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The Methods and Impacts of Intangible Cultural Heritage Revival: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

This systematic literature review examines the methods and impacts of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) revival in response to threats like globalization and cultural homogenization. Based on 48 peer-reviewed papers from the Web of Science database, five primary revival methods are identified: government policy-driven, technological, community-engaged, tourism-driven, and integrated approaches. Integrated methods consistently yield positive outcomes, while other approaches face challenges such as conflicts between cultural practitioners and governments, institutional control in technological revival, and the commodification of heritage in community- and tourism-based efforts. ICH revival generates positive impacts in two key areas: (1) fostering sustainable community development through economic revitalization, cultural identity enhancement, and environmental sustainability; and (2) safeguarding and transmitting ICH via greater public participation and awareness. However, challenges like cultural homogenization, commercialization, and limited stakeholder collaboration persist. This review calls for future research to focus on harmonizing stakeholder relationships, democratizing digital tools, enhancing inclusive community engagement, and promoting sustainable cultural tourism. By addressing these challenges, the study offers insights to advance ICH protection and sustainable development. keyword: ICH Revival, Methods, Impacts, Review, ICH Protection and Sustainable Development

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Introduction

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) encompasses all non-physical manifestations of culture. It represents humanity's living heritage and serves as the primary vehicle for cultural diversity (Lenzerini, 2011). As a reservoir of traditional knowledge and skills, ICH supports not only cultural diversity but also sustainable development, playing a pivotal role in strengthening social cohesion and fostering local identity(Wahed et al., 2021; Akash, 2023). Its preservation and revitalization are crucial for maintaining global cultural ecosystems(Giliberto & Labadi, 2021). ICH plays a crucial role in national and international development. Its significance lies in the wealth of knowledge and skills passed down through generations (Petronela, 2016). As a multifaceted, rich, and dynamic system of human and historical values, ICH constitutes the invaluable heritage of traditional cultures worldwide (Yuan et al., 2022).

However, in today's globalized era, many forms of ICH are endangered. Globalization, industrialization, and urbanization have amplified these threats, alongside cultural standardization, armed conflict, mass tourism, rural exodus, and environmental degradation(Lenzerini, 2011). The pressing need to address these challenges makes ICH revival an urgent priority for cultural sustainability. Threats include cultural standardization, armed conflict, mass tourism, industrialization, rural exodus, migration, and environmental degradation (Lenzerini, 2011).

ICH serves as the cornerstone of local and indigenous identities. Numerous indigenous communities worldwide engage in diverse cultural renewal efforts. They strive for culturally appropriate social and economic development by strengthening and promoting the roots of indigenous knowledge and practices—traditions that are themselves evolving (Yeh et al., 2021). These efforts are often termed revival, revitalization, and restoration. ICH revival practices have gained prominence as tools to reinvigorate cultural traditions, counteract cultural erosion, and facilitate their transmission to future generations(Fu & Cheng, 2023; Guo & Ma, 2022). By leveraging cultural revival strategies, communities can enhance social cohesion, economic opportunities, and sustainable development(Tahseen & Al-Jumaily, 2020; Wang, 2023). "Revival" implies imbuing something with new life and restoring its efficacy and vitality. It encompasses both absence (partial or total) and any process of recovering what is missing, driven by terms and features from the past (Ali et al., 2022). Therefore, ICH revival signifies stimulating new life into ICH and restoring its effectiveness and dynamism.

This study seeks to address critical gaps in understanding the methods and impacts of ICH revival by systematically reviewing global experiences. This review explores the methods and impacts of ICH revival globally. The primary objective is to uncover the experiences and challenges associated with current ICH revival approaches. It aims to identify positive impacts and highlight negative aspects. By offering practical solutions, this review seeks to enhance ICH revival practices and mitigate negative consequences. Ultimately, the review aims to promote the sustainable development of ICH and its positive interaction with society.

This review is particularly relevant to policymakers, cultural practitioners, and researchers seeking to develop more effective cultural policies and revival strategies. It highlights best practices and offers actionable insights to address the complexities of ICH revival in a globalized world. This study addresses the following research questions: (1) What

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are the methods employed in ICH revival? (2) What impacts have different ICH revival approaches generated?

