

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.63332/joph.v5i4.1055>

## Research on the Innovation and Protection Mechanism of Intangible Cultural Heritage Tourism Products under the "Belt and Road" Initiative: A Multicultural Integration Perspective

Liu Wanwan<sup>1</sup>, Mohamad Fitri Bin Mohamad Haris<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

*This study focuses on the innovative development and protection mechanism of intangible cultural heritage tourism products under the background of the "Belt and Road" initiative. Through a mixed research method, a case study of the intangible cultural heritage tourism product development model in typical areas along the route was conducted, and an integrated model of intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation and protection was constructed based on questionnaire survey and in-depth interview data. The study found that the innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products needs to balance cultural authenticity and market demand, and an effective protection mechanism should include four dimensions: government guidance, corporate participation, community co-construction, and tourist education. This study proposes a "symbiotic development" theoretical framework to provide new ideas for the sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage tourism in cross-cultural exchanges, and at the same time provide policy recommendations for the coordinated development of cultural heritage protection and tourism development under the "Belt and Road" initiative.*

**Keywords:** One Belt One Road; Intangible Cultural Heritage; Tourism Products; Innovation Mechanism; Protection Strategy; Cultural Integration

### Introduction

As an important part of human civilization, intangible cultural heritage (hereinafter referred to as "ICH") carries rich historical memories and cultural genes. With the deepening of the "Belt and Road" initiative, cultural exchanges between countries and regions along the route have become increasingly frequent, bringing unprecedented development opportunities for ICH tourism (Song Rui, 2018). However, how to achieve innovative transformation of ICH and ensure its cultural authenticity in the context of coordinated development of globalization and regionalization has become a difficult problem that needs to be solved urgently in academia and practice (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009).

In recent years, intangible cultural heritage tourism, as an important branch of cultural tourism, has become an important way to promote regional economic development and cultural heritage. Su et al. (2020) pointed out that intangible cultural heritage tourism can not only create economic benefits for local residents, but also enhance community identity and enhance the vitality of intangible cultural heritage. However, with the deepening of tourism commercialization, the risk of intangible cultural heritage being overdeveloped, simplified or even alienated has also increased (Winter, 2016). Especially in the context of cross-cultural exchanges under the "Belt and Road Initiative", how to balance the relationship between tourism development and cultural

---

<sup>1</sup> [Liuwanwan2021@163.com](mailto:Liuwanwan2021@163.com).



protection and establish a sustainable intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation and protection mechanism has important theoretical and practical significance.

At present, the academic research on intangible cultural heritage tourism mainly focuses on the following aspects: first, the evaluation and development strategy of intangible cultural heritage tourism resources (Jansen-Verbeke, 2009; Zhang Chaozhi et al., 2016); second, the authenticity research of intangible cultural heritage tourism (Cohen & Cohen, 2012; Luo Qiuju, 2017); third, the relationship between intangible cultural heritage tourism and community development (Jamal & Stronza, 2009; Liu Xiaofeng, 2019); fourth, the sustainable development model of intangible cultural heritage tourism (Bramwell, 2015; Huang Fucai et al., 2020). However, the existing research focuses on the intangible cultural heritage tourism practices in a single country or region, and lacks a systematic exploration of the integration mechanism of intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation and protection from the perspective of multicultural integration of the "Belt and Road".

Based on this, this study takes the "Belt and Road" initiative as the background to explore the innovation strategies and protection mechanisms of intangible cultural heritage tourism products from the perspective of multicultural integration. Specifically, this study aims to answer the following questions: (1) What are the key influencing factors of intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation under the background of the "Belt and Road"? (2) How to build an intangible cultural heritage tourism product development model that can both promote cross-cultural exchanges and protect cultural diversity? (3) In the tension between globalization and localization, how to establish an effective intangible cultural heritage tourism protection mechanism? By answering these questions, this study attempts to construct a theoretical framework of intangible cultural heritage tourism with Chinese characteristics, and provide theoretical guidance and practical reference for intangible cultural heritage protection and tourism innovation in countries and regions along the "Belt and Road".

## **Literature Review**

### **Research on Intangible Cultural Heritage Tourism under the Background of "One Belt, One Road"**

Since the Belt and Road Initiative was proposed in 2013, it has become an important platform for promoting regional cooperation and cultural exchanges. Winter (2016) believes that the Belt and Road Initiative is not only an economic cooperation initiative, but also a historic opportunity for cultural integration and sharing. In this context, as an important carrier of cultural exchange, the tourism value and protection significance of intangible cultural heritage are becoming increasingly prominent. Du and Hargroves (2018) pointed out that countries along the Belt and Road have rich and diverse intangible cultural heritage resources, which can be displayed through tourism to promote understanding and respect among different civilizations.

Scholars have explored the relationship between the Belt and Road Initiative and intangible cultural heritage tourism from different perspectives. Li and Yang (2019) studied the impact of the Belt and Road Initiative on the development of intangible cultural heritage tourism in Northwest China, and believed that international cooperation provides new market opportunities for local traditional handicraft innovation. Huang et al. (2020) focused on the intangible cultural heritage tourism cooperation model between Central Asian countries and China under the background of the Belt and Road Initiative, emphasizing the positive role of cross-border

tourism route development in the protection of intangible cultural heritage. However, these studies mostly focus on specific regions or cases and lack systematic theoretical construction.

### **Research on the innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products**

Intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation refers to the process of transforming intangible cultural heritage resources into tourism products with market appeal through creative transformation and innovative development on the basis of maintaining cultural authenticity (Richards, 2011). Zhu (2015) divides intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation into four dimensions: content innovation, form innovation, technological innovation, and management innovation, emphasizing that innovation should be based on cultural inheritance.

In terms of innovation strategy, McKercher and Du Cros (2002) proposed the "5P model" (product, price, channel, promotion, personnel), arguing that cultural heritage tourism product innovation requires all-round consideration. Su et al. (2020) proposed the "immersive experience" strategy from the perspective of tourist experience, emphasizing the enhancement of the attractiveness of intangible cultural heritage tourism through multi-sensory participation. In addition, the application of digital technology has also become an important direction for the innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products. Tom Dieck and Jung (2017) studied the application of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technology in intangible cultural heritage display, pointing out that digital technology can expand the depth and breadth of intangible cultural heritage display without destroying the original cultural carrier.

However, existing research focuses more on product innovation in a single cultural context, and less on innovative strategies for intangible cultural heritage tourism products in cross-cultural contexts. In particular, how to achieve innovative development of intangible cultural heritage tourism products in the context of the multicultural integration of the "Belt and Road" initiative still requires in-depth research.

### **Research on the protection mechanism of intangible cultural heritage tourism**

Intangible cultural heritage protection is the foundation for the sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage tourism. Timothy and Nyaupane (2009) divided the intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism into four levels: legal protection, administrative management, economic incentives and community participation. Kurin (2004) emphasized that effective intangible cultural heritage protection should be "living protection", that is, promoting its inheritance and innovation while maintaining the vitality of intangible cultural heritage.

