

## Research on Spatial Distribution Characteristics and Tourism Activation Mechanism of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Xinjiang: Postprint

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### Abstract

Taking Xinjiang's intangible cultural heritage resources as the research object, this study systematically analyzes the current status, models, and existing problems of Xinjiang's intangible cultural heritage tourism activation development based on field investigations and historical literature. It employs GIS spatial analysis technology to explore the spatial distribution characteristics of Xinjiang's intangible cultural heritage and utilizes SPSS software to analyze the correlation between intangible cultural heritage and tourism development, thereby summarizing the mechanisms and models of intangible cultural heritage tourism activation development. The results indicate: (1) The type structure and quantity distribution of Xinjiang's intangible cultural heritage resources exhibit relatively significant differentiation characteristics. The development trend of Xinjiang's intangible cultural heritage tourism activation is favorable, and the activation models are gradually diversifying. (2) At the provincial spatial level, national-level and autonomous region-level intangible cultural heritage primarily exhibit distribution characteristics of polar core areas, high-density areas, sub-high-density areas, and planar regions, showing an unbalanced agglomeration pattern. (3) The abundance of intangible cultural heritage resources in different regions has a significant positive impact on tourism development; areas with dense intangible cultural heritage resources demonstrate relatively better tourism development levels, while regions with scarce intangible cultural heritage resources experience relatively slower tourism development. Based on the above analysis results, this study proposes a development mechanism for Xinjiang's intangible cultural heritage tourism activation, which utilizes tourism as a carrier to activate cultural heritage and promotes the benign interactive development between intangible cultural heritage and tourism.

Full Text

Preamble

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**Research on the Distribution Characteristics and Tourism Activation Mechanism of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Xinjiang**

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**Abstract:** Taking Xinjiang's intangible cultural heritage (ICH) resources as the research object and based on field investigations and historical literature, this study systematically analyzes the current status, models, and existing problems of ICH tourism activation development in Xinjiang. Using GIS spatial analysis technology, it explores the spatial distribution characteristics of Xinjiang's ICH, and employs SPSS software to analyze the correlation between ICH and tourism development. The study then summarizes the mechanisms and models for ICH tourism activation development. The results indicate: (1) The development trend of ICH tourism activation in Xinjiang is positive, with activation models gradually diversifying. The type structure and quantity distribution of Xinjiang's ICH resources exhibit significant differentiation characteristics. (2) At the provincial level, national-level and autonomous region-level ICH show main distribution features of extreme core areas, highly dense areas, secondary dense areas, and planar regions, presenting an uneven pattern of agglomeration. (3) The abundance of ICH resources in different regions has a significant positive impact on tourism development. Areas with dense ICH resources demonstrate relatively better tourism development levels, while regions with scarce ICH resources experience slower tourism development. Based on these findings, this article proposes a development mechanism for ICH tourism activation in Xinjiang, advocating the activation of cultural heritage through tourism as a carrier to promote benign interactive development between ICH and tourism.

**Keywords:** intangible cultural heritage; distribution characteristics; heritage tourism activation; Xinjiang

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## 1 Study Area Overview

Xinjiang is located in the northwestern border of China and serves as the core zone where diverse cultures converge along the ancient and modern Silk Road, giving rise to rich and splendid cultural history. Consequently, it has nurtured abundant intangible cultural heritage resources, which represent the vivid con-

tinuation of Xinjiang' s spiritual civilization and constitute invaluable assets for implementing the "Culture Enriches Xinjiang" project and building a culturally strong region. Xinjiang has established a comprehensive five-level ICH catalog system: world-class, national-level, autonomous region-level, prefecture-level, and county-level.

By 2021, the State Council and Xinjiang had respectively released five batches of national-level and autonomous region-level representative ICH project catalogs, including 94 national-level ICH items, 112 national-level inheritors, 315 autonomous region-level ICH items, and 385 autonomous region-level inheritors (Table 1). These include both new projects and extension projects, where extension projects share a project number with existing ICH items but have different actual protection units, with significantly different connotative characteristics and inheritance status.