Methodology

This study utilizes a systematic literature review methodology, employing systematic searches and analysis of existing literature to explore the primary methods and impacts of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) revival. The specific methodology is outlined below:

This study exclusively utilizes the Web of Science (WOS) electronic database for literature retrieval. WOS was selected due to its extensive collection of high-quality, influential academic journals, providing a comprehensive range of relevant research literature.

The initial search employed the keywords "revival of intangible cultural heritage" and "intangible cultural heritage revive." After removing duplicate entries, 38 relevant articles were identified. Due to the limited number of initial results, the search scope was broadened using "revival of cultural heritage" as a keyword, yielding 230 articles. From this set, articles specifically addressing ICH revival were selected, adding 10 more articles. Ultimately, a total of 48 articles were included in this review.

The following were the inclusion and exclusion criteria:

Inclusion Criteria:

- (a) Research articles published in academic journals.
- (b) Studies addressing the revival of intangible cultural heritage.
- (c) Articles written in English.

Therefore, this review systematically examines English-language academic articles on ICH revival published from 1998 to 2024.

Exclusion Criteria:

- (a) Articles published in non-academic outlets (e.g., commentaries, news reports).
- (b) Studies not related to the revival of intangible cultural heritage.
- (c) Duplicate publications.

The screening process involved three stages. Stage 1: Initial Screening. Relevant articles were initially identified through keyword searches. Stage 2: Title and Abstract Screening. Titles and abstracts of the initially screened articles were reviewed to further refine the selection based on the inclusion criteria. Stage 3: Full-Text Review and Selection. Full texts of the remaining articles were assessed, excluding those that did not meet the inclusion criteria. This resulted in a final set of 48 articles for the review. Finally, data extraction was performed on the 48 included articles.

Content analysis was employed to address the first research question. Relevant sections of each article outlining the primary methods of ICH revival were identified, read, and reread to gain familiarity with the data. Through content analysis, five specific ICH revival methods were generated.

For the second research question, the various evolving impacts described in each article were first categorized and coded as "positive," "negative," or "mixed." Positive indicated a

Vol. 14, No. 11, 2024, E-ISSN: 2222-6990 © 2024

beneficial effect, negative indicated an adverse effect, and mixed represented the coexistence of both. Subsequently, thematic analysis was used to identify impacts associated with the six specific ICH revival methods. To ensure credibility and dependability (Creswell, 1998), coders engaged in frequent debriefing sessions to refine themes, followed by rigorous peer review by experts.

Findings

Revival Methods

Table 1 presents the classification of ICH revival methods identified in articles published between 1998 and 2024. Government policy-driven revival accounts for 16.67% of the identified methods. Technological revival represents 20.83%. Community-engaged revival constitutes the largest category at 33.33%. Tourism-driven revival comprises 16.67%. Integrated revival makes up the remaining 12.5%.

Table1
The Classification of ICH Revival Methods

Revival Methods	N	% of total articles(N=48)		
Government Policy-Driven Revival	8	16.67% 20.83%		
Technological Revival	10			
Community-Engaged Revival	16	33.33%		
Tourism-Based Revival	8	16.67%		
Integrated Revival	6	12.5%		

Government Policy-Driven Revival

Government organizations play an increasingly crucial role in ICH revival.

Firstly, UNESCO, an intergovernmental international organization, has been a driving force. The 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage established the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Inscription on this list, signifying recognition as world-class ICH, has become a significant initiative for many countries and regions to promote ICH. This recognition enhances the visibility of ICH items and communities, contributing to ICH revival and the development of regional tourism (Garaj, 2024).

Secondly, national and regional governments engage in administrative interventions for ICH revival. For instance, Spain employs national administration to intervene in the ICH within its jurisdiction. This has resulted in a holistic revival model characterized by collaboration

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among different administrative levels (general, regional, and local). Legislation even explicitly designates the protection and enrichment of ICH as a responsibility of government authorities (Montealegre, 2019). In Russia, with government support, academic institutions from the national to the local level are dedicated to researching and reviving endangered Cossack ICH performances (Pertseva, 2014).

