

Three Approaches to Intangible Cultural Heritage Transmission in University Libraries

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Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] University libraries serve as crucial carriers for the “creative transformation and innovative development” (双创) of excellent traditional Chinese culture. Systematically demonstrating the advantages, achievements, and deficiencies in intangible cultural heritage (ICH) transmission within university libraries, and proposing novel transmission pathways, can more effectively inform innovative practices in university library ICH transmission. [Method/Process] Through teleological analysis of ICH transmission in universities, this study employs digital humanities analytical methods to dissect cases of ICH transmission in “Double First-Class” university libraries, proposing new practical pathways from three dimensions: ICH narrative, scenario, and paradigm. [Results/Conclusion] Confronted with dilemmas of singular narrative modes, gradually solidified transmission scenarios, and relatively monotonous transmission paradigms in university library ICH transmission, it is argued that university libraries can achieve narrative transformation of ICH through open expansion of ICH narrative pathways, integrated transition of “rural folklore narrative,” and leapfrog transformation of narrative content; accomplish scenario reconstruction of ICH through transformation of digital virtual scenarios, extension of local fields in cultural spaces, and sublimation of aesthetic conception in transmission fields; and realize paradigm reconstruction of ICH through connotative upgrading of resource construction, directional breakthroughs in service innovation, and good governance in educational ecology pathways.

Full Text

Preamble

The Three Practical Pathways for Intangible Cultural Heritage Inheritance in University Libraries*

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Abstract:

[Purpose/Significance] University libraries serve as crucial carriers for the “creative transformation and innovative development” of China’s outstanding traditional culture. By systematically examining the advantages, achievements, and shortcomings of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) inheritance in university libraries, and by proposing new inheritance pathways, this study provides valuable references for enhancing innovative ICH preservation within academic library systems.

[Method/Process] Through a necessity analysis of ICH inheritance in universities and a digital humanities examination of case studies from Double First-Class university libraries, this study proposes new practical pathways from three dimensions: narrative construction, contextual scenarios, and innovative paradigms.

[Result/Conclusion] Confronted with challenges of singular narrative approaches, increasingly rigid contextual scenarios, and relatively monotonous paradigms in ICH inheritance, this paper argues that university libraries can achieve breakthroughs through: (1) narrative transformation via open pathway expansion, integration of “folk-custom narratives” through contextual transitions, and transformative shifts in narrative content; (2) contextual reinvention through digital virtual environment evolution, extension of localized cultural spaces, and elevation of aesthetic dimensions in heritage transmission settings; and (3) paradigmatic restructuring through upgraded resource development, reoriented service innovation, and optimized governance within educational ecosystems.

Keywords: university library; intangible cultural heritage; inheritance pathway; narrative approach; virtual scenario; service paradigm

Classification Number: G251

1 Introduction

“Libraries are important indicators of national cultural development levels and vital venues for nourishing national spirit and cultivating cultural confidence” [1]. University libraries serve as essential platforms for universities to fulfill their cultural inheritance and innovation functions, representing key positions for “promoting outstanding traditional culture.” The extension of cultural inheritance and innovation functions in university libraries aligns with contemporary global trends in library development. “Intangible Cultural Heritage” (hereinafter referred to as “ICH”) constitutes a crucial vehicle for advancing cul-

tural self-confidence and self-strengthening. In practice, university libraries have conducted extensive explorations in ICH inheritance to “promote the creative transformation and innovative development of outstanding traditional Chinese culture,” achieving considerable results in collection, organization, production, exhibition, and preservation. However, under the influence of modern information technologies and new communication systems—digitalization, informatization, intelligence, and data-intelligence integration—how university libraries can leverage their advantages to enhance ICH inheritance effectiveness presents a new challenge. This study examines the practical pathways for ICH inheritance in university libraries through necessity analysis and digital humanities case studies, focusing on three dimensions: narrative approaches, scenario construction, and inheritance paradigms, aiming to provide references for innovative ICH inheritance in academic libraries.