Furthermore, Xinjiang has comprehensively implemented an all-round protection and utilization model of "ICH projects, inheritance bases, inheritors, education and popularization bases, exhibition and communication bases, research and training bases, and ICH-featured scenic spots."

## 2.1 Data Sources

The national-level ICH catalogs and inheritor lists for Xinjiang in this study were obtained from documents issued by the State Council on the Chinese government website (Guofa [2006] No. 18, Guofa [2008] No. 19, Guofa [2011] No. 14, Guofa [2014] No. 59, Guofa [2021] No. 9) and the China Intangible Cultural Heritage Network. Autonomous region-level ICH catalogs and inheritor data were sourced from the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Department of Culture and Tourism and its official website. The study collected and organized 94 national-level and 315 autonomous region-level ICH items in Xinjiang, establishing a spatial database of Xinjiang' s ICH resources for visualization analysis and mapping using ArcGIS software. Additionally, based on the 2020 Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook and prefecture-level statistical yearbooks, as well as the 2019 national economic and social development statistical bulletins of Xinjiang and its prefectures, the study compiled relevant data on Xinjiang' s tourism development.

### 2.2.1 Kernel Density Analysis

Spatial density analysis primarily uses kernel density estimation to calculate the unit density of point and line elements in a given area. In this study, taking each ICH resource point in Xinjiang as the center, the kernel density value within the calculation unit range was computed to reflect the degree of resource aggregation and specific clustering units, thereby analyzing the spatial distribution patterns of Xinjiang' s ICH resources. Higher kernel density values indicate greater distribution density of ICH protection units. The calculation formula is:

$$\hat{f}_n(x) = \frac{1}{nh} \sum_{i=1}^n K\left(\frac{x-x_i}{h}\right)$$

Where:  $\hat{f}_n(x)$  is the kernel density estimate at location  $x$ ;  $n$  is the number of data points;  $h$  is the bandwidth, i.e., the search radius (km);  $K$  is the kernel function; and  $(x-x_i)$  is the distance value from the estimated point  $x_i$  to the measurement point  $x_j$ . The kernel density value is jointly determined by the kernel function and bandwidth.

### 2.2.2 Mathematical Statistical Analysis

By consulting the Xinjiang ICH catalogs on the Chinese government website, China Intangible Cultural Heritage Network, and the official website of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Department of Culture and Tourism, statistical analysis was conducted using Excel and SPSS software to organize the names and type structures of national-level and autonomous region-level projects. Additionally, the regression and correlation analysis functions of SPSS were employed to explore the relationship between Xinjiang's ICH distribution and regional tourism development. Regression analysis emphasizes the correlation between random variables to enable prediction of one variable using another.

ICH is a high-quality tourism resource and the driving force and guarantee for high-quality tourism development in Xinjiang. The organic integration of Xinjiang's ICH projects and tourism resources not only facilitates the effective inheritance and rational protection of ICH but also promotes the connotative development of tourism. To enable ICH to truly enter people's lives and achieve protection and inheritance effects, various prefectures and cities in Xinjiang have actively carried out activities related to heritage tourism activation, yielding initial results. Currently, the development models for intangible cultural heritage tourism activation in Xinjiang can be basically divided into four categories: thematic exhibition hall model, leisure performance model, tourism product development model, and festival tourism development model (Table 2).

## 3 Results and Analysis

### 3.1.1 Analysis of Xinjiang ICH Structure Types

Xinjiang's ICH projects are rich in variety and widely distributed. According to the classification standard of "ten categories" in the national ICH catalog, a radar chart of Xinjiang's ICH type distribution was drawn (Figure 1). The analysis reveals that Xinjiang's ICH resources are complete in type, covering all categories in the national classification standard, while showing relatively obvious differentiation characteristics. Among Xinjiang's national-level ICH resources, traditional music, traditional craftsmanship, and folk customs rank top three, attributable to Xinjiang's cultural heritage, social history, and geographical environment, which endow its cultural heritage with unique historical

traditions, expressive characteristics, and textural features. Among autonomous region-level ICH items, traditional craftsmanship, folk customs, and traditional music rank top three, with quantities of other ICH categories being relatively balanced. Traditional sports, recreation, and acrobatics show strong development potential for autonomous region-level ICH projects, with significant advantages for promotion to national-level status.