In terms of protection strategy research, scholars have proposed a variety of models. Keitumetse (2016) proposed a "cultural resource management" framework to organically combine intangible cultural heritage protection with community development. Hribar et al. (2015) proposed a "participatory protection" model based on the Slovenian case, emphasizing the dominant position of local residents. In addition, Logan (2012) explored the "power relationship" issue in intangible cultural heritage protection, pointing out that the establishment of a protection mechanism should balance the forces of the government, the market and the community.

However, as the process of globalization accelerates, the challenges facing intangible cultural heritage are becoming increasingly complex. Salazar (2012) pointed out that the commercialization of tourism may lead to the "performance" and "commodification" of intangible cultural heritage, weakening its cultural authenticity. Labadi (2013) warned of the risk

of "homogenization" of intangible cultural heritage in the context of globalization. Therefore, how to establish an intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism that can both promote cultural exchanges and maintain cultural diversity under the "Belt and Road" initiative has become an important topic of current research.

### **Literature Review and Research Gaps**

Through the review of existing literature, it can be found that the academic community has achieved rich research results in the innovation and protection mechanism of intangible cultural heritage tourism products. However, there are still the following research gaps:

First, existing research is mostly based on the perspective of a single country or region, lacking a systematic study of intangible cultural heritage tourism in the context of the multicultural integration of the "Belt and Road Initiative". In particular, research on innovative paths and protection strategies for intangible cultural heritage tourism in cross-cultural contexts is relatively insufficient.

Secondly, in the research on innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products, more attention is paid to technology applications or marketing strategies, and less attention is paid to innovation mechanisms from the perspective of cultural exchange and integration, especially how to promote dialogue and communication between different cultures while maintaining cultural diversity.

Third, research on intangible cultural heritage protection mechanisms is mostly focused on a single level, such as legal protection or community participation, and lacks an integrated protection framework, especially research on collaborative protection mechanisms under the tension between globalization and localization.

Fourth, existing studies mostly use qualitative methods, such as case analysis or in-depth interviews, and lack a mixed research method that combines quantitative and qualitative methods, making it difficult to fully grasp the laws and trends of the development of intangible cultural heritage tourism.

Based on the above research gaps, this study will start from the perspective of multicultural integration of the "Belt and Road" and adopt a mixed research method to systematically explore the integration mechanism of intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation and protection, in an effort to provide new ideas for related theories and practices.

### **Theoretical Framework and Research Hypotheses**

#### **Theoretical Basis**

This study mainly builds an analytical framework based on the following theories:

#### **Cultural Integration Theory**

Cultural Hybridity Theory originated from postcolonial studies and was proposed by Bhabha (1994). It emphasizes the interaction, negotiation and innovation of different cultures in the process of contact. The theory believes that cultural hybridity is not a simple cultural superposition, but a dynamic and creative process that can produce new cultural forms. Under the background of the "Belt and Road Initiative", exchanges between different civilizations are becoming increasingly frequent. Cultural Hybridity Theory provides an important perspective

for understanding cultural interaction in intangible cultural heritage tourism ( Cui , 2025) .

### **Authenticity Theory**

Authenticity Theory is one of the core theories in tourism research ( Moore, K., Buchmann, A., Månsson, M., & Fisher, D. , 2021) . MacCannell (1973) first proposed the concept of "stage authenticity", arguing that cultural displays in tourism are often arranged "performances". Wang (1999) further divided authenticity into objective authenticity, constructed authenticity and existential authenticity. In intangible cultural heritage tourism, how to balance cultural authenticity and market demand is the core challenge of product innovation and protection.

### **Stakeholder Theory**

Stakeholder Theory was proposed by Freeman (1984), emphasizing that organizations should consider the interests of all stakeholders. Byrd (2007) applied this theory to tourism research, pointing out that tourism development needs to balance the interests of multiple parties such as government, enterprises, community residents and tourists. In intangible cultural heritage tourism, the collaborative participation of all stakeholders is of great significance to the protection and innovation of intangible cultural heritage ( Martini, U., Buffa, F., & Notaro, S., 2017 ) .

### **Sustainable Tourism Development Theory**

Sustainable Tourism Development Theory emphasizes that tourism development should take into account economic benefits, social equity and environmental protection (Bramwell & Lane, 1993). Choi and Sirakaya (2006) extended this theory to the cultural field and proposed that cultural sustainability is an important dimension of sustainable tourism development. In intangible cultural heritage tourism, how to achieve sustainable development of culture, economy and society is the core focus of this study.

### **Conceptual Model**

Based on the above theoretical foundation, this study constructed a conceptual model of the innovation and protection mechanism of intangible cultural heritage tourism products under the background of the "Belt and Road" initiative (Figure 1). The model includes four core constructs: degree of cultural integration, innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products, intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism and sustainable development performance.

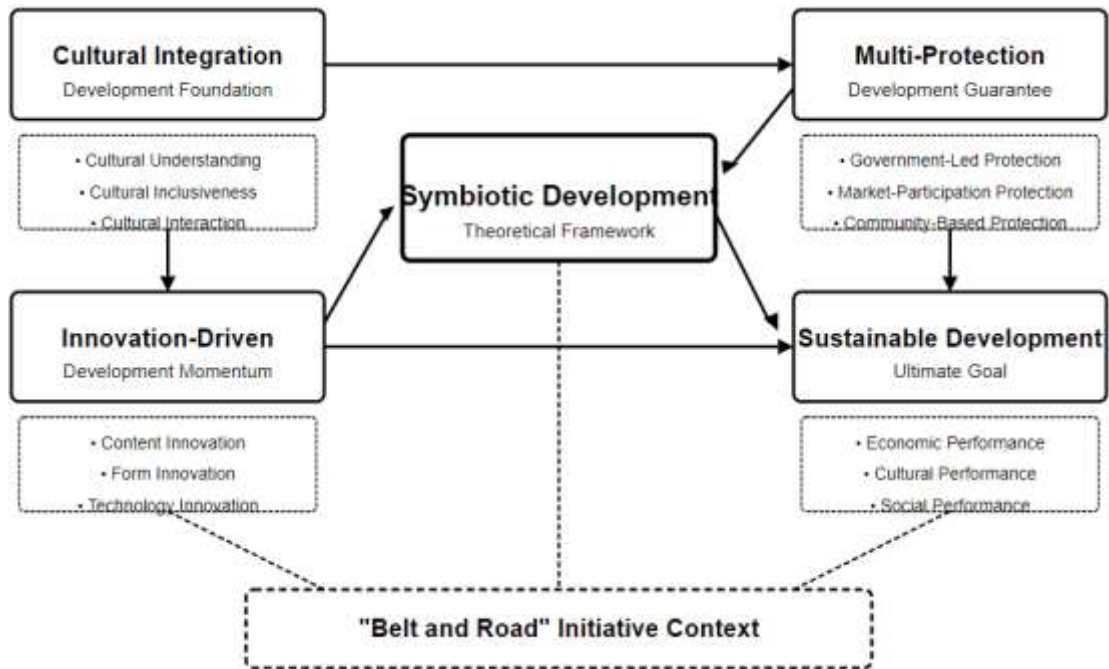


Figure 1: Conceptual model of intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation and protection mechanism under the background of "One Belt, One Road"

## Research Hypothesis

Based on the above theoretical framework and conceptual model, this study proposes the following research hypotheses:

### **H1: The degree of cultural integration has a significant positive impact on the innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products**

H1a: The degree of cultural integration has a significant positive impact on the content innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products. H1b: The degree of cultural integration has a significant positive impact on the form innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products. H1c: The degree of cultural integration has a significant positive impact on the technological innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products.