2 Necessity Analysis of ICH Inheritance in University Libraries

From a knowledge perspective, ICH represents a knowledge resource involving collection, flow, and innovation that can enrich university library collections and expand educational carriers. As academic resource centers and cultural education institutions, university libraries can leverage advantages in resource preservation and organization, academic research and educational support, cultural dissemination and promotion, community engagement and social services, and interdisciplinary collaboration to provide research, academic, and communication support for ICH protection, research, inheritance, and innovation.

2.1 Academic Research and Knowledge Production Empower ICH’s “Academic Engine”

As venues for academic research and knowledge production, university libraries can serve as an “academic engine” for ICH inheritance and innovation. First, they can develop specialized literature resources by establishing ICH characteristic collections that include local chronicles, manuscripts, oral records, and audio-visual materials, forming collections such as Tibetan opera scripts, folk music scores, and traditional medical classics to provide foundational support for academic research. By constructing ICH thematic databases that integrate domestic and international research findings, libraries support scholars in literature mining and analysis, providing data support for knowledge production. Second, they can build interdisciplinary research platforms. University libraries can utilize multidisciplinary academic resources to provide research platforms for ICH interdisciplinary studies. For instance, they can collaborate with anthropology, folklore, and art departments to conduct research on ICH preservation technologies and cultural ecology, such as digital restoration of traditional crafts and documentation of endangered dialects. They can also host academic forums and workshops on themes like “ICH Revitalization and Rural Revitalization” to promote dialogue between theory and practice. Third, they can facilitate aca-

demic publishing and 成果转化. University libraries can promptly publish ICH research outcomes, such as oral histories of ICH inheritors and field investigation reports. They can also leverage advantages in intellectual property protection to advance ICH intellectual property research and assist inheritors in patent or copyright applications.

2.2 Digitalization and Technological Innovation Enhance ICH “Living Protection” Capabilities

Mature digital technologies have been extensively applied in university library resource construction, enabling digital “living protection” of ICH. On one hand, digital preservation can be achieved through 3D modeling and motion capture technologies to record traditional techniques and ritual processes, constructing dynamic digital archives. ICH virtual exhibitions (VR/AR) can simulate cultural scenarios such as traditional festivals and ancient village environments for enhanced protection. On the other hand, smart library services can be enriched by establishing ICH interactive experience zones in library spaces (e.g., touch-screens displaying technique processes, dialect voice databases) and utilizing AI technology for semantic analysis of ICH literature to assist research (e.g., mining cultural symbols in folk song lyrics), thereby enhancing immersive and vivid services.

2.3 Resource Construction Capabilities Ensure ICH “Eternal Transmission”

University libraries can leverage their academic advantages in resource excavation to develop local ICH resource databases, making permanent preservation possible. By collaborating with local governments and ICH protection centers, libraries can participate in local ICH surveys and rescue documentation of endangered folk arts, constructing “local cultural characteristic resource databases” that focus on regional ICH for collection, organization, and preservation. Additionally, university libraries can promote industry-academia-research collaboration by partnering with enterprises to develop ICH derivatives (e.g., applying traditional patterns to modern apparel design) and building platforms connecting ICH inheritors with designers and technology teams to facilitate modernization of traditional crafts.

2.4 International Exchange Capabilities Propel ICH Toward “World Culture”

Universities bear responsibilities for international exchange and cultural dissemination, with university libraries serving as important venues for these activities. In advancing ICH inheritance, university libraries can build platforms to tell “ICH stories” to the world. They can facilitate global resource sharing by participating in international ICH digital library initiatives (e.g., UNESCO’s “Memory of the World” program) to share research outcomes. They can also host international ICH-themed exhibitions to promote cross-cultural dialogue, such as

“Comparative Exhibition of Traditional Papermaking Techniques in East Asia” for mutual learning and enhanced dissemination. Furthermore, universities can organize international students to participate in local ICH activities (e.g., making zongzi for Dragon Boat Festival, crafting lanterns for Mid-Autumn Festival) to enhance cultural identity through experiential learning.