### 3.1.2 Current Status of Xinjiang ICH Tourism Activation and Utilization

Intangible cultural heritage is a component of China's traditional culture, as well as a crystallization of human civilization and a symbol of national wisdom. As a high-quality tourism resource, ICH serves as the driving force and guarantee for Xinjiang's high-quality tourism development. The organic integration of Xinjiang's ICH projects and tourism resources not only facilitates effective inheritance and rational protection of ICH but also promotes the connotative development of tourism. To enable ICH to truly enter people's lives and achieve protection and inheritance effects, various prefectures and cities in Xinjiang have actively carried out activities related to heritage tourism activation, yielding initial results. Currently, the development models for intangible cultural heritage tourism activation in Xinjiang can be basically divided into four categories: thematic exhibition hall model, leisure performance model, tourism product development model, and festival tourism development model (Table 2).

Overall, traditional music, traditional craftsmanship, folk customs, and folk literature projects have been relatively fully excavated across Xinjiang's 14 prefectures and cities. For example, traditional music such as Xinjiang Uygur Muqam Art (Twelve Muqams), Mongolian Long Tune Folk Songs, Xibe Folk Songs, and Russian Bayan Art have been preserved to the present day with relatively complete protection, promotion, and inheritance. However, traditional drama, traditional fine arts, and traditional medicine ICH projects require intensified excavation and protection efforts. Currently, Xinjiang's ICH tourism activation development is in a bottleneck period, with the organic integration of "ICH + tourism" failing to form a mature development system, making it difficult for many regions to implement ICH protection and rational development strategies. Specific manifestations include three aspects: First, the authentic cultural connotations of ICH tourism activation are being lost. Some areas in Xinjiang only focus on the superficial "materialization" of ICH during cultural heritage tourism activation, causing tourists to understand what ICH elements are without appreciating their cultural connotations. Some ICH has even lost its original characteristics under commercial impact. Second, the integration depth of "ICH + tourism" is insufficient, and tourism activation utilization lacks systematicity. Most of Xinjiang's ICH tourism development processes only target individual cultural heritage items, rarely considering the background and environment upon which ICH relies. Tourism planning and development is a dynamic process that promotes the harmonious development

of the tourism system and society. Only based on the concepts of systematic coordination, comprehensive advancement, and continuous integration can ICH tourism activation development achieve the unity of economic, environmental, and social benefits. Third, the market is affected by resource vulnerability, and products lack deep-level development. Due to the vulnerable characteristics of some ICH resources and Xinjiang's ecological environment, external resistance is considerable during ICH tourism activation and utilization. Moreover, some inheritors are over 70 years old, making inheritance difficult. Currently, the types and structures of Xinjiang's ICH tourism products are gradually diversifying, but there are few cultural derivatives, still remaining at the sightseeing tourism development stage, such as display exhibitions in thematic exhibition halls and promotional video playback, with insufficient interactive experience, making it difficult to achieve a win-win situation for heritage inheritance and tourism development.

### 3.2 Analysis of Spatial Distribution Characteristics of Xinjiang ICH

Through analysis of Xinjiang ICH project statistical data, the distribution of national-level and autonomous region-level ICH shows obvious unevenness. Using the kernel density analysis tool in ArcGIS software, the spatial clustering characteristics of Xinjiang's ICH were further verified to intuitively reflect their specific aggregation patterns (Figures 2 and 3). Significant differences exist in culture, resources, and industrial structure among Xinjiang's prefectures and cities, resulting in a stepped spatial distribution of ICH quantities in northern, southern, and eastern Xinjiang, decreasing from high to low.

