

Article

Reflections on Establishing a System for Cultivating Intangible Cultural Heritage Inheritors in the New Era: Based on the Survey in Fujian Province

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Abstract: In the context of globalization and modernization, it has become particularly important to build an effective system to cultivate intangible cultural heritage (ICH) inheritors. This study utilizes a mixed-method approach, including questionnaires, interviews, and fieldwork, to investigate the current status of cultivating ICH inheritors in Fujian Province. The findings suggest that policies, integration into formal education, industry training, and continuing education have guided the cultivation of ICH inheritors in Fujian Province. However, problems persist, including lack of systematization, shortage of resources, and limited coverage. Based on a systematic analysis of the current situation, ideas and frameworks are proposed for developing a new system to cultivate ICH inheritors. This study aims to provide a theoretical reference and practical inspiration for the cultivation of ICH inheritors in other regions and promote the effective inheritance and development of ICH.

Keywords: intangible cultural heritage inheritors; inheritance; cultivation; sustainable development



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1. Introduction

As globalization has accelerated, the preservation and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) have received unprecedented attention. Cultivating ICH inheritors, which are key to passing on ICH, has become an important topic for academic researchers and social practitioners. In an age of globalization and modernization, some traditional skills and cultural forms face extinction, as younger generations' familiarity with and attention to ICH decline along with their enthusiasm and willingness to inherit it. Constructing an effective system to nurture ICH inheritors has become an urgent task to protect world cultural heritage and preserve cultural diversity and the prosperity of human culture. Fujian Province is a region with abundant ICH resources in China that has many ICH inheritors and traditional craftsmen. In recent years, Fujian Province has actively explored and practiced ways to cultivate ICH inheritors. The province has adopted diverse approaches and channels to encourage and support the growth of ICH inheritors and promote the sustainable development of ICH. Therefore, we present an in-depth analysis of the current situation of nurturing ICH inheritors and related problems through questionnaires, interviews, and fieldwork, with the hope of answering the following questions: What experiences does Fujian Province have in the cultivation of ICH inheritors? What difficulties does Fujian Province encounter in the cultivation of ICH inheritors? How should the new-era ICH inheritor cultivation system be constructed?

2. Literature Review

The terminology used to describe intangible cultural inheritors (ICH inheritors) differs by country. UNESCO refers to ICH inheritors as “safeguards of intangible cultural heritage”, “practitioners of intangible cultural heritage”, or “holders of intangible cultural heritage” [1], UNESCO’s Guidelines for the Preparation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity refer to ICH inheritors as “persons who safeguard the mastery of folklore traditions” [2]. In Japan, ICH inheritors are called “Ningen Kokuhō”, which means “national treasures of the earth” [3], whereas in Italy, ICH inheritors are called “Maestro Artigiano”, which means “master craftsmen”. Italy also uses titles such as “Custode della Tradizione” or “Tradizionale” to describe the role and responsibilities of ICH inheritors [4]. In Belgium, they are called “cultural heritage bearers” (Erkend Immaterieel Erfgoed Vlaanderen) [5]. These designations emphasize the important role of inheritors in the preservation and inheritance of cultural traditions. In China, ICH inheritors refer to those who have made significant contributions to the inheritance of ICH and possess a strong desire to pass on their knowledge and skills to subsequent generations [6]. ICH inheritors engage in preservation and inheritance activities based on autonomy and agency, possessing attributes of multiple entities. Broadly speaking, they can be categorized as individual inheritors, group inheritors, and national inheritors. From a narrow perspective, inheritors should include both ordinary inheritors and representative inheritors [2]. Based on the reality of China’s ICH work, this paper focuses on the cultivation of both ordinary and representative ICH inheritors.

Due to its intergenerational inheritance characteristics, the work of cultivating ICH inheritors is considered a form of education and a means to achieve the United Nations’ sustainable development goals related to education [7]. Through the integration of theory and practice, ICH education has become increasingly widespread in both formal and informal educational settings [7]. Relevant research has explored ICH inheritor cultivation from the perspectives of various stakeholders, including families, universities, and enterprises. Nowadays, to safeguard ICH, the traditional master–apprentice model of education must be revived as a primary strategy. This model emphasizes teaching apprentices to carry on a trade and promotes sustainable ICH inheritance through cultural identity, moral principles, and material existence [8]. The current approach to ICH education lacks individuality, situationality, and practicality, which has led to an insufficient number of high-level ICH inheritors with the integrated knowledge, skills, and spirit of ICH inheritors. Researchers have called for universities and colleges to actively establish a modern apprenticeship-based ICH inheritor training model that incorporates individuality, situationality, and practicality [9].