3 Digital Humanities Analysis of ICH Inheritance in University Libraries

3.1 Research Objects and Methods

According to China’s Double First-Class university construction requirements, “inheriting and promoting outstanding traditional Chinese culture” constitutes one of the selection criteria for cultural inheritance and innovation [2]. Selected Double First-Class universities have continuously increased funding and policy investment, achieving considerable cultural construction accomplishments. Their ICH inheritance activities represent the development direction of ICH inheritance in Chinese universities. To comprehensively understand the current status and trends, this study selected 147 Double First-Class university libraries as case studies for digital humanities analysis. Data sources included official library websites and WeChat accounts, using search terms including “intangible cultural heritage,” “ICH,” “traditional craftsmanship,” “cultural inheritance,” “folk art,” and “cultural heritage protection” for combined retrieval. The data coverage period spanned from January 1, 2021, to February 1, 2025, with retrieval conducted across four channels: library website “News/Announcements” sections, academic resource platforms, site search engines, and official WeChat accounts. Python libraries (requests and BeautifulSoup) were used for targeted data crawling. After removing duplicates and invalid data, 12,041 data entries were retrieved from 2,045 texts. The top five universities are shown in Table 1. Two universities yielded no valid data.

Table 1 The Top 5 Double First-Class Initiative University Libraries in ICH Inheritance Data Capture

3.2 Characteristic Analysis of ICH Inheritance in University Libraries

Keyword extraction and categorization of the 2,045 texts identified 45 keywords, visualized in a word cloud (Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper]). Frequency statistics revealed that eight keywords each exceeded 5% frequency, collectively accounting for over 70% of occurrences (Table 2).

Table 2 Frequency Statistics of Keywords in ICH Inheritance Case Texts from Double First-Class University Libraries

Further corpus analysis and text 梳理 of these eight high-frequency keywords, supplemented by other terms, enabled 共性 analysis to outline current characteristics of ICH inheritance in university libraries.

First, ICH exhibitions and lectures constitute the most fundamental forms of inheritance. Statistics show nearly every university has conducted such activities, with combined frequency reaching 21.7%. These activities are favored for their low implementation difficulty, broad audience reach, and interactive experiences, characterized as “short, flat, and fast.” For example, Tsinghua University Library held a “Chinese Traditional Craftsmanship ICH Exhibition” featuring cloisonné, purple clay teapots, and woodblock New Year paintings, with inheritors providing on-site explanations enhanced by multimedia technology. Some universities developed series activities: Fudan University Library hosts an annual “ICH Culture Week” inviting inheritors to demonstrate paper-cutting, embroidery, and traditional opera performances like Kunqu and Peking Opera. Others explore new media technologies, using WeChat public accounts and short-video platforms to disseminate ICH knowledge, stories, and event information. Nanjing University Library’s “ICH Stories” WeChat account regularly pushes articles and videos, while Zhejiang University Library uses Douyin to post short videos of ICH techniques, attracting numerous young followers. These applications inject new vitality into ICH dissemination, overcoming traditional limitations and presenting ICH culture more vividly.

Second, research and publication enhance ICH connotation. University libraries support ICH research projects and publish academic works, with “research” and “publication” accounting for 19.6% of activities. Libraries provide literature retrieval and information services for scholars, host academic lectures and seminars, and promote exchanges and collaboration. For instance, Fudan University Library established an “ICH Research Center” that regularly hosts forums and publishes academic journals. Interdisciplinary collaboration involving anthropology, art history, and other fields enhances research depth and breadth. Nanjing University Library collaborated with the School of Literature to publish monographs like *Research on ICH Protection and Inheritance*, providing theoretical support. Sun Yat-sen University Library regularly hosts academic seminars covering ICH protection, digital technology applications, and ICH’s role in rural revitalization, inviting domestic and international experts to share findings and promote interdisciplinary cooperation.