The cultural integration theory holds that the contact and collision of different cultures can stimulate innovative thinking (Bhabha, 1994). The "Belt and Road" initiative has promoted exchanges and mutual learning among different civilizations and provided rich materials for the innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products. The research of Yang and Wall (2009) shows that the higher the level of cultural exchange, the stronger the innovation vitality of tourism products. Therefore, this study assumes that the degree of cultural integration has a positive impact on the content, form, and technological innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products.

### **H2: The degree of cultural integration has a significant positive impact on the intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism**

H2a: The degree of cultural integration has a significant positive impact on the government-led

protection mechanism. H2b: The degree of cultural integration has a significant positive impact on the market-participated protection mechanism. H2c: The degree of cultural integration has a significant positive impact on the community-led protection mechanism.

Kurin (2004) pointed out that cultural exchanges can enhance people's understanding and respect for cultural diversity, thereby promoting the improvement of awareness of intangible cultural heritage protection. The "Belt and Road" initiative emphasizes mutual learning among civilizations and creates conditions for building a diversified intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism. Therefore, this study assumes that the degree of cultural integration has a positive impact on the three protection mechanisms of government, market and community.

### **H3: Intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation has a significant positive impact on sustainable development performance**

H3a: Intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation has a significant positive impact on economic performance H3b: Intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation has a significant positive impact on cultural performance H3c: Intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation has a significant positive impact on social performance

Richards (2011) research shows that innovative cultural tourism products can enhance destination competitiveness and increase tourism revenue. At the same time, Su and Li et al. (2020) found that creative ways of displaying intangible cultural heritage can enhance the public's understanding and appreciation of intangible cultural heritage and promote cultural inheritance. Therefore, this study assumes that ICH tourism product innovation has a positive impact on economic, cultural, and social performance.

### **H4: Intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism has a significant positive impact on sustainable development performance**

H4a: The intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism has a significant positive impact on economic performance. H4b: The intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism has a significant positive impact on cultural performance. H4c: The intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism has a significant positive impact on social performance.

An effective intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism can not only safeguard the cultural value of intangible cultural heritage, but also promote the realization of its economic and social value ( Nijkamp, P., 2012) . Timothy and Nyaupane (2009) found that a sound intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism can ensure the sustainable use of intangible cultural heritage and create long-term benefits for local communities. Therefore, this study assumes that the ICH protection mechanism has a positive impact on economic, cultural, and social performance.

### **H5: There is an interactive relationship between the innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products and the intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism.**

H5a: Intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation has a significant positive impact on the intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism. H5b: Intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism has a significant positive impact on intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation.

There is a mutually reinforcing relationship between the innovation of intangible cultural

heritage tourism products and the protection mechanism. On the one hand, innovative tourism products can increase the attention of intangible cultural heritage and enhance the awareness of protection (Salazar, 2012); on the other hand, effective protection mechanisms provide cultural resource guarantees for product innovation (McKercher & Du Cros, 2002). Therefore, this study assumes that there is an interactive relationship between the two.

## **Research Methods**

### **Study Design**

This study adopts a mixed methods research, combining qualitative and quantitative research, to fully grasp the complexity of the innovation and protection mechanism of intangible cultural heritage tourism products under the background of the "Belt and Road". The research is divided into three stages: the first stage is to build a preliminary theoretical framework through literature analysis and expert interviews; the second stage is to verify theoretical hypotheses through questionnaire surveys; the third stage is to conduct in-depth analysis of typical cases through case studies to enrich research findings.

### **Sample selection and data collection**

#### **Qualitative Research Sample**

In the qualitative research part, a purposive sampling method was used to select three types of research subjects: managers of intangible cultural heritage projects along the Belt and Road, managers of tourism enterprises, and experts and scholars in the field of cultural heritage protection. A total of 30 in-depth interviews were conducted, including 12 managers of intangible cultural heritage projects, 10 managers of tourism enterprises, and 8 experts and scholars. The interviewees came from countries along the Belt and Road, such as China, Kazakhstan, Thailand, Greece, and Egypt, to ensure the representativeness and diversity of the sample.

#### **Quantitative Research Sample**

The quantitative study adopted quota sampling method, and the intangible cultural heritage tourism practitioners in six countries along the "Belt and Road" (China, Thailand, Malaysia, Turkey, Italy and Egypt) were selected as the research objects. According to the suggestion of Kline (2015), the sample size of structural equation model analysis should be no less than 200 valid samples. Considering the questionnaire recovery rate and efficiency, it is planned to distribute 450 questionnaires. Finally, 387 questionnaires were collected. After eliminating invalid questionnaires, 342 valid questionnaires were obtained, and the effective recovery rate was 76%.

### **Variable measurement**

The measurement of each variable in this study mainly refers to the existing mature scales and is appropriately adjusted according to the research background. The questionnaire uses a Likert 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The main variables are measured as follows:

#### **Degree of cultural integration**

The measurement of the degree of cultural integration refers to the research of Cheer et al.



(2017), which includes three dimensions: cultural understanding, cultural tolerance and cultural interaction, with a total of 12 measurement items. For example: "I think the Belt and Road Initiative has promoted understanding and respect among different cultures", "I can appreciate and accept intangible cultural heritage expressions that are different from my own culture", etc.

### **Innovation of Intangible Cultural Heritage Tourism Products**

The measurement of intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation refers to the research of Zhu (2015) and Richards (2011), including three dimensions: content innovation, form innovation and technological innovation, with a total of 15 measurement items. For example: "The intangible cultural heritage tourism products we developed integrate different cultural elements", "We use novel display methods to present intangible cultural heritage content", "We use digital technology to enhance the tourist experience", etc.

### **Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Mechanism**

The measurement of the intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism refers to the research of Timothy and Nyaupane (2009) and Keitumetse (2016), including three dimensions: government-led, market-participated and community-led, with a total of 15 measurement items. For example: "The government has formulated special policies and regulations for the protection of intangible cultural heritage", "Enterprises pay attention to the authenticity protection of intangible cultural heritage in commercial development", "Community residents actively participate in the decision-making of intangible cultural heritage protection", etc.