The northern Xinjiang region enjoys good economic development and rapid tourism growth, with relatively adequate excavation and protection of cultural heritage. The planar distribution characteristics centered on Urumqi City, the direct-administered counties and cities of Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture, and Tacheng Prefecture are particularly evident. Figure 2 reveals that Xinjiang's national-level ICH resources have formed three extreme core areas in spatial distribution—Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture's directly-administered counties and cities; three highly dense areas: Urumqi City, Kashgar Prefecture, and Aksu Prefecture; and four secondary dense areas: Tacheng Prefecture, Bayingolin Mongol Autonomous Prefecture, Hotan Prefecture, and Hami City. The above distribution characteristics are closely related to factors such as cultural accumulation, transportation convenience, and multi-ethnic settlement.

The spatial distribution characteristics of autonomous region-level ICH in Xinjiang are similar to those of national-level ICH but with specific differences. As shown in Figure 3, high-density areas remain concentrated in Kashgar Prefecture, Urumqi City, and Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture's directly-administered counties and cities, with the highest kernel density values in the province. Altay Prefecture, Tacheng Prefecture, Bayingolin Mongol Autonomous Prefecture, and Hotan Prefecture belong to secondary density areas. Bortala Mongol Autonomous Prefecture and Karamay City have

relatively few autonomous region-level ICH projects. Among them, Kizilsu Kirgiz Autonomous Prefecture, Bayingolin Mongol Autonomous Prefecture, and Altay Prefecture have relatively few national-level ICH items compared to autonomous region-level items, but the quantity and quality advantages of autonomous region-level ICH are obvious, showing potential and momentum for promotion to national-level representative catalogs. Hami City, Turpan City, and Bortala Mongol Autonomous Prefecture have profound cultural heritage but insufficient ICH inheritance and excavation, urgently requiring enhanced protection awareness and attention.

### 3.3 Correlation Analysis Between Xinjiang ICH and Tourism Development

The preceding sections analyzed the stepped distribution characteristics of Xinjiang's ICH type structure and regional spatial distribution, summarized and explored the current status of Xinjiang's ICH activation development, and elaborated on the inevitable relationship between ICH and tourism development. Based on 2019 tourism development data from Xinjiang's 14 prefectures and cities, regression analysis was conducted to further verify the correlation between the two. Data on total tourist numbers, comprehensive tourism income, and ICH project quantities from the 14 prefectures and cities were compiled (Table 3). Using SPSS software's regression analysis function, the relationship between Xinjiang's ICH and tourism development was analyzed. The results (Table 4) show that the coefficient tests between Xinjiang's ICH and total tourist numbers and comprehensive tourism income are statistically significant ( $\text{Sig}=0<0.01$ ), indicating that Xinjiang's ICH (independent variable) can effectively predict variations in tourist numbers and tourism income (dependent variables). Specifically, prefectures and cities with concentrated ICH distribution demonstrate higher tourism development levels and greater importance of tourism to local development. Additionally, in the regression analysis of ICH with total tourist numbers and comprehensive tourism income, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) is above 0.9, indicating high explanatory power of the regression equation and a significant positive correlation between Xinjiang's ICH resource distribution and tourism development.

ICH resources play an important role in promoting the high-quality development of A-level scenic spots in Xinjiang. Based on A-level scenic spot data from the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Department of Culture and Tourism, this study used a weighted model to determine the tourism resource abundance of each prefecture and city. The calculation formula is as follows:

$$ATR = 5.0 \times N_{5A} + 2.5 \times N_{4A} + 2.0 \times N_{3A} + 1.5 \times N_{2A} + 1.0 \times N_{1A}$$

Where  $ATR$  is tourism resource abundance and  $N$  represents the number of A-level scenic spots of each grade.