Enterprises also play a crucial role in fostering the development of ICH inheritors. Therefore, the cultivation of ICH inheritors requires joint discussion and implementation by universities, colleges, and enterprises regarding skill and talent development goals, training models, teaching organization methods, curriculum systems, and teaching teams [10]. The modern apprenticeship system is an effective means of inheriting China’s ICH because it combines academic learning with real-world experience to help inheritors better internalize skills. By integrating cognitive, formative, and automatic stages of skills into the realm of craftsmanship, the modern apprenticeship system can strengthen the inheritance of traditional crafts [11]. In short, there is a need to increase the publicity of ICH to enhance the attractiveness of ICH inheritance; improve the mechanism for identifying, safeguarding, and managing inheritors; and expand the avenues of training ICH inheritors [12].

Most of the existing studies have focused on the status and role of ICH inheritors, or on the specific ways and challenges of cultivating ICH inheritors, but relatively little research has been conducted on the construction of a cultivating system for the issue, especially in the context of the new era. In addition, in-depth studies on the cultivation practices of ICH inheritors in specific regions such as Fujian Province, especially their implications and implications for other regions and countries, are yet to be explored further.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-method approach, including questionnaires, interviews, and fieldwork. A literature review was conducted to analyze relevant sources, including the Internet, forums, newsletters, journal articles, and policy documents. Both online and offline questionnaires were used. From October to December 2022, 186 valid questionnaires were collected and analyzed using Sojump and SPSS. Issues and suggestions regarding the cultivation of ICH inheritors were further understood through face-to-face interviews, online interviews, phone interviews, and field investigations. Prior to commencing the study, we obtained research permission from the Research Ethics Committee of Fujian Engineering College and secured informed consent from all research subjects.

3.1. Field Research

We conducted field surveys in three institutions participating in the National ICH Research and Training Program in Fujian Province, namely Fuzhou University, Fujian Normal University, and Fujian Vocational College of Art. We also visited traditional workshops such as the Fuzhou Lacquer Art Base, ICH productive protection demonstration bases such as Fujian Chunlun Group Co., Ltd., (Fuzhou, China), and interviewed inheritors of ICH and staff to understand their experiences, difficulties, and needs.

3.2. Questionnaire Survey

Based on some expert opinions, we drafted the “Fujian Province ICH Inheritor Cultivation Situation Survey Questionnaire”. Both online and offline surveys were conducted, and a total of 186 valid questionnaires were collected. A prepilot study was conducted to confirm that the questions in the questionnaire were understood by the target group and to ensure the reliability and validity of the data.

3.3. Expert Interviews

Through face-to-face, online, and telephone interviews, we thoroughly interviewed more than 30 ICH inheritors, researchers, government officials, educators, and trainees. Through the experts’ experiences and opinions, we understood their views, problems, and suggestions about the cultivation of ICH inheritors in Fujian Province. They provided authoritative and practical advice and suggestions for the study.

3.4. Data Analysis

We statistically interpreted the data using the online analysis of Questionnaire Star and the social science statistical software package (SPSS 22). We also summarized, organized, and analyzed the collected literature, field research, and expert interview data, extracting key issues, challenges, and solutions for the cultivation of ICH inheritors in Fujian Province.

4. Results

This survey reveals several existing approaches for cultivating ICH inheritors in Fujian and the issues that exist.

4.1. Main Approaches to Cultivating ICH Inheritors at Present

4.1.1. Improving ICH Inheritor Cultivation System under Policy Guidance

Fujian Province has adopted a series of policy measures for the cultivation of ICH inheritors. In 2018, the Department of Culture and Tourism of Fujian Province established the ICH Division, which is responsible for the administrative management of ICH protection in the province. In 2019, the Regulations on ICH in Fujian Province were enacted, which clearly stipulate the rights and obligations of representative inheritors and requires local governments to support the inheritors of representative items at risk of disappearing. In 2020, the ICH Division enacted “Measures for the Recognition and Management of Representative ICH Inheritors at the Provincial Level in Fujian Province”, which clarify the conditions, processes, and responsibilities of inheritors and government bodies. That same

year, they enacted “Measures for the Recognition and Management of Representative Inheritors of Fujian Provincial ICH”, which specify the conditions, processes, and responsibilities for the recognition of ICH inheritors by the government. Another policy, “Measures for the Management of Provincial Cultural Ecological Reserves in Fujian Province”, requires support for inheritors to carry out activities and training to improve their inheritance capacity [13]. Finally, in 2020, the ICH Division issued “Implementation Opinions on Further Strengthening the Protection of ICH” to encourage the participation of professionals and technicians in the assessment and to commend and reward those who had contributed [14].