Third, ICH resource digitalization has become a crucial inheritance method. With increased Double First-Class construction funding, libraries have invested heavily in resource preservation and digitalization, providing financial support for ICH digital projects. Leveraging their 资源优势, libraries actively collect, organize, and preserve ICH literature, artifacts, and audio-visual materials while establishing databases and digital museums for permanent preservation and convenient access. Peking University Library built the “China ICH Digital Library” containing extensive text, images, audio, and video materials. Tsinghua University Library used 3D scanning to digitize ICH artifacts for virtual display and interactive experiences. Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine Library’s “Full-text Database of Traditional Chinese Medicine Classics” integrates ancient resources with ICH technique experiences, revitalizing traditional knowledge. These digital resources, with clear classification and multi-dimensional retrieval

capabilities, solve preservation challenges, overcome temporal and spatial limitations, and enable widespread dissemination.

Fourth, fulfilling educational functions promotes ICH education and outreach. ICH education represents the educational function of university libraries, with ICH serving as important content for reading and cultural promotion. Libraries integrate ICH into education by offering courses, exhibitions, and experiential activities to enhance student awareness and interest. They create organic integration of literature utilization, artifact exhibition, craftsmanship demonstration, hands-on experience, course instruction, and lecture salons. This academic research and educational support provides theoretical foundations and talent cultivation, fostering younger generations' cultural identity and inheritance consciousness. Sun Yat-sen University Library and Wuhan University Library offer general education courses like "ICH and Traditional Culture" and regularly host "ICH on Campus" events with inheritor demonstrations, cultivating students' protection awareness and research capabilities while promoting ICH culture.

Fifth, localized ICH inheritance promotes characteristic development. Localization constitutes an important pathway for university library participation in ICH protection. Combining geographical location and institutional characteristics, libraries collaborate with local or industry-specific ICH projects, conducting extensive localization attempts to promote living inheritance in native environments. Sichuan University Library partnered with local governments in constructing the "Qiang Cultural Ecological Protection Zone." Lanzhou University Library built the "Northwest ICH Database" focusing on Hua' er (folk songs), shadow puppetry, and Longdong paper-cutting. Hunan University Library collaborated with Xiangxi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture on ICH protection research. Hohai University leveraged its location in Changzhou's Jintan district to establish Jiangsu University's Cultural Inheritance and Innovation Base (Jintan Paper-cutting), featuring exhibition halls, workshops, and inheritor studios in the library. These initiatives emphasize regional characteristics and endangered ICH rescue, providing scientific foundations for protection and inheritance.

3.3 Shortcomings in ICH Inheritance in University Libraries

The retrieved data also reveal areas needing improvement. While some libraries have established relatively complete digital resource databases, resource distribution remains uneven and digitalization levels vary. Exhibition and lecture formats are diverse but have limited public participation. Research and publication achievements are abundant, yet interdisciplinary cooperation requires strengthening. Educational outreach is deepening but coverage needs expansion. Localization combines with local characteristics, yet overall social participation remains insufficient. These issues primarily stem from three aspects.

First, singular narrative approaches result in insufficiently vivid ICH storytelling. Current ICH dissemination still relies mainly on traditional exhibitions and lec-

tures with limited interactivity and appeal, struggling to attract younger generations. Some exhibitions primarily use images and text without interactive experiences, leaving visitors with superficial understanding. This singular approach fails to meet diverse public needs, requiring exploration of more engaging methods to enhance participation and experience.

Second, increasingly rigid inheritance scenarios reflect inadequate digital technology utilization. Some libraries' ICH activities are confined to specific scenarios and formats, lacking innovation and aesthetic atmosphere. Technology empowerment for spatial expansion remains insufficient, with surveys showing over half of libraries have not conducted online dissemination. This rigidity limits ICH dissemination scope and influence, necessitating digital virtual technology to explore more open and diverse inheritance models that create multidimensional learning scenarios.