Technological Revival

Since the mid-2000s, significant advancements have been made in integrating technology into ICH (Bekele et al., 2018; Bozzelli et al., 2019), contributing to its revival. The widespread adoption of digital and immersive technologies facilitates ICH revival through various means:storage, access, and reproduction of ICH resources; enhanced understanding and experience of ICH culture.Strengthened transmission of ICH knowledge; creation of spaces for collective memory; facilitation of online ICH data management; establishment of heritage tourism destination images.

Digital technologies are primarily used to establish ICH databases, promoting public learning and access. For example, the Moriori people are developing a comprehensive database encompassing cultural landscapes, ancient stories, traditional practices, and digital recordings to revive the endangered Taonga Moriori ICH culture in the Pacific (Solomon & Thorpe, 2012). Bulgaria utilizes digital technologies to create an archival heritage information portal that disseminates ICH knowledge and preserves cultural memory. This portal enables convenient mobile access for the public, fostering ICH transmission and revival (Tsvetkova, 2019). Immersive technologies, particularly mobile augmented reality (AR), are enhancing the understanding and experience of ICH culture, primarily by improving museum exhibitions. For example, Egypt uses 3D printing to replicate ICH prototypes for displays (Urcia et al., 2018). Museums increasingly utilize mobile AR applications to create immersive cultural heritage experiences (Li et al., 2023). Users can view historical sites, artifacts, and monuments through smartphones or AR glasses (De Luca et al., 2022). This digital revival brings past eras and lost cultures to life (Stylianidis et al., 2022). These AR applications foster greater engagement and understanding of ICH, promoting tourism and education (Boboc et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the integration of social media into museums, monuments, and heritage sites is evolving, with institutions and authorities leveraging it to enhance ICH knowledge dissemination, create spaces for collective memory, facilitate online ICH data management, and establish heritage tourism destination images (Hammou et al., 2020; Burkey, 2022; Podara et al., 2021; Qiu & Zhang, 2021). Civil society also engages in efforts to combine ICH with social media. One approach involves developing social media applications to disseminate ICH knowledge and enhance its appeal. For example, Cui et al. (2021) posit that raising awareness among younger generations is crucial for ICH revival. They demonstrate techniques for effectively integrating ICH elements into social media platforms through a lightweight game design based on Hangzhou's traditional food culture and hosted on the WeChat platform. Another prominent method utilizes popular social media applications (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and collective memory websites) to collect and analyze narratives, including short reviews and blogs, for storytelling (Psomadaki et al., 2019; van der Hoeven, 2019). For instance, Anju Maudgal Kadam and Ally Matthan launched the #100sareepact campaign in India, committing to wearing sarees 100 times and encouraging others to do the same through social media. They became storytellers, narrating the history and stories

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interwoven within each saree, revitalizing interest in traditional Indian weaving while reviving the saree as ICH (Chatterjee, 2023).

Community-Engaged Revival

Communities are also recognized as a vital force in ICH revival. Community involvement in ICH revival manifests in four key aspects. To begine with, productive protection and revival focuses primarily on handicraft ICH items. In China, for instance, driven by developmentalism and capitalism, ICH has become a resource for development in many rural areas (Kim et al., 2019). Community-led revival of handicraft ICH often involves negotiating with various stakeholders to develop markets, acting as a driving force for local economic revitalization, tourism development, and community cooperation (Chen et al., 2021). However, some rural communities spontaneously engage in productive protection to promote handicraft ICH revival and boost local economies. For example, in Menglian, a Dai community in Yunnan, China, younger members are encouraged to learn and innovate upon traditional weaving techniques, generating better economic returns for weavers and the community. This exemplifies how isolated and marginalized communities can improve their economic conditions and revitalize their ethnic traditions, highlighting the significant contributions non-governmental organizations can make to such efforts (He & Prott, 2013).

Next, communities foster ICH revival by organizing festivals or maintaining daily ICH practices. This includes integrating traditional crafts and production techniques into daily life, promoting ICH revival and sustainable development (Kevseroglu et al., 2021). Communities regularly hold traditional folk cultural events, disseminating traditional cultural values and preserving and promoting ICH (Zolotareva, 2017; Minhus & Huie, 2021). Community-led heritage events organized by volunteers are particularly significant, fostering innovation in local economies, creating vibrant communities, and promoting sustainable ICH development (Genz, 2011).

