an important carrier of national cultural genes, the living inheritance of intangible cultural heritage has the function of resisting cultural invasion and maintaining ideological security. At the same time, as an important carrier of national spirit, the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage plays an irreplaceable role in enhancing cultural confidence and maintaining national cultural security. The core of solving the dilemma of intergenerational inheritance of intangible cultural heritage lies in establishing a new cultural identity mechanism. The acceptance of traditional culture by young people is closely related to the strength of their emotional connection. Therefore, it is necessary to build a multi-level value resonance system. This requires that it should focus on the organic integration of tradition and modernity at the content level. At the form level, it is necessary to innovate the incentive mechanism for participation.

The inheritance of intangible cultural heritage is not a simple skill transfer, but a continuation of cultural genes. By telling good stories about intangible cultural heritage, we should help young people understand the national memory and collective wisdom carried by intangible cultural heritage, so as to establish a sense of identity and pride in traditional culture. This deep cultural identity is the fundamental guarantee for ensuring the sustainable inheritance of intangible cultural heritage.

5. Conclusions

Based on the theory of cultural identity, this study systematically examines the triple rupture phenomenon of "cognition-participation-identification" in the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage among young people. Specifically, young people face the problem of fragmented education at the cognitive level in the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, which leads to a superficial understanding of intangible cultural heritage; the participation level is manifested as skill and mechanism barriers, making it difficult for young people to deeply participate in intangible cultural heritage practice; and the impact of commercialization further weakens young people's sense of identity with intangible cultural heritage. The study found that the deep-seated dilemma faced by young people in the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage is mainly due to the defects in the curriculum and practice of the intangible cultural heritage education system, the poor communication effect of traditional and digital media in the promotion of intangible cultural heritage, and the lack of innovation in the development form and inheritance mechanism of intangible cultural heritage.

In response to the dilemma of intangible cultural heritage inheritance among young people, this study uses the path reconstruction suggestions of the three-dimensional intervention model of "education integration-communication optimization-digital empowerment", and its innovative value is mainly reflected in three aspects. First, in terms of educational embedding, it breaks through the subordinate status of intangible cultural heritage as a "curriculum supplement" and builds a curriculum system and multi-dimensional training mechanism with deep integration of disciplines; second, in terms of optimizing dissemination, it proposes to reconstruct the dialogue mode of intangible cultural heritage dissemination and build a multi-level value resonance system; third, in terms of digital empowerment, it proposes a gamification translation strategy for intangible cultural heritage symbols to achieve a paradigm shift from "cultural display" to "digital experience". These strategies together constitute a systematic solution to solve the intergenerational gap.

In the future, the research on the intergenerational inheritance of intangible cultural heritage needs to be further explored in the following directions. First, it is necessary to establish a quantitative evaluation system for the participation of youth in intangible cultural heritage and track the actual effects of different intervention measures through big data; second, cross-national comparative research should be strengthened, especially by learning from the successful experience of other countries in the transformation of traditional culture to youth; finally, it is necessary to pay attention to the ethical boundaries of emerging technologies such as AI on the innovation of intangible cultural heritage and avoid the dissolution of cultural authenticity by technological rationality. Only by continuously promoting the two-way interaction between theoretical innovation and practical exploration can we build a new paradigm of intangible cultural heritage inheritance that adapts to the digital civilization era and provide youth power support for building a strong national cultural security barrier.

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