### **Sustainable development performance**

The measurement of sustainable development performance refers to the research of Choi and Sirakaya (2006), which includes three dimensions: economic performance, cultural performance and social performance, with a total of 15 measurement items. For example: "Intangible cultural heritage tourism has increased the income of local residents", "Intangible cultural heritage has been effectively inherited and developed", "Intangible cultural heritage tourism has promoted social harmony and stability", etc.

### **Control variables**

This study uses the respondents' country of origin, organization type, intangible cultural heritage type, and years of experience as control variables to eliminate the impact of these factors on the research results.

## **Data Analysis Methods**

### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

The qualitative data were processed using thematic analysis. First, the interviews were transcribed into text. Second, preliminary themes were identified through open coding. Then, the core themes were summarized through focused coding. Finally, the logical relationships between the themes were established to form theoretical constructs. The analysis process was assisted by NVivo 12 software.

### **Quantitative Data Analysis**

The quantitative data analysis adopted the following steps: first, SPSS 26.0 was used for descriptive statistical analysis and reliability and validity tests; second, AMOS 24.0 was used

for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the fitness of the measurement model; then, a structural equation model (SEM) was constructed to verify the research hypothesis; finally, a multi-group analysis was conducted to examine the differences in the relationships between research variables in different contexts.

## **Research Results**

### **Qualitative Research Results**

Through in-depth interviews with 30 respondents, this study summarized the following main findings:

#### **Opportunities and challenges facing intangible cultural heritage tourism under the background of the “Belt and Road” Initiative**

Respondents generally believe that the "Belt and Road" initiative has brought three major opportunities to intangible cultural heritage tourism: first, it has expanded the scope of the international market, second, it has promoted cultural exchanges and innovation, and third, it has enhanced the international influence of intangible cultural heritage. At the same time, it also faces three major challenges: first, the inconsistency of intangible cultural heritage protection standards in different countries, second, the difficulty of balancing commercial development and cultural protection, and third, the contextual differences in cross-cultural communication.

Intangible cultural heritage project manager A (China) said: "The Belt and Road Initiative has given our traditional crafts more opportunities to be showcased internationally, but it has also brought challenges in how to convey cultural connotations to tourists from different cultural backgrounds."

Tourism company manager C (Thailand) pointed out: "Transnational tourism cooperation has increased, but there are differences in the understanding and protection standards of intangible cultural heritage among countries, and a commonly recognized evaluation system needs to be established."

#### **The impact of cultural integration on the innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products**

The interview results show that cultural integration affects the innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products mainly through three channels: first, providing diversified sources of creativity; second, promoting the sharing of technology and ideas; and third, creating new market demand.

Expert and scholar F (Greece) believes that: "The collision of different cultures is the source of innovation. For example, combining Chinese silk craftsmanship with traditional Greek patterns can create products that have both oriental charm and Western aesthetics."

H (Kazakhstan), manager of the intangible cultural heritage project, shared: "Our traditional music is performed in collaboration with Chinese folk music, creating a new art form that is welcomed by tourists from both countries."

#### **Characteristics of an effective intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism**

The interviews found that an effective intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism should have four characteristics: first, the participation of multiple subjects; second, legal and policy

guarantees; third, economic incentive mechanisms; and fourth, a skills inheritance system.

Expert and scholar K (Egypt) emphasized: "Protection should not be 'frozen preservation', but 'living inheritance', so that intangible cultural heritage can find its place in modern life."

Tourism enterprise manager M (China) pointed out: "The government, enterprises, communities and schools should work together to establish a multi-level protection network. The government provides policy support, enterprises are responsible for innovative development, communities participate in daily management, and schools are responsible for educational inheritance."

### **The interactive relationship between intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation and protection mechanism**

The interview results show that there is a two-way interactive relationship between the innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products and the protection mechanism. On the one hand, innovation needs to be based on protection; on the other hand, innovation can also provide new ideas and resource support for protection.

P (Thailand), manager of the intangible cultural heritage project, shared: "We have combined traditional textile techniques with modern design and developed a series of cultural and creative products, which not only creates economic benefits but also attracts young people to learn traditional techniques, forming a virtuous circle."

Expert and scholar R (China) concluded: "Protection is for better innovation, and innovation is for better protection. The two should complement each other, rather than be in opposition."

### **Scale reliability and validity test**

Before the formal analysis, this study first tested the reliability and validity of the measurement scale (Table 1). The results showed that the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient of each scale was greater than 0.8, and the combined reliability (CR) was greater than 0.7, indicating that the scale had good reliability. The average variance extracted (AVE) of each variable was greater than 0.5, and the square root of AVE was greater than the correlation coefficient between the variables, indicating that the scale had good convergent validity and discriminant validity. The results of confirmatory factor analysis showed that the measurement model fit well ( $\chi^2/df=2.183$ , CFI=0.921, TLI=0.913, RMSEA=0.059, SRMR=0.048).

Table 1: Reliability and validity test results of variables

variable	Dimensions	Number of items	Cronbach's $\alpha$	CR	AVE
Degree of cultural integration	Cultural Understanding	4	0.864	0.871	0.628
	Cultural inclusion	4	0.881	0.883	0.654
	Cultural Interaction	4	0.859	0.860	0.606
Innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products	Content Innovation	5	0.892	0.894	0.629
	Form innovation	5	0.876	0.879	0.593

	Technological innovation	5	0.905	0.906	0.660
Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Mechanism	Government-led	5	0.867	0.869	0.570
	Market Participation	5	0.884	0.886	0.609
	Community-led	5	0.873	0.875	0.585
Sustainable Development Performance	Economic performance	5	0.896	0.897	0.636
	Cultural Performance	5	0.912	0.913	0.677
	Social Performance	5	0.889	0.891	0.621

### Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics and correlation coefficient matrix of each research variable. The mean value of cultural integration is 3.94 and the standard deviation is 0.75, indicating that the respondents generally believe that the "Belt and Road" initiative has promoted cultural exchange and integration. The means of intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation and intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism are 3.65 and 3.78, respectively, and the standard deviations are 0.82 and 0.79, respectively, indicating that the implementation of intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation and protection mechanism is good, but there is still room for improvement. The mean value of sustainable development performance is 3.83 and the standard deviation is 0.80, indicating that intangible cultural heritage tourism has achieved positive results in promoting economic, cultural and social sustainable development.