Finally, community involvement in managing ICH and innovative approaches contribute to its revival. This involves a shift in perspective, recognizing that revival does not necessitate complete replacement but can embrace a retro-revival approach. For instance, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the historic site of Petaling Street (Chinatown) combines the renovation of tangible built heritage with local intangible heritage practices. This approach revitalizes and preserves both tangible and intangible cultural heritage, strengthening cultural identity while meeting market demands (Kay, 2019). Establishing eco-museums within ICH communities encourages large-scale local participation in ICH safeguarding. Local residents and experts collaborate to develop and implement project plans, fostering ICH revival and creating positive community environments (Kimeev, 2008).

Tourism-Based Revival

ICH tourism is also recognized as a significant means of promoting ICH revival and urban sustainable development (Madandola & Boussaa, 2023). The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines cultural heritage tourism as "a type of tourism whose main motive is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products of a tourism destination" (Richards, 2018). Encouraging the regeneration, responsible use, and adaptation of "living heritage for tourism purposes" offers numerous benefits. These include job creation, poverty alleviation, curbing rural exodus, and

Vol. 14, No. 11, 2024, E-ISSN: 2222-6990 © 2024

fostering a sense of pride within communities (UNWTO, 2012, p. 2). For instance, in Puri, Odisha, the coordinated development of traditional handicraft artisans' economic activities with tourism has revitalized local crafts, boosted tourism, and fostered economic, social, and cultural development within the destination. This approach not only enhances tourist satisfaction with handicraft products but also encourages them to extend their stay (Azharunnisa, 2022).

Furthermore, some scholars argue that ICH revival should not be limited to wealth accumulation, standardization, and commercialization of cultural products. It should also prioritize the need to perpetuate traditional local cultures and create handicrafts and cultural heritage associated with customs, values, and social relationships (Chondrogiorgos et al., 2017). ICH education plays a significant role in this regard. It primarily operates through two avenues: Firstly, integrating ICH practice and experience projects into school curricula provides students with opportunities for understanding, participation, collaboration, and decision-making. This cultivates the capacity for informed and engaged future citizens who can contribute to environmental protection, improvement, and sustainability (Chondrogiorgos et al., 2017). Secondly, leveraging the educational function of cultural museums is crucial. Museums possess extensive experience in developing, exhibiting, and implementing ICH projects. They can organize diverse ICH cultural activities targeting visitors and citizens of all ages, contributing to ICH protection, promotion, and revival (Zolotareva, 2015).

However, some regions adopt an integrated approach to ICH revival, rather than relying on a single method. For instance, Sápmi, a transnational ICH music tradition in Northern Europe, utilizes technology to establish musical archives, strengthen educational programs aimed at transmission, and organize performances to revive contemporary Sápmi music (Hilder, 2012). In Rio de Janeiro, with government support, an "open-air/living museum" was established. This museum utilizes kinesthetic practices (photography, performance, mobile exploration, spoken word, and acoustics) and integrates elements of technology, tourism, and performance activities. It not only promotes ICH revival but also boosts tourism and enhances the community's quality of life (Savova, 2009).

Impacts of ICH Revival

Table 2 presents the impacts associated with different ICH revival methods. In articles focusing on government policy-driven revival, over half report positive impacts, while one-quarter report negative impacts. In articles examining technological revival, community-engaged revival, tourism-driven revival, and integrated revival, over 80% report positive impacts. Notably, articles discussing integrated revival, which combines multiple approaches, consistently report positive impacts (100%). Comparatively, technological revival exhibits a higher proportion of reported negative impacts.