Third, monotonous inheritance paradigms result in weak resource service internal drivers. ICH resources are predominantly paper-based literature, with insufficient capture of living resources and lack of three-dimensional databases integrating digital, multimedia, and physical resources. Resource characteristics are underdeveloped, with inadequate systematic collection, organization, and development of local ICH resources, and low interdisciplinary resource sharing. Service models remain traditional with insufficient proactivity and innovation, failing to meet diversified and personalized user needs. Service content is singular, with inadequate smart and data-intelligence services and limited attention to industry-academia-research transformation. ICH education lacks systematic planning and curriculum development, with ineffective collaboration mechanisms between libraries, inheritors, and related institutions, while cross-cultural ICH communication remains overlooked.

4 The Practical Pathways for ICH Inheritance in University Library

To optimize ICH inheritance pathways, university libraries should actively explore new concepts and methods, enhancing interactive experiences through narrative innovation, promoting resource utilization through scenario expansion, and forming inheritance synergy through paradigmatic reconstruction to continuously improve ICH inheritance levels and effectiveness.

4.1 Narrative Transformation of Pathways, Objects, and Content

Examining the conceptualization process of ICH reveals it as “a historical inscription that considers human intelligence and promotes intercultural dialogue” [3], with this historical inscription constituting the main body of ICH narrative style characterized by 多元主体, historical accumulation, and folk traditions. Placing ICH in university halls, distinct from ordinary social cultural venues, the vast library collections, 多元文化 intersection, and youthful student consciousness establish the material foundation for narrative transformation in university li-

braries, becoming the driving force for transforming narrative styles and revitalizing ICH vitality. Through open expansion of narrative pathways, integration of “folk-custom narratives” through contextual transitions, and transformative shifts in narrative content, university libraries can make ICH narratives more aligned with contemporary societal needs.

4.1.1 Open Expansion of Narrative Pathways Traditionally, ICH subjects, objects, and inheritance methods exist in relatively “closed-loop” states. However, ICH’s cultural characteristics define it as a “living” culture, requiring university libraries to break this closure and achieve open, expanded narrative pathways that make ICH more “alive.” First, from the perspective of media space construction, the virtuality of media space opens broader spaces for ICH cultural acceptance and inheritance. University libraries can use digital technology to transform ICH resources into multimedia formats such as audio, video, and virtual reality (VR) to enhance narrative interactivity and immersion. Second, from the perspective of historical space representation, immersive experiences in exquisite ICH projects and classic works allow deeper appreciation of ICH charm. Through scene restoration, simulated performances, 精品 reproduction, detailed displays, and collisions between ancient and modern art, libraries enable young students to experience ICH brilliance immersively, strengthening cultural confidence. Third, from the perspective of psychological space integration, realistic narrative enhances cultural confidence and value identification effects. Through immersive audio-visual experiences and participation in performances and creation practices, libraries help students 挖掘, 演绎, and innovate ICH classics, moving them beyond the 困境 of “seeing without observing, hearing without listening, and listening without remembering.”

4.1.2 Integration and Transition of “Folk-Custom Narratives” ICH possesses distinct regional and folk characteristics, representing forms of local civilization accumulation that often struggle to transcend local constraints, limiting narrative breadth. ICH entering universities and libraries enables dialogue between rural and urban, tradition and modernity, providing possibilities for integrating and transitioning “folk-custom narratives.” On one hand, it creates a youthful atmosphere for narrative environments. Young audiences no longer merely seek to “see” or “read” ICH projects but to personally “do” them. Youthful vitality easily breaks from traditional paths, bringing modern 气息 and new behavioral patterns that become part of ICH narratives. For example, Tsinghua University Library’s “National Ancient Book Restoration Skills Inheritance Center Tsinghua University Inheritance Institute” has made “mounting and restoration techniques (ancient book restoration skills)” popular among young students. On the other hand, it provides possibilities for 多元共生 among narrative objects. Young students are curious about unknown fields, receptive to new things, and possess strong practical abilities. Once engaged with ICH projects, their creations transcend local categories, spreading ICH culture nationally and globally. For instance, Hohai University students’ “Belt and Road” series created

in the library's paper-cutting workshop has received high praise from domestic and international students. This diversification of narrative objects becomes more aligned with modern life, promotes urban-rural cultural exchange and integration, and brings strong contemporary 气息 to ICH inheritance.