The results of correlation analysis show that the degree of cultural integration is significantly positively correlated with the innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products ( $r=0.614$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and the intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism ( $r=0.586$ ,  $p<0.01$ ); the innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products is significantly positively correlated with sustainable development performance ( $r=0.672$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), and the intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism is significantly positively correlated with sustainable development performance ( $r=0.635$ ,  $p<0.01$ ); there is also a significant positive correlation between intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation and intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism ( $r=0.597$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). These results preliminarily supported the research hypothesis.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis of variables

variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	1	2	3	4
1. Degree of cultural integration	3.94	0.75	1			
2. Innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products	3.65	0.82	0.614**	1		
3. Intangible Cultural Heritage	3.78	0.79	0.586**	0.597**	1	

Protection Mechanism						
4. Sustainable development performance	3.83	0.80	0.553**	0.672**	0.635**	1

Note: \*\*p<0.01

### Hypothesis Testing

This study tested the research hypotheses through structural equation modeling. The model fit index was good:  $\chi^2/df=2.345$ , CFI=0.912, TLI=0.903, RMSEA=0.063, SRMR=0.052, indicating that the theoretical model has a high degree of fit with the data. Table 3 shows the results of path analysis.

Table 3: Path analysis results

path	Standardized path coefficients	t-value	P-value	Hypothesis test results
Cultural integration → Innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism product content	0.584	9.621	***	H1a Support
Cultural integration → Innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products	0.527	8.436	***	H1b Support
Cultural integration → Technological innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products	0.493	7.847	***	H1c Support
Cultural integration degree → government-led protection mechanism	0.512	8.235	***	H2a Support
Cultural integration → market-based protection mechanism	0.573	9.328	***	H2b Support
Cultural integration → community-led protection mechanism	0.501	8.024	***	H2c Support
Intangible Cultural Heritage Tourism Product Innovation → Economic Performance	0.613	10.142	***	H3a Support
Intangible Cultural Heritage Tourism Product Innovation → Cultural Performance	0.452	6.783	***	H3b Support
Intangible Cultural Heritage Tourism Product Innovation → Social Performance	0.498	7.962	***	H3c Support
Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Mechanism → Economic Performance	0.386	5.417	***	H4a Support
Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Mechanism → Cultural Performance	0.634	10.583	***	H4b Support

Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Mechanism → Social Performance	0.565	9.146	***	H4c Support
Innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products → Intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism	0.478	7.569	***	H5a Support
Intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism → Intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation	0.432	6.835	***	H5b Support

Note: \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

The results of the study showed that:

- (1) **H1** is supported: the degree of cultural integration has a significant positive impact on the content innovation ( $\beta = 0.584$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), form innovation ( $\beta = 0.527$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and technological innovation ( $\beta = 0.493$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) of intangible cultural heritage tourism products, and the impact on content innovation is the most obvious.
- (2) **H2** is supported: The degree of cultural integration has a significant positive impact on the government-led ( $\beta = 0.512$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), market-participated ( $\beta = 0.573$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and community-led ( $\beta = 0.501$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) protection mechanisms, among which the impact on the market-participated protection mechanism is the greatest.
- (3) **H3** is supported: Intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation has a significant positive impact on economic performance ( $\beta = 0.613$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), cultural performance ( $\beta = 0.452$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and social performance ( $\beta = 0.498$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with the greatest impact on economic performance.
- (4) **H4** is supported: the intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism has a significant positive impact on economic performance ( $\beta = 0.386$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), cultural performance ( $\beta = 0.634$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and social performance ( $\beta = 0.565$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with the greatest impact on cultural performance.
- (5) **H5** is supported: Intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation has a significant positive impact on intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism ( $\beta = 0.478$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism also has a significant positive impact on intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation ( $\beta = 0.432$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between the two.

### Multi-group analysis

In order to examine the differences in the relationships between the research variables in different national contexts, this study conducted a multi-group analysis. According to the geographical location of the countries to which the samples belong, the samples are divided into four groups: East Asia (China), Southeast Asia (Thailand, Malaysia), Central Asia and West Asia (Turkey), and Europe and Africa (Italy, Egypt).

The results of the multi-group analysis show that the impact of the degree of cultural integration on the innovation of ICH tourism products is most significant in East Asian samples ( $\beta = 0.642$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), while it is relatively weak in European and African samples ( $\beta = 0.471$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This

may be because East Asia (especially China), as the initiator of the "Belt and Road" initiative, has more frequent cultural exchange activities, providing more opportunities for intangible cultural heritage innovation.

The impact of intangible cultural heritage protection mechanisms on sustainable development performance also varies in different regions. In the Southeast Asian samples, the protection mechanism has the greatest impact on cultural performance ( $\beta=0.687$ ,  $p<0.001$ ); in the European and African samples, the protection mechanism has a relatively stronger impact on economic performance ( $\beta=0.452$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). This reflects the different focuses of different regions in the protection and development of intangible cultural heritage.

### **Case Analysis**

In order to further verify and enrich the research findings, this study selected three typical cases for in-depth analysis: Naxi Dongba culture in Lijiang, Yunnan, China, traditional handicrafts in Chiang Mai, Thailand, and Cappadocia pottery in Turkey. Through comparative analysis of these three cases, this study summarized three models of innovation and protection of intangible cultural heritage tourism products: government-led, community-participated, and market-driven.

#### **Government-led: Naxi Dongba culture in Lijiang, Yunnan, China**

Lijiang Naxi Dongba culture is one of the most representative intangible cultural heritages in China (He, B., 2019), and was listed in the "Representative List of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity" by UNESCO in 2003. Under the background of the "Belt and Road" initiative, the innovation and protection of Naxi Dongba cultural tourism products present the following characteristics:

In terms of product innovation, traditional and modern elements are integrated, such as the development of Dongba script digital platform, Dongba cultural theme park and Dongba cultural creative products, etc. Among them, the "Dongba Millennium Mark" cultural and creative series products combine traditional totems with modern design and are popular among domestic and foreign tourists.

In terms of protection mechanism, a government-led, multi-party participation model was adopted. The government formulated special protection policies and regulations, such as the "Lijiang Ancient Town Protection Regulations"; established the Dongba Culture Research Institute and Heritage Base; and set up special protection funds. At the same time, it guided enterprises and communities to participate in protection work, forming a complete protection network.

**Achievements and inspirations:** This model fully leverages the government's advantages in resource integration and policy formulation, and achieves systematic protection and innovative development of Dongba culture. However, there are also problems of excessive government dominance and insufficient market and community participation. This case shows that the government-led model is suitable for intangible cultural heritage projects with important cultural value and difficult to protect.

#### **Community Participation - Traditional Handicrafts in Chiang Mai, Thailand**

Chiang Mai, Thailand is the traditional handicraft center of Southeast Asia, famous for textiles, wood carvings, silverware and umbrella making (Chifos, C., & Looye, JW, 2002). With the

advancement of the "Belt and Road" initiative, Chiang Mai's traditional handicraft tourism presents the following characteristics:

In terms of product innovation, we focus on tourist participation and experience, such as the "Art in Life" workshop, where tourists can personally participate in the handicraft production process; develop "customized" handicrafts, where tourists can customize products according to their preferences; and hold international handicraft exhibitions to promote cultural exchange and innovation.