A correlation analysis was conducted between the number of ICH projects and tourism resource abundance across the 14 prefectures and cities. The results show that both national-level and autonomous region-level ICH in Xinjiang have obvious correlations with tourism resource abundance (Table 4). In ICH-rich areas such as Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture's directly-administered counties and cities, Urumqi City, Kashgar Prefecture, Bayingolin Mongol Autonomous Prefecture, and Tacheng Prefecture, the number of A-level scenic spots is also relatively large, and the development quality of scenic spots is relatively high.

### 3.4 Tourism Activation Mechanism of Xinjiang Intangible Cultural Heritage

ICH tourism is a compound concept with the goal of coordinating protection and utilization. Therefore, in the process of ICH tourism activation, Xinjiang needs to adhere to the development concept of “shaping tourism with culture and highlighting culture through tourism,” utilizing ICH in protection and further interpreting and enriching its historical, scientific, artistic, and social values through utilization. The protection, inheritance, and high-quality development of Xinjiang's cultural heritage resources and tourism industry require a process and still have a long way to explore. Therefore, from the perspective of industrial integration theory, this article analyzes and discusses the tourism activation development mechanism of intangible cultural heritage.

Combining the connotations of the three major models of cultural-tourism integration—“penetration, extension, and reorganization”—and based on the analysis of Xinjiang's ICH tourism activation status, exploration of spatial distribution characteristics, and verification of the relationship with tourism development, this study proposes an interactive development mechanism for ICH tourism activation (Figure 4), activating cultural heritage through tourism as a carrier to promote benign collaborative development between ICH and tourism. The driving force of the ICH protection mechanism stems from a management-driven system of “support force led by cultural administration departments, propelling force centered on human resources, and pulling force linked by tourism enterprises,” which integrates administrative management, market demand, and cultural inheritance in ICH protection to form an organic whole of mutual generation and interaction between cultural and tourism industries, thereby effectively promoting the in-depth development of ICH protection.

However, currently, Xinjiang's ICH inheritors lack awareness and understanding of cultural heritage tourism activation utilization. Inheritors' sense of ownership, cultural consciousness, and participatory development mechanisms have not yet been fully established. The establishment of a tourism system signifies the rapid upgrading of ICH tourism activation development, and tourists' attention to heritage tourism is gradually increasing. At this stage, it is necessary to enhance the innovation speed and quality of existing cultural tourism products on the basis of protecting the authenticity and ethnicity of ICH, continuously extracting and purifying cultural connotations and historical heritage to create

high-quality products that meet consumers' demand for heterogeneous cultural experiences in border areas.

**3.4.1 Exploring the Cultural Connotations of ICH Resources** The cultural connotations of ICH resources are key factors in maintaining their vitality. Fully exploring ICH connotations to preserve their authentic texture is the starting point for inheritance and protection. Regional cultural characteristics are the core carriers for activating recreation motivation and shaping local experiences. Xinjiang possesses rich and unique ICH resources, providing a good foundation environment for the interactive integration and development of ICH and tourism. In the initial stage of ICH tourism activation, i.e., the interaction stage, attention should be paid to the excavation and continuation of ICH connotations, rational utilization of tourism characteristic resources, integration of tourism activity elements and functions, leveraging the advantages of tourism' s connectivity, and adhering to the differentiated activation concept of adapting measures to local conditions and tailoring to actual circumstances. Based on the actual conditions of ICH in each prefecture, starting from multiple stakeholders including projects, inheritors, and tourism enterprises, models such as authentic cultural protection utilization and thematic deepening utilization should be created to form a good beginning for interactive development.