Collectively, these policies provide protection and support for the cultivation of ICH inheritors. In its circular, the Fujian Provincial Department of Education provides policy guidelines to encourage secondary schools to offer majors for talents in short supply under the protection of ICH. The guidelines, formulated in 2022, encourage qualified universities to offer majors or courses related to ICH, emphasizing the “protection and development of ICH with important cultural value and heritage significance” [15].

Through the promotion of multiple policies, the cultivation of ICH inheritors in Fujian Province has increased. Currently, there are 143 national-level representative ICH inheritors and 917 provincial-level representative ICH inheritors, as well as municipal-, district-, and county-level representative ICH inheritors in each city. All these individuals and groups form a well-structured ICH team in the province.

As illustrated in Figure 1, the number of recognized representative ICH inheritors at or above the provincial level in Fujian has risen over time from 136 provincial representative ICH inheritors and 10 national representative ICH inheritors in the first year to 216 provincial inheritors and 34 national inheritors in the fifth year. This growth reflects the Fujian provincial government’s emphasis on the protection of representative ICH inheritors and demonstrates society’s increased recognition of and attention to ICH, which has led to a phenomenon described as “ICH Craze”.

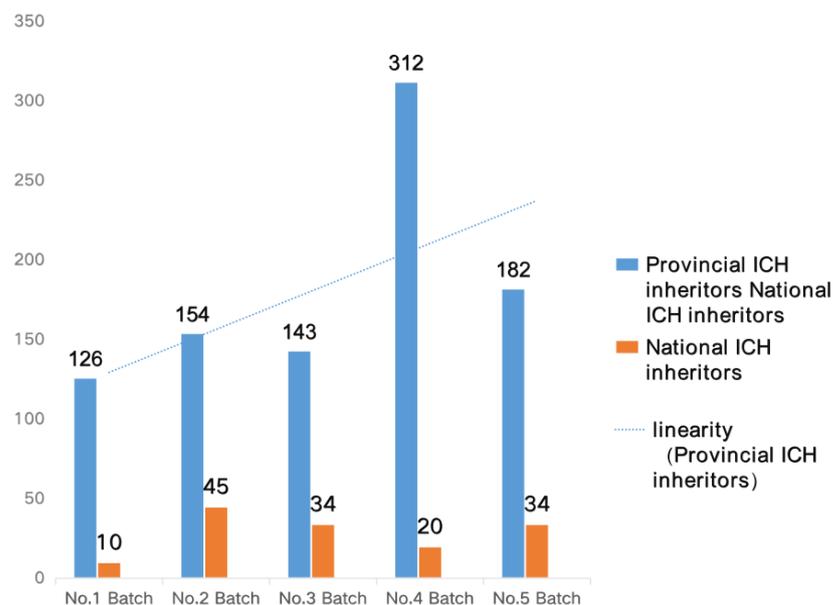


Figure 1. Number of provincial and national representative ICH inheritors categorized by batch in Fujian Province. **Note:** The chart is based on the lists of provincial and national representative ICH inheritors in Fujian Province spanning from the first to the fifth batch. The data comes from the website of the Digital Cultural Museum of Fujian Province. “<https://www.fjysg.net> (accessed on 20 October 2022)”.