4.1.3 Transformative Shifts in Narrative Content Cultural origins stem from social practice. As outstanding traditional Chinese culture, ICH's narrative content represents the unity of tradition and practice. While outstanding traditional Chinese culture remains a culture of the past [4], ICH narrative content requires transformation from traditional to modern types to truly "make outstanding traditional Chinese culture modern" [5], using "lived" content to tell ICH stories well. ICH narrative content must shift from singular cultural display to multidimensional cultural interpretation. First, achieve transformation from static to dynamic. University libraries can employ dynamic narratives such as on-site inheritor demonstrations and interactive experiences to make ICH narratives more vivid and engaging. Second, achieve transformation from singular to 多元. ICH narratives should not be limited to culture itself but should encompass historical, social, economic, and other multidimensional content. For example, constructing thematic databases facilitates ICH rescue, storage, dissemination, and knowledge transformation, providing references and support for content creation and richer background and connotation. Third, achieve transformation from tradition to innovation. University libraries can explore innovative expressions integrating ICH elements into modern art, design, and film/television, leveraging reading promotion and community practices to enable students to actively 阐述 and 演绎 ICH stories from youthful perspectives.

4.2 Contextual Reinvention Through Virtual, Spatial, and Aesthetic Dimensions

From a communication studies perspective, ICH inheritance is a process of revitalization within modern scenarios. As important carriers of human culture, ICH transmission and protection require 与时俱进. However, traditional ICH inheritance scenarios are often limited to static display and document preservation, inadequately showcasing ICH's living nature and cultural connotation. From the perspective of university libraries constructing ICH inheritance development scenarios, their unique scenario composition differs from traditional ICH development contexts, emphasizing the virtualization of external physical scenarios, extension of localized cultural spaces, and elevation of individual aesthetic dimensions.

4.2.1 Transformation of Digital Virtual Scenarios Under the background of educational digitalization, university libraries empowered by digital technology for knowledge services have become "future learning centers" [6], with core concepts of "spatial justice, flexibility, zoning, collaboration, inclusivity, order, and healing" [7], which align with core ICH inheritance requirements. Digital technology introduction enables virtual scenario transformation. Future

learning centers achieve scenario transformation through element shifts in supporting ICH inheritance development: (1) transforming support elements through modern information technology, big data, and AI applications, where AI, VR experiences, and audio-visual equipment provide technical support; (2) transforming foundational elements through new space creation, where physical scenarios, cyberspace, and virtual classrooms become basic supports for new ICH narrative spaces, enabling digital twins and AI technology to allow youth to reconstruct ICH through immersive, interactive, and experiential services; and (3) transforming resource elements through interdisciplinary knowledge organization, where libraries construct resource knowledge graphs according to ICH-related disciplines to organize resource recommendations and form organized smart applications.