**3.4.2 Constructing an Endogenous Development Mechanism for ICH** In the middle stage of ICH tourism activation, a brief bottleneck period will be encountered, urgently requiring breakthroughs from within ICH itself. Following the inherent development laws of ICH, awakening the internal driving force of ICH inheritance, and thereby activating cultural reproduction have become new drivers for promoting the sustainable development of ICH and constitute the basic institutional guarantee for ICH activation. The endogenous development mechanism refers to a model where ICH, based on its own connotations and industrial foundation, continuously creates market value and promotes its own inheritance and development under the impetus of internal mechanisms of culture, social environment, and economy, thereby enabling ICH to have continuous "blood-making" capacity. ICH inheritors are the active subjects in the endogenous development mechanism, and their creativity and subjective initiative in participating in ICH tourism activation need to be further stimulated.

**3.4.3 Optimizing the ICH Protection System and Inheritance Path** ICH tourism activation is a systematic, comprehensive, and dynamic action plan and process that relies on the comprehensive development of various elements and the collaborative efforts of multiple subjects. Considering the reality of Xinjiang' s ICH, there are numerous ICH items but weak regional advantages and low marketization levels. To enable ICH tourism activation to enter a higher-level integrated development stage and continuously optimize interaction results, necessary external interventions and diversified strategies must be adopted to support the protection system and inheritance path. First, the

guiding role of government in ICH tourism activation needs to be strengthened, scientifically planning the heritage protection system and institutions. Local government units need to actively carry out applications for ICH at different levels and build relevant cultural exchange platforms to provide basic guarantees for ICH activation. Second, the upgrading of Xinjiang' s ICH tourism activation needs to focus on the protection and cultivation of talent, including ICH inheritors and practitioners in the cultural and tourism industries. Additionally, in the process of ICH inheritance and tourism activation development, overall planning of inheritance bases, education and popularization bases, and other constructions should be coordinated, promoting and improving the construction of national-level ICH project experience centers, and encouraging qualified places to establish independent ICH protection centers to form an integrated management and development system that combines inheritance, experience, education, training, and tourism functions.

## 5 Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusions

- (1) Through analysis of the current status of Xinjiang' s ICH tourism activation and utilization, it is evident that initial results have been achieved, but many problems at the primary development stage remain. It is necessary to avoid distorting the original characteristics of cultural heritage for immediate economic benefits. Existing research tends to focus on exploring ICH development status from the perspective of resource endowment. This article comprehensively examines Xinjiang' s ICH tourism activation development status from three aspects: project structure types, field investigation findings, and activation utilization status, based on the analysis of ICH resource endowment. Deepening the understanding of ICH' s cultural value and tourism development value, expanding the coverage of ICH tourism projects, and enhancing project influence will ensure the sound development of Xinjiang' s intangible cultural heritage.
- (2) Xinjiang' s ICH resources still exhibit uneven agglomeration characteristics in type structure and spatial distribution. This result validates the views of scholars such as Wang Chunyan that Xinjiang' s ICH distribution mainly concentrates in the Ili River Valley area north of the Tianshan Mountains and Urumqi City. Using the latest five batches of ICH data, this study finds an obvious increasing trend in ICH distribution in Kashgar, Tacheng, and other areas, indicating significant excavation potential for cultural heritage. While leveraging the advantages of ICH projects such as traditional craftsmanship, folk customs, and traditional music, efforts should be strengthened to protect and apply for other projects such as folk performing arts and traditional drama. During regional cultural tourism development, the approach of "leading the inferior with the superior and developing as a whole" should be adopted to optimize Xinjiang' s ICH type structure and promote the inheritance and development of all

types of ICH.

- (3) Based on the analysis of Xinjiang' s ICH tourism activation status, spatial distribution characteristics, and mathematical statistical analysis, and from the perspective of industrial integration theory, this article proposes an interactive development mechanism for Xinjiang' s ICH tourism activation. The number of ICH items in Xinjiang' s 14 prefectures and cities has a significant positive correlation with representative indicators of tourism development (comprehensive tourism income, total tourist numbers, and tourism resource abundance). Areas with dense ICH distribution demonstrate better tourism development levels with relatively more tourism income and tourist numbers, while regions with scarce ICH resources experience slower tourism development, indicating that ICH and tourism integration development has a practical foundation.