4.1.2. Integrating ICH Inheritor Cultivation into National Education and Expanding the Channels for Cultivation

The Chinese Ministry of Culture and Tourism issued “Opinions on Further Strengthening the Protection of ICH”, which calls for ICH to be integrated into the national education system. Fujian Province has responded positively to the national policy by integrating ICH into the education system. At the basic education level, 103 schools have been awarded “School for the Inheritance of Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture” across the province. These schools promote education on ICH topics, including Southern Fujian nursery rhymes and Pingtan shell carvings. Through summer camps, school-based courses, and special club activities, students experience ICH culture firsthand and deepen their understanding of traditional culture. At the tertiary education level, many universities in Fujian have introduced majors related to ICH, such as arts and crafts and historical building conservation engineering. The Fujian Vocational College of Art has been training students to meet the demand for ICH inheritors in Fujian by “sending ICH education to enterprises”. Fujian University of Technology, Fuzhou University, and Fujian Normal University have used a combination of online and offline learning methods to integrate ICH training and research into postgraduate education. Several universities in the province offer courses on ICH culture in conjunction with local culture. A total of 10 courses have been selected as first-class undergraduate courses that enhance the quality of courses related to ICH inheritance, including a virtual simulation experimental teaching project on lacquer-ware amateur craft offered at Fujian Normal University. Quanzhou Normal University offers a Master of Arts degree to systematically train postgraduate students in Nanyin culture.

4.1.3. Encouraging Industry Cultivation and Strengthening the Foundation for Cultivating ICH Inheritors through Industry

Family heritage and master–apprentice traditions are common ways of inheriting folk culture and ICH. According to our questionnaire survey, 60.22% of people who pursue ICH inheritance do so because of family origins and learning from mentors (see Figure 2).

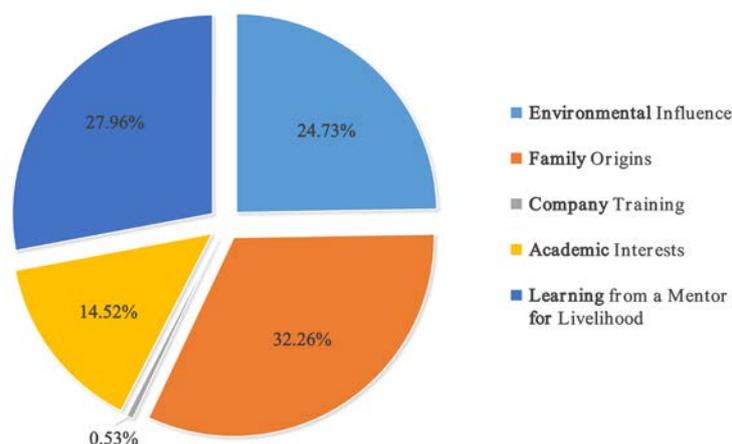


Figure 2. Reasons for becoming an ICH inheritor.

For example, the Nanping Nanci Centre has adopted the “pass-on” approach to cultivate ICH inheritors, enhancing the role of existing Nanci Centre ICH inheritors and cultivating new talents through the “pass-on” approach, which has closed the talent gap in the Nanci Centre ICH. In 2018, the Fujian Provincial Department of Culture (Department of Culture and Tourism) selected and identified 25 key units for the productive protection and inheritance of representative ICH projects in the province to promote the training of ICH inheritors and inheritance. From 2018 to 2019, these 25 key units trained more than 60,000 people as ICH inheritors, making a positive contribution to the cultivation of ICH inheritors.

4.1.4. Emphasizing Continuing Education to Enhance the Capacity of ICH Inheritors to Pass on Their Heritage

Fujian Province actively promotes the implementation of the National ICH Research and Training Program. The aim of this program is to help representative ICH inheritors strengthen their foundation, broaden their horizons, and enhance their learning. From November 2015 to August 2022, the three institutions participating in the National ICH Research and Training Program in Fujian Province (Fuzhou University, Fujian Normal University, and Fujian Vocational College of Art) organized 49 training projects for representative inheritors of ICH and trained 2206 representative inheritors of ICH, with a completion rate of nearly 100%. The training courses covered traditional arts, traditional techniques, traditional sports, amusement and acrobatics, traditional drama and opera, and other areas of cultural heritage. Those who went through the training program reported an 80% satisfaction rate regarding the training content, professional knowledge of the teachers, effectiveness of the training methods, and level of training services (see Figure 3).