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Table 2
The Impacts Associated with Different ICH Revival Methods

	Government Policy-Driven Revival		Technological Revival		CommunityEngaged Revival		Tourism- -Based Revival		Integrated Revival	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Positive	6	70%	8	80%	14	87.5%	7	87.5%	6	100%
Mixed	0	0	0	0	1	6.25%	1	12.5%	0	0
Negative	2	25%	2	20%	1	6.25%	0	0	0	0
Total	8	100%	10	100%	16	100%	8	100%	6	1009

Specifically, the positive impacts of ICH revival primarily manifest in fostering sustainable development within heritage-bearing communities. Whether in urban or rural settings, ICH revival contributes not only to economic revitalization, particularly through tourism growth and the creation of "sense of place" landscapes, but also to the sustainable development of community environments, history, culture, and other aspects, ultimately promoting community cultural identity. Positive impacts also extend to ICH culture itself, including enhanced public engagement and experiences, increased public awareness and recognition, safeguarding and transmission of ICH, and promotion of community participation in ICH protection and its productive safeguarding, contributing to the sustainable development of ICH culture.

Conversely, negative impacts are primarily observed in government policy-driven revival, technological revival, and community-led revival. Government policy-driven revival can lead to conflicts between governments and culture bearers or practitioners, hindering ICH revival and development. For instance, while the Chinese government incorporates ICH social practices into administrative categories (Padovani, 2023), a significant gap often exists between government perspectives and how local practitioners discuss their living traditions (Chen, 2015; Kuah & Liu, 2016). In Ireland, the revival of traditional music with strong state support has led to its evolution into a public resource for arts and culture, requiring all forms of music to obtain licenses for performance in public venues and broadcasts. This approach has been criticized for commercially appropriating traditional music performance spaces through copyright, lacking consultation with music practitioners or those who perceive the music as an artistic and cultural heritage (Vallely, 2014).

Regarding the negative impacts of technological revival, some scholars argue that digital heritage technologies merely replicate the dominant power structures of collecting institutions and technologies. Curators control the release of digital content, while the agency over ethnographic items remains firmly within these institutions (Were, 2014), hindering

Vol. 14, No. 11, 2024, E-ISSN: 2222-6990 © 2024

comprehensive ICH revival. Furthermore, the effectiveness of social media in ensuring ICH knowledge sharing and cultural revival is questioned. For instance, Lu (2019) examines knowledge-sharing livestreams on Chinese social media and concludes that their effectiveness in sharing knowledge or showcasing culture is uncertain. Tools should be designed and developed to engage audiences more effectively and facilitate communication, thereby promoting ICH revival. Some scholars even contend that social networks disrupt cultural heritage utilization. Albanese & Graziano (2021), studying two Italian provinces, suggest that online narratives generated by social media distort local perceptions and judgments of collective well-being. This can hinder ICH revival and discourage ICH communities from engaging in its protection and transmission.

Moreover, the negative impacts of community-engaged ICH revival are particularly evident in countries with authoritarian ICH management systems. Scholars argue that government-influenced community ICH activities can negatively impact the transmission of festivals. Traditional festivals become commodified cultural practices packaged for sale, neglecting the inherent evolution of festival culture, hindering ICH revival and transmission (Chen & Tao, 2017).

Finally, some articles on tourism-based and community-engaged ICH revival suggest the coexistence of positive and negative impacts. Regarding tourism-driven revival, while cultural tourism promotes economic and social development, it also presents challenges. For example, tourism development in Kampong Ayer, Brunei, generates substantial revenue and supports ICH protection and revival. However, it also faces issues such as waste management, crime, loss of authenticity, and a lack of information, facilities, and tourist services (Ahmad, 2013). Regarding community-engaged revival, some scholars caution against excessive emphasis on innovation. They highlight the importance of grounding ICH revival in social and cultural contexts, seeking development models aligned with indigenous cultures and ethos (Yeh et al., 2021).

Discussion

Current ICH revival efforts primarily rely on government policy support, digital technologies, community engagement, and cultural tourism, with a growing trend towards integrating these approaches. However, challenges and difficulties persist within certain methods.

Firstly, regarding government policy support, potential conflicts can arise between government intervention and culture bearers. In some cases, government policies may overlook the genuine needs of culture bearers and the inherent logic of cultural practices, leading to suboptimal outcomes. Secondly, concerning digital technologies, their adoption has not fundamentally altered the control dynamics of ICH; it has merely shifted its modes of presentation. Some digital media platforms, especially social media, do not guarantee effective ICH knowledge sharing and revival and may even disrupt cultural heritage utilization. Thirdly, regarding community engagement, excessive government intervention can transform ICH practices into mere commodities for packaging and sale, neglecting their inherent cultural evolution, thus hindering ICH revival and transmission.