4.2.2 Extension of Localized Cultural Space Every ICH project has its specific cultural space. Despite current 泛化 phenomena in ICH cultural space protection, the fundamental 初衷 lies in “the integrity of space-time unity, the practical subjectivity of cultural groups, and profound local traditional roots” [8]. Whether regarding integrity, practicality, or traditionality, ICH projects derive from specific spaces, which limit their “daily life space” extension and broader promotion. University libraries’ ICH scenario reinvention requires extending localized cultural spaces for broader dissemination and recognition: (1) emotional 引流 in spatial environments, where university library cultural spaces’ spiritual values provide students with cultural emotional resources, and ICH’ s local background and cultural ecology attract more student participation; (2) expansion of service advantages in resource supply, where libraries transform local ICH resources into widely disseminated content, breaking geographical restrictions through open online and digital supply; (3) space expansion through technology empowerment, where AI technologies break physical distance and time constraints, enabling 时空对话 with ICH historical figures and collaborative creation without barriers; and (4) 多元共存 of personnel identities, where students from diverse cultural backgrounds gather around specific ICH cultural symbols, vastly enriching spatial elements and supporting essential space extension.

4.2.3 Elevation of Aesthetic Dimensions in Inheritance Scenarios The physical reinvention effect of ICH scenarios ultimately depends on aesthetic dimension elevation. The cultural 意境 in university library ICH inheritance focuses on future-oriented space construction, emphasizing educational multi-objectivity, digital space virtuality, and learning multidimensionality: (1) elevating multi-element literacy education new situations, where ICH inheritance converges knowledge, information, data skills, and behavioral patterns, requiring libraries to enhance ICH aesthetic 意境 in scenario architecture, 多元 narrative, resource services, interactive dialogue, and immersive experiences to improve student literacy; (2) elevating future digital education new spaces, where digital education’ s fairness, inclusivity, openness, and sharing advantages provide new paths for achieving comprehensive human development [9], and library-

constructed ICH inheritance education models enable students to develop learning aesthetic feelings through exploratory, collaborative, and utilization practices; and (3) elevating multidimensional knowledge learning new scenarios, where ICH inheritance as cultural knowledge production follows knowledge production laws, and tools like DeepSeek and ChatGPT make ICH inheritance 意境 spaces unlimited, with libraries strengthening governance of knowledge flow to create new multidimensional learning scenarios.

4.3 Paradigmatic Restructuring of ICH Inheritance in University Libraries

Deep interactive relationships exist between systematic ICH protection and inheritance innovation paradigms. Systematic protection provides foundational conditions for ICH inheritance innovation through institutional guarantees, resource integration, and ecological restoration, while also generating new cultural production logics. Examining this interaction from the university library perspective reveals that current practices are driving libraries' transformation from "cultural storage" to "innovation accelerators," dependent on paradigmatic restructuring across three dimensions: resources, services, and ecology.

4.3.1 Connotation Upgrade in Resource Development University libraries utilize digital knowledge services to solidify ICH classic resources through datafication of ICH information (works, techniques, research findings) for storage, retrieval, browsing, and dissemination. Paradigm transformation in resource development should focus on three aspects: First, constructing three-dimensional knowledge bases by breaking traditional literature collection models to establish "physical collections-digital archives-living data" systems. For example, Sun Yat-sen University Library linked Chaozhou woodcarving physical collections, dynamic capture data of inheritors' carving processes, and craftsmen's oral histories to create an interactive ICH digital twin system. Second, integrating interdisciplinary resources by developing "ICH+" thematic knowledge graphs connecting art, materials science, anthropology, and other disciplines. Tsinghua University Library's lacquer art knowledge platform integrates chemical laboratory data on lacquer phenols, art academy manuscripts, and field investigation videos to support modern translation of traditional techniques. Third, improving living resource capture mechanisms by creating ICH practitioner residency programs that transform creation processes into traceable teaching resources. China Academy of Art Library's "ICH Creation Workshop" uses multi-camera recording and motion capture to transform seal carving masters' knife trajectories into 3D dynamic teaching models. Fourth, establishing technical ethics norms by developing ICH metadata cataloging standards and digital collection standards, creating ICH element usage tracking platforms and cultural security early warning systems, and establishing human-machine collaborative innovation guidelines to ensure technology does not compromise knowledge integrity.