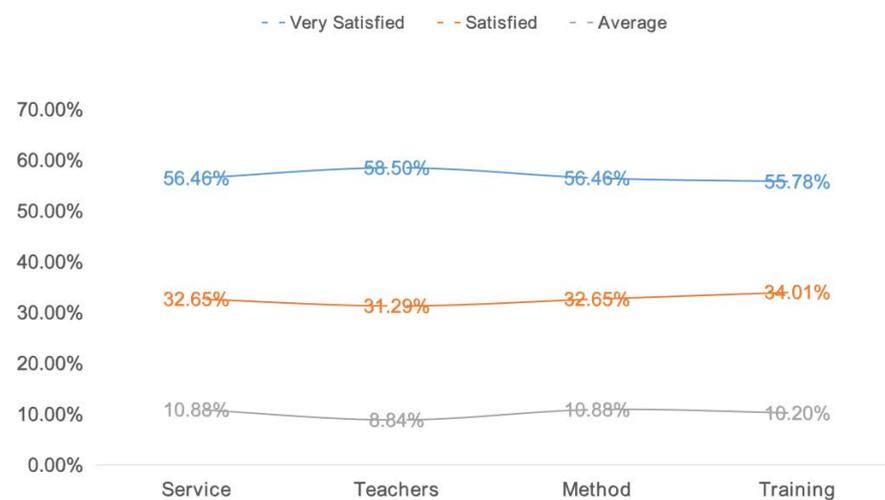


Figure 3. Perceived quality of training.

Each district and city in Fujian Province has implemented its own training for representative ICH inheritors, taking into account the regional characteristics of ICH and the need for the protection and inheritance of ICH. At present, more than 50,000 people have been trained as representative ICH inheritors in Fujian, and many outstanding trainees have become the leaders and backbone of ICH protection and inheritance in their regions, playing an active role in promoting the integration of culture and tourism, revitalizing traditional crafts, and promoting rural revitalization.

4.2. Main Problems in Current ICH Inheritor Cultivation

Since acceding to the UNESCO ICH Convention in 2004, China has actively promoted ICH inheritor cultivation. However, challenges have arisen in practice. Through questionnaire surveys, literature analysis, and feedback from interviewees, we found the main problems in the cultivation of ICH inheritors in Fujian Province.

4.2.1. Systemic Deficiencies Affect the Breadth of ICH Inheritors' Cultivation

There is no comprehensive national program for cultivating ICH talents, and there is a need to enhance the systemic, standardized, coordinated, and sustainable cultivation of ICH inheritors in Fujian Province [16]. Under the influence of the market economy, it is difficult to develop traditional family inheritance and master–apprentice inheritance models. The long apprenticeship period and uncertainty about the future have led to a high turnover of inheritors. In the survey, 17.74% of respondents responded to the high level of instability and turnover of their ICH learner or student (see Figure 4). Although ICH

majors have been included in the catalog of undergraduate majors, a disconnect persists between university teaching missions and objectives and the actual demand for talent. Certain educational activities regarding ICH are merely symbolic and lack tangible results. The number of ICH workshops for continuing education students is limited and financial support is insufficient, which makes implementation difficult. The lack of systematic and standardized training methods has limited the depth of training for ICH practitioners.

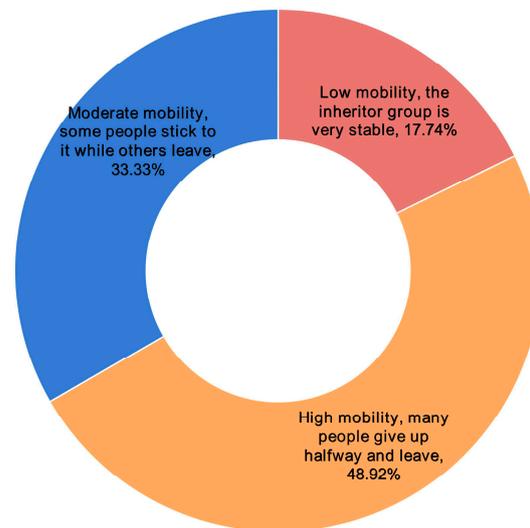


Figure 4. Perceptions of ICH inheritor mobility.

4.2.2. Educational Resources Shortage Affects the Depth of ICH Inheritors' Cultivation

Many challenges affect the training of ICH personnel in the national and ICH education environments. The primary problems are a shortage of professional teachers and a training model that overly focuses on theory and does not focus enough on practical teaching [16]. The lack of a scientific curriculum or a standardized talent training structure also limit students' overall development. Research findings reveal that many ICH teachers, whether at universities or vocational schools, base their teaching primarily on theoretical knowledge and lack ICH professional experience and skills [17].

