

# Study of Creatively Popular Short Videos for Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage

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## ABSTRACT

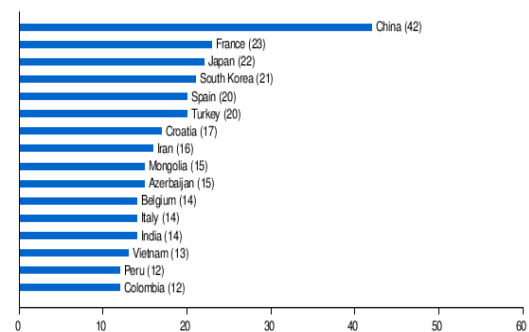
Short video has become one of the most dominant trends in Chinese social media. Nowadays, new media platforms such as TikTok provided new potential for the protection, dissemination, and activation of intangible cultural heritage. It provides a new stage for the Chinese intangible cultural heritage and helps it return to the center of public vision. There are many intangible cultural heritage projects which rely on the expansion of mobile Internet. It creates a new linkage between daily life in a way which the public enjoys seeing and the broad social foundation. The popular short videos on new media platforms will lead to a national trend for promotion of Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage. Short videos will provide more stages to the old craftsmanship throughout time, as well as allowing inheritors to build cultural confidence.

**Keywords:** Intangible cultural heritage, Short video, New media technology, TikTok.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

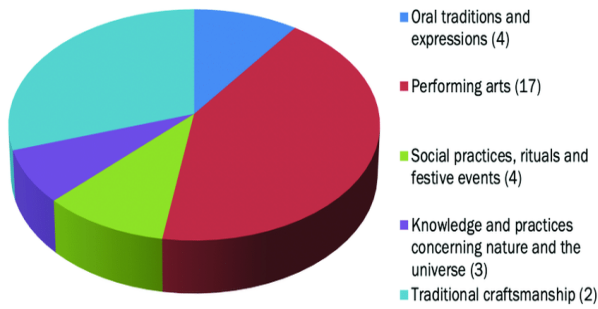
Intangible cultural heritage includes different traditional cultural expressions that exist in intangible forms and are closely related to people's lives. With regard to "intangible cultural heritage", this paper adopts the definition in the Convention for the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage adopted by UNESCO in 2003, that is, intangible cultural heritage refers to "traditional cultural expressions existing in intangible forms", and various intangible traditional cultural expressions closely related to people's life and handed down from generation to generation, including all kinds of knowledge and practice, customs and rituals, ethnic religions and beliefs, etc.

It refers to traditional knowledge, practices, handicraft skills [1]. Figure 1 shows the number of Intangible Cultural Heritage elements inscribed by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).



**Figure 1** The number of Intangible Cultural Heritage elements inscribed by UNESCO.

The Chinese intangible cultural heritage includes five categories: (1) oral traditions and expressions; 2) performing arts; 3) social practices, rituals and festive events; 4) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; and 5) traditional craftsmanship [2]. Figure 2 indicates the numbers of Chinese intangible cultural heritage projects in the five categories.



**Figure 2** The numbers of Chinese intangible cultural heritage projects in the five categories.

Different scholars have different views on the definition of new media. Some people equate new media with network media and digital media, which refers to the sum of all media based on computer information processing technology and Internet technology. Some scholars define new media from the two dimensions of "technology" and "time". From a technical perspective, new media refers to a series of new communication tools or means to provide users with information services based on emerging technical means such as digital technology, Internet technology and mobile communication technology; From the perspective of timeliness, new media is a new media form relative to traditional media.

"New media" mainly refers to the sum of interactive and integrated media forms and platforms based on digital technology, network technology and other modern information technology or communication technology. At this stage, new media mainly includes network media, mobile media and the mobile Internet formed by the integration of the two, as well as other interactive digital media forms. Under the internet tidal wave, short video platforms such as TikTok, WeChat, and Kuaishou have brought back the traditional handicrafts which were gradually drifted away from our daily life [3]. The intangible cultural heritage was reborn with new vitality when it meets new media technology. Therefore, how to seize the opportunity to inherit and innovate to enhance the self-survival and development ability of intangible cultural heritage projects is becoming a new hotspot topic.

The new media technology is based on the internet technology, streaming technology, and information transmission technology to integrate various information such as language, text, audio, video, and film and deliver this information from a server to a client [4]. The dissemination of intangible cultural heritage in China by using new media technology is not a simple duplication and reorganization of traditional dissemination but based on the characteristics and status of the contents of intangible cultural heritages to carry out brand-new dissemination content and dissemination for different target audience groups [5].

Since the development of new media technology is fast, little research have been conducted in relation to this filed in China. The aim of this paper is to 1) study the state of knowledge and perspectives of creative short videos for Chinese intangible cultural heritage; 2) discuss the new features and characteristics of the creative short videos for Chinese intangible cultural heritage.

## 2. THE STATE OF KNOWLEDGE AND PERSPECTIVES OF CREATIVE SHORT VIDEOS

In the digital age, the popularity of short video has become one of the most important visual culture phenomena. Tiktok Kwai, a short video platform represented by the voice and fast hands, has been increasing sharply since 2016. According to the data released by China Internet Network Information Center, as of June 2020, the number of short video users in China has reached 817.86 million, with a utilization rate of 87%. The outbreak of covid-19 pneumonia at the end of 2019 further explored the potential of short video information transmission, and the short video user scale increased further. New media such TikTok and Kuaishou has become one of the major stages for intangible cultural heritage in China [6].