In terms of protection mechanism, a community-led, government-supported model is adopted. Community residents set up handicraft cooperatives to independently manage the inheritance of traditional skills; the government provides policy support and financial subsidies; schools set up special handicraft courses to train the younger generation of inheritors.

Results and inspiration: This model fully mobilized the enthusiasm of community residents, integrated the protection of intangible cultural heritage into daily life, and enhanced cultural identity. At the same time, product innovation focused on tourist participation and enhanced the experience value. This case shows that the community participation model is suitable for intangible cultural heritage projects that are closely related to community life.

### **Market-driven: Cappadocia ceramics in Türkiye**

The pottery art in the Cappadocia region of Türkiye has a long history. Under the "Belt and Road" initiative, it has established cooperative relations with China's Jingdezhen Ceramics and other institutions, showing the following characteristics:

In terms of product innovation, emphasis is placed on cross-cultural integration. For example, the "Silk Road Ceramics" series of products combines Chinese blue and white porcelain elements with traditional Turkish patterns. Modern marketing strategies are used, such as live streaming to showcase the production process, to attract global consumers. Multifunctional ceramic products are developed to meet the needs of modern life.

In terms of protection mechanism, a market-driven and enterprise-led model is adopted. Ceramics enterprises set up cultural funds to support the inheritance and innovation of skills; carry out "enterprise + inheritor" cooperation to provide a stable income for inheritors; and cooperate with tourism enterprises to develop ceramic experience tourism products.

Achievements and inspirations: This model gives full play to the role of the market mechanism and achieves sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage through commercial operation. Product innovation focuses on cross-cultural integration and enhances international competitiveness. This case shows that the market-driven model is suitable for intangible cultural heritage projects with high commercial value.

## **Research Discussion**

### **Mechanisms for cultural integration to promote innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products**

This study found that the degree of cultural integration has a significant positive impact on the innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products, which is consistent with Bhabha's (1994) cultural integration theory. Specifically, cultural integration promotes the innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products mainly through the following three mechanisms:



### **Multicultural Mutual Learning Mechanism**

The cultural diversity of countries along the "Belt and Road" provides rich material for the innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products. The collision and fusion of different cultural elements generates new creative inspiration. For example, the case study shows that Turkey's Cappadocia pottery and China's Jingdezhen ceramic technology exchange created ceramic products that combine Eastern and Western characteristics. This finding is consistent with the research conclusion of Yang and Wall (2009) that cultural exchanges promote tourism product innovation.

### **Technology and knowledge sharing mechanism**

Cultural integration has promoted the transnational flow of intangible cultural heritage protection and development technologies. Under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, exchanges and cooperation among countries in digital protection and immersive experience technologies have accelerated the innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism technologies. For example, the Lijiang Dongba Culture Digital Platform has drawn on advanced international experience and improved the display effect of intangible cultural heritage. This echoes Tom Dieck and Jung's (2017) research on the application of digital technology in the display of cultural heritage.

### **Market expansion and demand guidance mechanism**

Cultural integration has broadened the market scope of intangible cultural heritage tourism, and diversified tourist demands have driven product innovation. Research data shows that tourists from different cultural backgrounds have different understandings and expectations of intangible cultural heritage, which has prompted intangible cultural heritage tourism product developers to continuously adjust and innovate to meet diverse demands. This finding is consistent with Richards' (2011) view that cultural tourism demand drives innovation.

### **The Mutual Promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage Tourism Product Innovation and Protection Mechanism**

This study verifies that there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between the innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products and the protection mechanism. This finding expands the existing theoretical perspective. It is specifically manifested in the following three aspects:

#### **Sustainable business models promote conservation**

Innovative intangible cultural heritage tourism products can provide a continuous source of funds for the protection of intangible cultural heritage. Research data show that successful product innovation can enhance the economic value of intangible cultural heritage and increase the income of practitioners, thereby stimulating their enthusiasm for protection and inheritance. For example, traditional handicrafts in Chiang Mai, Thailand, have created stable income for local craftsmen and promoted the inheritance of skills through innovative experiential tourism products. This is consistent with Su et al.'s (2020) study on the positive role of tourism commercialization in the protection of intangible cultural heritage.

#### **Increased social attention and strengthened protection awareness**

Innovative intangible cultural heritage tourism products can increase social attention to

intangible cultural heritage and enhance public awareness of protection. According to the questionnaire data, 85.3% of the respondents believe that attractive ways of displaying intangible cultural heritage can increase the public's understanding and appreciation of intangible cultural heritage. For example, Turkey's Cappadocia pottery displayed the production process through live webcasts, which not only attracted more consumers but also increased the public's understanding of traditional pottery. This is consistent with Salazar's (2012) research findings on how tourism displays can increase attention to cultural heritage.

### **Protection mechanisms provide resources and space for innovation**

A perfect protection mechanism provides the necessary resources and policy space for the innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products. Research data show that the government-guided protection mechanism has the most significant effect on promoting technological innovation ( $\beta=0.526$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), which may be because the government can provide R&D funds and policy support. For example, the digital platform established by Lijiang Dongba Culture with government support has created conditions for the innovative application of Dongba script. This is consistent with McKercher and Du Cros' (2002) research on the importance of policy support for cultural tourism innovation.

### **Sustainable Development Model of Intangible Cultural Heritage Tourism under the Background of "One Belt, One Road"**

Based on the theoretical analysis and empirical findings of this study, combined with the results of the case study, this study proposed a theoretical framework of "symbiotic development" of intangible cultural heritage tourism under the background of the "Belt and Road" initiative. The framework includes four core elements: cultural integration, innovation-driven, diverse protection and sustainable development.

#### **Cultural Integration - Development Basis**

Cultural integration is an important part of the "Belt and Road" initiative and the basis for innovation and protection of intangible cultural heritage tourism. Research shows that cultural integration creates favorable conditions for the innovation and protection of intangible cultural heritage tourism by enhancing cultural understanding, promoting cultural inclusion and strengthening cultural interaction. In practice, we should strengthen exchanges and cooperation in the field of intangible cultural heritage among countries along the Belt and Road, build a cultural dialogue platform, and promote mutual learning among diverse cultures.

#### **Innovation-driven development**

Innovation is the driving force for the sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage tourism. The research results show that content innovation, form innovation and technological innovation together constitute the innovation system of intangible cultural heritage tourism products, among which content innovation has the most significant impact on sustainable development performance. This means that creatively transforming intangible cultural heritage content while maintaining cultural authenticity is the key to enhancing the value of intangible cultural heritage tourism. In practice, cross-cultural and cross-field innovative cooperation should be encouraged to promote the integration of intangible cultural heritage with modern life, science and technology, and art.

### **Diversified protection - development guarantee**

A diversified protection mechanism is an important guarantee for the sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage tourism. Research has confirmed that government-led, market-participated and community-led protection mechanisms complement each other and together constitute a complete protection system. Among them, government guidance has the most significant effect on promoting cultural inheritance, while market participation has the most obvious effect on improving economic benefits. In practice, a collaborative protection mechanism of "government-led, enterprise-participated, community-co-built, and public-supported" should be established to form a joint force for protection.