Teachers who are socially competent at teaching ICH inheritance tend to be older and face difficulties in implementing modern teaching, and the terms of their employment are often constraining. Particularly for ICH performance categories, title qualifications present an obstacle for schools and often prevent them from hiring folk masters who have excellent teaching skills in areas such as traditional dance and opera. Conversely, family inheritance and master–apprentice inheritance approaches tend to overemphasize practicality in the training of inheritors and provide insufficient theoretical guidance. In addition, these forms of cultivation generally have a shortage of teaching materials. The officially published systematic ICH teaching materials are insufficient, and teachers of performance or operational courses primarily rely on expert lectures, theoretical education, and case sharing [17]. This status quo has led to a lack of systematic and standardized teaching materials for the training of ICH inheritors, which affects the quality and structural rationality of the training of inherited talents.

4.2.3. Limited Coverage Affects the Breadth of ICH Inheritors' Cultivation

Fujian Province has a wide range of ICH projects. However, the coverage of academic and continuing education in ICH is relatively limited in universities and colleges, which limits the breadth of training for ICH inheritors. The survey findings indicate that more than 80% of respondents agree or strongly agree that government-organized ICH training should play a role in enhancing professional knowledge and artistic training, broadening the horizons of the profession, promoting practical working ability, and encouraging

creative potential. Most respondents also believe that training is of positive significance in addressing the development of ICH inheritance. However, the majority of respondents reported having few training opportunities, with only 21% having attended more than five training sessions, and many expressed a desire for more training opportunities.

The 49 ICH workshops conducted in Fujian Province included 15 sessions of traditional arts and 31 sessions of traditional skills, accounting for 30.6% and 63.2%, respectively. Other workshops included traditional sports, amusement, and acrobatics (e.g., Guangdong Lion Dance), traditional drama (e.g., Fujian Opera), and operatic arts, each of which was offered once. These offerings are aligned with the national policy of promoting research and training in traditional crafts and reflect the characteristics of ICH projects. For other ICH categories, such as folklore and traditional medicine, it is difficult to organize short-term, centralized research and training activities, and there is a resulting need to innovate existing cultivation methods.

5. Discussion

The cultivation of ICH inheritors is a systematic project that requires close cooperation among various stakeholders, including representative bearers of ICH, the government, schools, ICH institutions, social organizations, and enterprises. Each stakeholder needs clarity regarding their responsibilities in developing the system, and teaching resources such as materials and teacher teams must be allocated accordingly. The present study's findings identify challenges facing the cultivation of ICH inheritors in Fujian Province, including lack of a clear system, shortage of educational resources, and limited cultivation coverage. Based on the analytical findings, the following policy recommendations are advised to promote the construction of a system of ICH inheritance.

5.1. Improve the Cultivation System for ICH Inheritors

ICH inheritors are currently trained in five different ways: family-based training, apprentice-style training, enterprise training, research institute training, and school training [18]. To improve the industry cultivation system for ICH inheritors, the government must focus on family-based and apprentice-style training. Simultaneously, the interests of existing inheritors must be protected and coordinated by establishing a comprehensive protection system for ICH and creating lists of inheritors at the national, provincial, municipal, and county levels. Regulations for inheritor protection should be implemented to encourage knowledge sharing between older and younger inheritors. It is also important to unearth and protect the traditional talents of folk craftsmen, revitalize traditional crafts, and develop a group of high-quality traditional craft inheritors. Representative ICH inheritors should establish ICH workshops or studios in which local performing groups and cultural organizations can inherit cultural performing abilities. Fujian Province can employ ICH protection and inheritance bases, create talent training models that integrate social demands with practical teaching, and advocate for amateur training of ICH inheritors.

ICH inheritor training can be improved by integrating it into the national education system. A comprehensive social education program for ICH inheritors should be established, and inheritors should be identified and developed through "Five Introductions" Initiative for Intangible Cultural Heritage" activities. A comprehensive and systematic education plan for ICH inheritors should be generated for colleges and universities, and collaborations between these institutions and ICH enterprises should be encouraged to jointly develop training programs and quality standards. For younger students, professional teachers should provide fundamental lessons on the protection and transmission of ICH, and ICH masters should impart skills through an apprenticeship system in grades three and four.