According to the data from TikTok Intangible cultural heritage report, the total number of intangible cultural heritage video is approximately 0.14 billion which covered 97.94% of national intangible cultural heritage projects [7]. The number of video views has exceeded 6.7 billion likes, and the revenue has exceeded 1.5 billion yuan. Each video has been viewed by at least 6,263 people and liked by 187 people. Some Chinese national intangible cultural heritage related videos have been liked more than 100 million times on TikTok. The unique intangible cultural heritage projects of each province on TikTok have become a local cultural business card. It can help to enhance the city's to create unique cultural logos. The report also indicates that some representative intangible cultural heritage projects in 14 different provinces with more than 10 million times like on TikTok. Among these intangible cultural heritage videos, Tianjin Xiangsheng, Huangmei Opera in Anhui Province, and Shaanxi Qin Opera ranked the top three with 100 million, 77.72 million and 73.81 million likes respectively. As the most representative arts and crafts in Suzhou, Suzhou embroidery has been praised more than 14.62 million times on TikTok. It has become the most representative intangible cultural heritage business card in Jiangsu. In addition, ceramic firing technology is an outstanding representative of ancient Chinese black-glazed porcelain. It has been liked 20.81 million times on TikTok, and it has become the most popular intangible cultural heritage item in Fujian Province. The latest Liuzhou snail noodle

making technology has been liked 68.77 million times, becoming the Zhuang nationality in Guangxi. The most popular traditional craft in the autonomous region.

### **3. NEW FEATURES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CREATIVE SHORT VIDEOS**

Intangible cultural heritage has strong plasticity. The non-genetic inheritance in the age of traditional media is fixed and rigid in the mode and form in the oral teaching of skills, and the professional threshold of traditional art is often prohibitive. The main reason for the rapid change of the traditional and social life in China is that it is difficult for people to keep up with the development of industrialization. In China, the countryside is the birthplace of Chinese traditional culture. However, many ancient natural villages are rapidly disappearing. Relevant statistics show that from 2000 to 2010, the number of natural villages in China decreased sharply from 3.63 million to 2.71 million, and more than 900000 natural villages disappeared in 10 years. The disappearance of traditional villages is not only the disappearance of splendid and diverse historical creation, cultural landscape, local architecture and material testimony of the agricultural era, but also the disappearance of a large number of intangible cultural heritage subordinate to the villages.

Short video relies on the entertainment and social platform of Internet big data. With only one mobile phone, the platform can recommend relevant content according to users' preferences, making short video close to everyone's unique taste and immersing people in this personalized online entertainment. The number of mobile Internet users in China reached 847 million in 2020, and the proportion of Internet users using mobile phones reached 99.1% [8]. The Internet environment of wireless mobile terminals is becoming an important way for the public to obtain information. The local intangible cultural heritage projects have returned to the public eye through new media platforms. Over the past decades, many art forms are usually confined to local areas result in separation of intangible cultural heritage due to the limitations of time and space such as media and transportation. The digital technologies such as internet technology and streaming technology can help to disseminate intangible cultural heritage to the audience and make a broader impact across the country. It can be seen from the previous research that there is less audience participation in intangible cultural heritage dissemination. The audiences don't want to interact and participate in the intangible cultural heritage dissemination process. They are passively receiving intangible cultural heritage information. When the social environment changes, the dissemination form of intangible cultural heritage will also adapt to changes in the environment and change accordingly.

With the development of Internet and various new media technology, the new media integration starts to break the one-way dissemination of intangible cultural heritage in traditional media. Compared with the previous use of documentaries and film and television dramas to express intangible cultural heritage, short video has the characteristics of low-cost and non professional production, which gives many unknown "vulnerable" intangible cultural heritage projects the opportunity to show. Taking Zhejiang as an example, folk handicrafts such as Haining shadow play, Shengzhou root carving, she folk songs and Ruian wood movable type printing have gained a lot of playback and attention on the short video platform. Intangible cultural heritage inheritors take photos of intangible cultural heritage through mobile phones , the production process demonstrates the specific presentation methods, from static to dynamic, which are understood, appreciated and learned by more people. In 2018, Anhui Huangmei Opera became the most popular local Chinese opera on the TikTok app, with content on related topics being played 210 million times. The traditional operas such as Henan Henan Opera, Shanxi Qin Opera, Hunan Huagu Opera and Zhejiang Kunqu Opera are also widely available on TikTok. These local operas have returned to the public eye with the help of new media platforms.

In the future, with the wide application and popularization of 5G technology, portable wireless Mobile terminals make digital information more accessible. Meanwhile, it can help the audience to communicate with inheritors of intangible cultural heritage through a modern digital technology, such as virtual reality (VR), artificial intelligence (AI), simulation machinery and other technologies. The audience can achieve multi-directional communication to realize more information of intangible cultural heritage during the digital dissemination. At the same time, under the influence of the fragmented dissemination of the Internet, the intangible cultural heritage population has gradually constructed their community. These communities also enable multi-dimensional interaction between audiences and the inheritors of intangible cultural heritage. Meanwhile, these modern technologies can help the audience to generate artistic resonance, which will also lead to the widespread dissemination of intangible cultural heritage.

### **4. CONCLUSION**

Chinese society has a long history and large population. We can find that the so-called new media is a new communication form supported by new media technology and integrating a variety of information communication modes. New media based on modern digital technology has the advantages of long-term storage, portability and sharing. Its development

provides material and technical guarantee for the collection, preservation, display and dissemination of intangible cultural heritage, so that intangible cultural heritage can be spread and continued.

There are many diverse needs of intangible cultural heritage, we do not lack cultural appreciators and loyal cultural inheritors, but what is missing is a bridge to connect them. Dissemination of intangible cultural heritage plays an important role in promotion of the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. For old craftsmanship, young people will be interested and enthusiastic only after they understand and understand them. Creatively popular short video on new media platforms will lead to a national trend for promotion of Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage. Short video will continuously provide more stages to the old craftsmanship, and it will also allow inheritors to gain cultural confidence.

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