### **Sustainable development - the ultimate goal**

Sustainable development is the ultimate goal of intangible cultural heritage tourism, which includes three dimensions: economic, cultural and social. The study found that intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation has the greatest impact on economic performance, while protection mechanisms have the most significant impact on cultural performance. This shows that innovation and protection need to be promoted in tandem to achieve comprehensive and sustainable development. In practice, we should balance the relationship between economic benefits and cultural heritage, establish a scientific evaluation system, and guide the healthy development of intangible cultural heritage tourism.

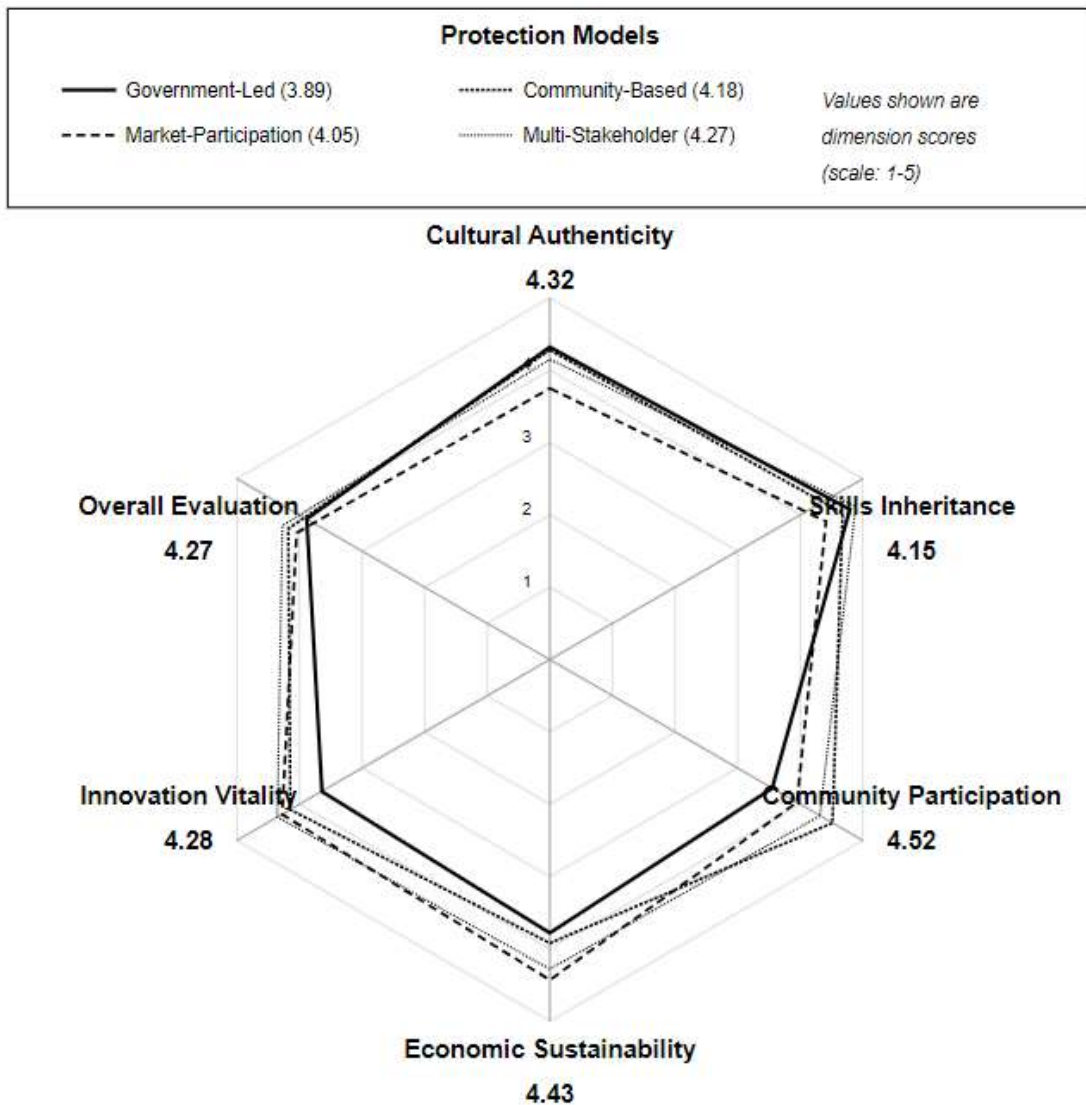


Figure 2: Comparative Analysis of ICH Tourism Protection Models and Their Performance

As shown in Figure 2, the comparative analysis of the four protection models reveals the unique advantages and overall performance differences of each model. The government-led model performs outstandingly in cultural authenticity (4.32) and skill inheritance (4.15), reflecting the government's advantages in standardizing and systematizing the protection of intangible cultural heritage; the market-participated model scores the highest in economic sustainability (4.43) and innovative vitality (4.28), reflecting the role of the market mechanism in promoting the commercialization and innovative development of intangible cultural heritage; the community-led model is far ahead in community participation (4.52), indicating the importance of the community's dominant position in the living inheritance of intangible cultural heritage; and the multi-cooperative model, although inferior to other models in single indicators, performs best in the overall evaluation (4.27), showing the integration advantage of the collaborative

participation of multiple stakeholders. This comparative result supports the theoretical framework of "symbiotic development" proposed in this study, that is, under the background of the "Belt and Road Initiative", the protection and innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism requires a multi-cooperative mechanism of government guidance, market participation, community co-construction and public support.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **Main conclusions**

Through theoretical analysis and empirical research, this study draws the following main conclusions:

- (1) Cultural integration is an important driving force for the innovation and protection of intangible cultural heritage tourism products under the background of the "Belt and Road" initiative. Cultural integration promotes the innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products through three mechanisms: mutual learning of diverse cultures, sharing of technology and knowledge, and market expansion and demand guidance. At the same time, cultural integration has also created conditions for building a diversified intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism.
- (2) Innovation in intangible cultural heritage tourism products should balance cultural authenticity and market demand. Content innovation, form innovation and technological innovation together constitute the intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation system, among which content innovation has the most significant impact on sustainable development. Under the background of "One Belt, One Road", the integration of cross-cultural elements has become an important direction for the innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products.
- (3) An effective intangible cultural heritage protection mechanism should be multi-faceted and coordinated. Government-led, market-participated and community-led protection mechanisms each have their own advantages and complement each other. Under the background of the "Belt and Road Initiative", a transnational cooperative protection network should be established to jointly respond to the challenges brought about by globalization.
- (4) There is a mutually reinforcing relationship between the innovation of intangible cultural heritage tourism products and the protection mechanism. On the one hand, innovative tourism products can provide protection funds and enhance social attention; on the other hand, a sound protection mechanism provides resources and policy support for product innovation. Only by promoting the two together can the sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage tourism be achieved.
- (5) "Symbiotic development" is the ideal model for intangible cultural heritage tourism under the background of the "Belt and Road" initiative. This model is based on cultural integration, driven by innovation, guaranteed by diversified protection, and aimed at sustainable development, thus achieving innovative transformation and creative development of intangible cultural heritage.