It is important to maintain the National ICH Research and Training Program to enhance the system for ICH inheritors' ongoing education and training. The training program can be maintained and expanded by creating a flexible research and training mechanism, increasing social participation in ICH education and training, conducting a

variety of social practice and study activities, broadening the scope of research and training, promoting local talent in drama, and innovating training services by fusing vocational training with lifelong learning. The Fujian ICH Research and Training Program should have a thorough and methodical implementation plan to improve the skills and capacities of inheritors and strengthen the construction of an inheritance system.

5.2. Thoroughly Explore and Safeguard Educational Resources for ICH Inheritors' Cultivation

To address the dearth of professional and systematic textbooks and teaching materials for ICH protection, it is crucial for educational institutions to collect and organize ICH-protection-related textbooks that adhere to teaching standards. Universities and institutions that promote ICH inheritance should form an ICH textbook research group composed of masters with ICH skills and experience in inheritance protection. This group can develop comprehensive teaching aids that include professional knowledge, skills, and project cases related to ICH inheritance protection, drawing from the practical experience of ICH masters and the educational expertise of campus textbook development teams. Such efforts can create high-quality supporting textbooks for ICH inheritors, emphasizing the educational objectives and characteristics of ICH to ensure the system's accuracy [17]. In addition, regional primary and secondary schools can develop ICH "Five Introductions' Initiative for ICH" textbooks based on local ICH features to promote the integration of ICH into local and school-based curricula.

To build a strong professional ICH teacher team, it is essential to establish a database of representative ICH inheritors' teacher teams in Fujian Province. Academic institutions of higher learning can collaborate with representative ICH inheritors by enhancing communication channels and updating the requirements for ICH teacher entrance through green channels, a flexible pathway, or an expedited process for hiring ICH teachers. This effort will create opportunities for qualified inheritors to participate in ICH education and training programs. We should create an atmosphere where senior, middle-aged, and young ICH teachers, as well as full-time and part-time ICH teachers, can mutually promote each other. While nurturing the inheritors, we can achieve common progress through mutual coordination [19]. A professional ICH teacher team for colleges and universities could be established to mentor and train inheritors to promote pertinent regulations, while primary and secondary schools could cultivate a similar group of knowledgeable educators who are passionate about ICH education. These actions could enable Fujian Province to establish a long-term mechanism for schools to learn and inherit ICH.

Digital technology offers expanded possibilities for ICH inheritance training. Digital media provides a vital platform for publicity and education about ICH culture and can be used to make cultural heritage accessible to a wide audience. Through detailed exhibitions and active engagement with viewers, live broadcasts, TikTok, Kwai, and other digital platforms that attract young people who are interested in inheriting and innovating ICH culture, it is possible to create a talent pool for discovering ideal ICH inheritors [20]. Furthermore, digital technology offers additional teaching channels for ICH training, such as online courses, internships, and follow-up training pathways, all of which provide convenient ways for students to access ICH information and assistance.

5.3. Promote a Categorical Approach to Broaden the ICH Inheritors' Cultivation

First, it is important to encourage cultivating based on different types of ICH. Given the diverse types and survival conditions of ICH projects, it is necessary to respect tradition and the characteristics of ICH during training. Flexible and classified rules should be implemented to develop training programs tailored to the needs of each project. Social groups and corporate market entities should be encouraged to participate in training for ICH projects with good industrial development potential. The government, different factions, and folk organizations should work together to train inheritors for ICH projects with challenging industrial development potential, such as local traditional opera and

traditional performance. In addition, folklore ICH inheritors should receive extensive training from local individuals, government agencies, and folk organizations.

Second, regional training initiatives should be encouraged. Because ICH projects vary by region, it is appropriate to support regionally specific ICH inheritor training initiatives that are closely aligned with customs and culture. Regions with abundant resources, such as ICH education and inheritance protection bases, can integrate ICH inheritor training into the existing bases and school subject education. For remote and restricted ICH projects, government entities are recommended to preserve the master-apprentice model of inheritance. Further, training for ICH inheritors should be included in local cultural and tourism economic development and rural revitalization plans. Policies that prioritize supporting ICH training programs through coordination of talent training funding in cities and counties (districts) should also be encouraged. Efforts should be made to organize relatively poor villages to participate in ICH training, promote the construction of ICH workshops, and raise the level of ICH protection and inheritance in poverty-stricken areas or relocated communities.