4.3.2 Directional Breakthrough in Service Innovation ICH protection emphasizes “seeing people, seeing objects, seeing life.” The life 主体 is people, and life under ICH scenarios is culturally tasteful. People’s cultural subject identity in ICH inheritance should transform from “outsiders to insiders” to “enhance mutual understanding among cultural holders” through dialogue with history [10]. Therefore, from a human-centered perspective, ICH protection is transitioning from pure cultural positions to multidimensional expansion based on human positions [11], shifting youth from pursuing “representative inheritors” toward “everyone is a cultural inheritor.” This positional shift represents the directional breakthrough in university library service innovation. First, breakthrough in immersive learning spaces by transforming traditional reading spaces into ICH digital laboratories. Nanjing University Library’s “ICH Activation Laboratory” features AR ancient book restoration tables and holographic opera stages where readers can virtually experience traditional papermaking and generate personalized digital works. Second, breakthrough in intelligent knowledge services by emphasizing modern AI technology to develop ICH innovation knowledge engines. Fudan University Library’s AI assistant, trained on millions of ICH documents, can automatically identify research needs, recommend interdisciplinary references, and generate cultural element recombination schemes. Third, breakthrough in industry-academia-research transformation platforms by establishing “literature support-prototype development-product incubation” service chains to improve transformation efficiency. For example, Zhejiang University Library’s collaboration with industrial design departments connects traditional pattern databases with 3D printing centers, supporting students in transforming Miao embroidery patterns into cultural interactive interfaces for smart wearable devices.

4.3.3 Pathway Optimization in Educational Ecology University libraries’ ICH inheritance innovation represents “active intervention” in fulfilling educational functions, yet ICH protection, inheritance, and development cannot be entirely undertaken by libraries alone. ICH inheritance is a highly systematic endeavor requiring collaboration across campus departments and society-wide coordination. University libraries must work with internal and external organizations to smooth educational pathways and reconstruct educational ecosystems. On campus, strengthen collaboration to develop ICH curriculum resources, such as Beijing Normal University Library’s “ICH Digital Narrative” course package forming a “ICH MOOCs + practical workshops + field classrooms” three-dimensional system. Innovate “technique-academia” dual-track evaluation systems by implementing inheritor academic certification, such as ICH inheritor visiting scholar programs where craftsmen’s creation outcomes can be certified as continuing education credits. Create ICH maker spaces supporting interdisciplinary collaboration and youth innovation community cultivation, such as Wuhan University Library’s “Cultural Gene Recombination Laboratory” that regularly holds joint workshops for archaeology, computer science, and design students, having incubated algorithmic art projects based

on Chu-style lacquerware patterns. For external cooperation, collect and organize campus ICH practice archives to implement campus cultural memory projects, such as Hunan University Library incorporating Yuelu Academy's traditional restoration techniques and local opera troupe inheritance genealogies into characteristic collections to build unique campus cultural gene banks. Construct ICH cross-cultural interpretation systems to enhance international dissemination capabilities, such as Beijing Foreign Studies University Library's multilingual ICH terminology database supporting international students in translating shadow puppetry elements into modern dance dramas for innovative presentation at international art festivals.

5 Conclusion

The narrative transformation, contextual reinvention, and paradigmatic restructuring of ICH inheritance in university libraries transform them into “cultural reactors” for ICH living inheritance. Through collisions between academic resources and folk wisdom, integration of traditional knowledge and modern technology, and linkage between campus spaces and social networks, they continuously release ICH innovation potential, making university libraries hub nodes for modern translation of traditional culture. Admittedly, university libraries' ICH inheritance activities represent only one scenario in national ICH protection. However, analysis of current activities reveals them as a microcosm of national ICH inheritance protection. Naturally, the patterns identified in university libraries cannot represent societal ICH inheritance characteristics, nor can libraries fully undertake ICH inheritance responsibilities. As internal academic and cultural support institutions within universities, they only fulfill partial functions of university cultural inheritance and innovation, requiring adaptation to different contexts, spaces, and projects to undertake meaningful work.

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

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