Fourthly, concerning cultural tourism, the development of this sector can expose heritage sites to challenges such as waste management, crime, and the loss of ICH authenticity.

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Future research directions for ICH revival can focus on the following areas: Firstly, research on coordinating government and other stakeholders is crucial. This involves investigating how to effectively harmonize relationships between government, culture bearers, community members, and NGOs to achieve more collaborative ICH revival strategies. Secondly, democratizing digital ICH revival is essential. This entails exploring how to use digital technologies to empower culture bearers and community members to participate in the creation and dissemination of digital ICH content. Thirdly, democratizing community engagement should be prioritized. This requires investigating how to genuinely empower community members with greater voice and decision-making power in ICH revival processes. Fourthly, sustainable cultural tourism requires further investigation. This involves researching how to develop cultural tourism while ensuring the authenticity and sustainability of ICH culture, addressing issues like waste management and crime, and mitigating negative impacts on local communities and cultures.

Based on existing research and findings, the following policy and practical recommendations are proposed: Firstly, strengthen collaboration among stakeholders. Governments should work closely with culture bearers, communities, academic institutions, and NGOs to develop and implement more integrated and inclusive ICH revival policies. Secondly, promote digital ICH projects. Governments and businesses should increase investment in digital ICH projects, developing and promoting digital platforms to facilitate the dissemination and protection of ICH culture. The democratic operation of these platforms should be ensured, enabling greater participation by culture bearers. Thirdly, enhance community engagement. The opinions and needs of community members should be fully respected and valued in ICH revival projects. Community workshops, public consultations, and other methods should be employed to enhance community participation and enthusiasm. Fourthly, develop sustainable cultural tourism. Tourism departments should formulate and implement sustainable cultural tourism policies to ensure that tourism development does not negatively impact ICH culture and local communities. Training and education should be provided to enhance tourists' cultural sensitivity and promote responsible tourism behavior.

Conclusion

This study systematically reviewed existing literature on ICH revival, revealing key findings:

- (a) Diverse revival methods: ICH revival primarily relies on government policy support, digital technologies, community engagement, cultural tourism, and ICH education, with a growing trend towards integrating these approaches.
- (b) Challenges in method application: each revival method faces challenges, including conflicts between government intervention and culture bearers, limitations of digital technologies, insufficient democratization of community participation, and potential negative impacts of cultural tourism.
- (c) Multiple impacts of revival: while ICH revival promotes economic development, cultural identity, and sustainable development, it also presents some negative impacts requiring further research and mitigation.

This study has Limitations

(a) Database limitation: relying solely on Web of Science may not encompass all relevant literature and research findings. Future research should consider including more databases, such as Scopus and Google Scholar, for a more comprehensive literature

Vol. 14, No. 11, 2024, E-ISSN: 2222-6990 © 2024

review.

(b) Keyword limitation: the selected keywords may not fully capture all relevant revival methods and impacts, potentially leading to the omission of important studies.

Future research should consider the following directions

- (a) Expand databases and keywords: future systematic reviews should utilize multiple databases and broader keywords to ensure comprehensive coverage of research findings.
- (b) Explore synergies between revival methods: research should investigate the synergistic effects of different revival methods and explore best practices for integrated applications.
- (c) Focus on policy and practice integration: research should emphasize the integration of policy development and practical application to ensure effective policy implementation and adaptation.
- (d) Enhance community participation: research should further explore how to increase community members' participation and decision-making power in ICH revival processes, ensuring democratic and sustainable approaches.
- (e) Evaluate the impact of digital technologies: further research is needed to examine the specific applications and effects of digital technologies in ICH revival, assess their advantages and limitations, and propose recommendations for improvement.
- By systematically analyzing existing research on ICH revival, this review provides valuable insights and guidance for future research and practice, aiming to promote the protection, transmission, and sustainable development of ICH culture.

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Vol. 14, No. 11, 2024, E-ISSN: 2222-6990 © 2024

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