5.4. Strengthen Research to Improve the Depth of ICH Inheritors' Cultivation

To enhance the protection of ICH, it is essential to coordinate resources from universities, research institutions, associations, and societies. Professional research forces should be integrated to establish ICH research bases at the national level, with support for international cooperation. Teaching and research can be linked to provide intellectual support for the cultivation of ICH inheritors. Academic discussion should be encouraged to support ICH inheritors to cooperate with research centers to advance theoretical and applied research. Joint research between ICH protection institutions and universities or research institutes should be promoted, focusing on key issues related to ICH protection.

Provincial ICH Protection Centers and Provincial Art Research Institutes should enhance their professional research capacity. Universities and research organizations should create master's and doctoral programs in ICH and establish ICH laboratories. Research hubs should be established at academic institutions and trade organizations, along with regional ICH research hubs and focal labs. A database of ICH experts should be created based on regional authorities and recognized domestic authorities should be frequently consulted.

Multidisciplinary research platforms focused on important ICH concerns should be encouraged by the government or relevant stakeholders. The construction of ICH majors and academic disciplines in universities should be promoted, which in turn will support the publication, dissemination, and release of ICH research results. National and provincial representative ICH projects should be prioritized, along with continued compilation and publication of ICH catalogs, dictionaries, and other works. Emphasis should be placed on the publication of ICH investigation records, research results, and graphic materials. Research subjects should focus on primary challenges to ICH protection, and collaborative study with academic institutions should be encouraged.

6. Conclusions

In the context of globalization and modernization, the cultivation of ICH inheritors is crucial because these individuals and groups carry a rich and diverse range of cultural memories and skills. The analysis of current practice in Fujian Province reveals that ICH inheritor cultivation is an important way to ensure the continuity and vitality of ICH. However, obstacles to such cultivation persist, including the lack of a systematic approach to nurturing and synchronizing modern educational techniques. These obstacles require further study. Integrating ICH into economic and social development and balancing tradition and modernity are keys to the effective inheritance and vitality of ICH in a rapidly globalizing world. These findings have implications for countries and regions facing similar pressures, and the recommendations included in this work will help these countries and

regions establish a system and mechanism for ICH inheritor cultivation that is aligned with local cultural preservation and sustainable development and based on local realities.

Constructing a new-era system for the cultivation of ICH inheritors is not only an important topic for academic research but also a significant task for social practice. Our research methodology is based on relevant theories and previous studies. We carefully designed and implemented each step to ensure accuracy and scientific rigor. However, limitations exist due to research conditions and the nature of the subject. The individuality of ICH and sampling methods may introduce errors, affecting the generalizability of our results. In data collection, subjective factors can influence techniques, as respondents may be influenced by social expectations or personal biases. In terms of research methods, we used a mixed-method approach. The analysis and conclusions of the survey data are comprehensively proposed based on qualitative and quantitative research, and the two data sets were not analyzed separately, which will affect the rationality of the research conclusions to some extent. To address these limitations, future research can expand the scope to include a wider range of ICH inheritors, utilize various methods for better comparability and applicability, and be mindful of researcher biases during data collection and analysis.

Future research directions could include the following aspects:

First and foremost, it is imperative to delve into the intricacies of nurturing diverse forms of ICH projects and their custodians. By fashioning more personalized and finely-tailored cultivation strategies, we can discern the underlying commonalities that seamlessly harmonize these treasures with the modern educational landscape.

Secondly, there could be an exploration of how the wonders of modern technology, particularly the realm of information technology, can propel the progression of fostering ICH inheritors. Imagine the possibilities of constructing immersive online learning platforms, replete with an abundance of enriching and conveniently accessible educational resources. Moreover, harnessing the power of data analytics and artificial intelligence holds the potential to empower inheritors with profound insights and facilitate the seamless inheritance of ICH.

Lastly, it is important to further study the fusion of cultivating ICH inheritors within the realms of social and economic development. This entails uncovering sustainable models that intertwine the livelihood concerns of inheritors, the commercialization of ICH projects, and the symbiotic promotion of local economic growth, while ardently preserving and inheriting ICH.

In essence, cultivating ICH stands as a profound societal endeavor, necessitating collective determination and unyielding exploration. A period of heightened focus and active participation is encouraged, where roles as custodians of human ICH can be embraced, with a strong commitment to the preservation and inheritance of cultural, economic, and social sustainable development.

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