## 5.2 Recommendations

- (1) **Tourism development should highlight “experientiality.”** Based on the cultural heritage of each prefecture and city in Xinjiang, attention should be paid to improving the level of ICH tourism development and utilization, strengthening ICH tourism product design, and better integrating ICH into tourism to enhance the quality of tourism experiences. Through tourism experiences, tourists can more authentically and originally understand ICH culture, appreciate ICH charm, and demonstrate the historical value of intangible cultural heritage through tourism forms.
- (2) **ICH resource endowment is the cornerstone of heritage tourism activation development.** Xinjiang' s ICH tourism activation development needs to further enhance attention to ICH inheritance, evolution, and living continuity. On the basis of scientific development and rational planning, the economic and social utility of ICH resources should be leveraged. Compared with other regions, ICH in ethnic minority areas has unique cultural traditions, social history, and geographical environments. While flexibly learning from mature development models of heritage tourism activation, direct copying should be avoided. For instance, when conducting ICH tourism development planning, in addition to emphasizing the protection of ICH inheritors, attention can also be paid to their participation in activities, granting ICH inheritors an “ICH spirit” through their beloved ICH to create economic value, enhancing their sense of honor and achievement, strengthening cultural confidence, and thus stimulating the internal driving force for inheritance.
- (3) **Promoting ICH projects into scenic spots enhances tourism quality while enabling living inheritance of ICH projects.** Xinjiang' s ICH has profound connotations covering all aspects of people' s livelihoods. Bringing ICH into scenic spots, campuses, communities, and rural areas integrates traditional culture with modern civilization, expanding the so-

cial influence of ICH protection. This not only makes tourism activities more attractive but also makes ICH inheritance and protection that “sees people, objects, and life” more vibrant.

- (4) **Tourism should build “brand identity.”** Xinjiang’ s ICH protection should actively promote the integration of culture and tourism, create ICH brands, implement brand development projects, and demonstrate and drive local high-quality development of “ICH + tourism.” For ICH tourism to go beyond Xinjiang and onto the international stage, it must have influence and appeal. ICH should not only exist in written catalogs but also in people’ s lives and memories. Only through protection and development can it be inherited with the times and become eternal with time.

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## Distribution characteristics of intangible cultural heritage and tourism activation mechanism in Xinjiang

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**Abstract:** Based on the strategic perspective of high-quality development of culture and tourism, this article considers the intangible cultural heritage resources of Xinjiang, China, as its research object. Through field research and by reviewing literature and historical materials, this study systematically analyzes the current situation, patterns, and problems of the revitalization development of intangible cultural heritage tourism in Xinjiang. This study also explores the spatial distribution characteristics of intangible cultural heritage in Xinjiang using GIS spatial analysis technology and then explores the correlation between intangible cultural heritage and tourism development using the SPSS software. Based on the above analysis, a mechanism and model for revitalizing and developing intangible cultural heritage tourism is summarized. The results show the following: (1) The development trend of intangible cultural heritage tourism revitalization in Xinjiang is good, and the heritage tourism activation mode is gradually diversified. The distribution of intangible cultural heritage types in Xinjiang has significant differentiation characteristics, with an unbalanced distribution of types and quantities. (2) The main distribution characteristics of national-level and provincial-level intangible cultural heritage include extreme core, highly and secondary dense, and faceted areas, showing an uneven pattern of clustering characteristics. (3) The abundance of intangible cultural heritage resources in different regions has a significant positive impact on tourism development, with tourism development levels in areas with dense intangible cultural heritage resources being relatively good, whereas tourism development in areas with scarce intangible cultural heritage resources is relatively slow. Finally, based on the above analysis, this article posits an interactive development mechanism for the activation of intangible cultural heritage tourism in Xinjiang, activates cultural heritage with tourism as the carrier, and promotes benign interactive development of intangible cultural heritage and tourism.

**Key words:** intangible cultural heritage; distribution characteristics; heritage tourism activation; Xinjiang

*Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.*

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