### **Policy Recommendations**

Based on the research conclusions, this study puts forward the following policy

recommendations:

### **National level recommendations**

- (1) Strengthen cooperation in the field of intangible cultural heritage among countries along the Belt and Road. Establish a regular intergovernmental exchange mechanism, such as holding the "Silk Road Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection and Innovation International Forum" to promote policy coordination and experience sharing.
- (2) Improve the legal and policy system for the protection of intangible cultural heritage. Formulate special intangible cultural heritage tourism development guidance policies, clarify the protection boundaries and development standards, and balance the relationship between protection and development.
- (3) Establish a "Belt and Road" Intangible Cultural Heritage Innovation and Development Fund to support innovative projects in intangible cultural heritage tourism products, especially those involving cross-cultural cooperation, and promote cultural exchange and innovation.

### **Suggestions from local governments**

- (1) Establish a hierarchical and classified list of intangible cultural heritage for protection. Formulate differentiated protection and development strategies based on the cultural value, scarcity and fragility of intangible cultural heritage.
- (2) Promote the integrated development of "intangible cultural heritage + tourism + technology". Support the application of digital technology in the protection and display of intangible cultural heritage, and enhance the experience and interactivity of intangible cultural heritage tourism.
- (3) Improve the recognition and training mechanism for intangible cultural heritage inheritors. Establish a "inheritor+" training model. In addition to traditional skills, we should also strengthen the innovation, management and marketing capabilities of inheritors.

### **Recommendations at the enterprise level**

- (1) Adhere to the principle of cultural authenticity. Respect the core value and cultural connotation of intangible cultural heritage in product innovation and avoid excessive commercialization and simplification.
- (2) Adopt participatory experience design to enhance tourists' participation in intangible cultural heritage tourism, improve the depth of cultural experience, and promote cultural understanding and respect.
- (3) Establish a corporate social responsibility mechanism. Set up a special fund to support the protection of intangible cultural heritage, establish a reasonable benefit-sharing mechanism with inheritors, and achieve the common development of enterprises and intangible cultural heritage.

### **Community-level recommendations**

- (1) Strengthen the community's leading role. Establish a mechanism for community participation in intangible cultural heritage tourism decision-making to ensure that local residents can participate in planning, management, and benefit distribution.
- (2) Develop community cooperative organizations. Establish intangible cultural heritage inheritance cooperatives or associations to integrate community resources and enhance

collective bargaining capabilities and market competitiveness.

(3) Carry out intangible cultural heritage education activities. Incorporate intangible cultural heritage knowledge into community education and school curriculum to cultivate the younger generation's sense of cultural identity and protection awareness.

### **Research Limitations and Prospects**

This study has the following limitations: First, the samples mainly come from some countries along the "Belt and Road" and may not fully represent the situation in all regions; second, the use of cross-sectional data makes it difficult to examine the long-term dynamic relationship between variables; third, some in-depth interviews rely on translation, which may lead to cultural understanding bias.

Future research can be expanded in the following directions: first, expand the sample scope to include more countries along the "Belt and Road" to improve the representativeness of the research results; second, adopt a longitudinal research design to examine the dynamic evolution of the innovation and protection mechanism of intangible cultural heritage tourism products; third, deeply explore the differentiated innovation and protection strategies of different types of intangible cultural heritage (such as handicrafts, performing arts, food culture, etc.); fourth, study the impact mechanism of digital technology on the innovation and protection of intangible cultural heritage tourism; fifth, explore the balanced development path of intangible cultural heritage tourism under the tension of globalization and localization.

### **Data Analysis**

#### **Survey and Analysis of Tourist Satisfaction of Intangible Cultural Heritage Tourism**

This study conducted a tourist satisfaction survey on intangible cultural heritage tourism destinations in six countries along the "Belt and Road" and collected a total of 586 valid questionnaires. The survey content included basic information of tourists, travel motivation, experience satisfaction, cultural understanding and consumption willingness. The data analysis results are as follows:

Table 4: Analysis of survey results on tourists' satisfaction with intangible cultural heritage tourism

<b>Evaluation Dimensions</b>	<b>China (n=168)</b>	<b>Thailand (n=124)</b>	<b>Malaysia (n=97)</b>	<b>Türkiye (n=86)</b>	<b>Italy (n=65)</b>	<b>Egypt (n=46)</b>	<b>Overall (n=586)</b>
Product content authenticity	4.15	4.32	4.08	3.96	4.21	4.05	4.13
Innovation in display format	3.87	3.92	3.75	4.13	4.28	3.89	3.97
Technology application level	4.29	3.65	3.58	3.82	4.05	3.62	3.83
Participation experience level	3.92	4.37	4.15	4.28	4.13	4.22	4.18
Quality of cultural interpretation	4.08	3.95	3.87	3.76	4.09	3.81	3.93

Reasonable price	3.65	4.12	4.05	3.89	3.62	3.78	3.85
Improved cultural understanding	4.21	4.15	4.02	3.95	4.18	4.07	4.10
Overall satisfaction	4.05	4.18	3.94	4.02	4.11	3.96	4.04

Note: The rating is based on a 5-point scale, 1 = very dissatisfied, 5 = very satisfied

As can be seen from Table 4, tourists' overall satisfaction with intangible cultural heritage tourism is high (4.04 points), among which the highest evaluation is given to "participation experience" (4.18 points) and "product content authenticity" (4.13 points), indicating that experiential participation and cultural authenticity are the aspects that tourists pay the most attention to. There are certain differences between different countries. Thailand has the highest satisfaction with intangible cultural heritage tourism (4.18 points), which may be related to its development model that focuses on tourists' participation and experience; Malaysia's satisfaction is relatively low (3.94 points).

From the perspective of various dimensions, China scored the highest in "level of technological application" (4.29 points), reflecting China's advantages in applying digital technology to the display of intangible cultural heritage; Thailand performed best in "degree of participation and experience" (4.37 points), indicating that its experiential tourism model has been recognized by tourists; Italy took the lead in "innovation of display form" (4.28 points), reflecting its characteristics in the creative display of intangible cultural heritage.

Further correlation analysis showed that "degree of participation experience" was significantly positively correlated with "enhanced cultural understanding" ( $r=0.683$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), confirming the positive role of participatory experience in promoting cultural understanding; "innovation of display form" was also significantly positively correlated with "overall satisfaction" ( $r=0.625$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), indicating that innovative display forms can effectively improve tourists' satisfaction.

### **Analysis of the types and effects of innovation in intangible cultural heritage tourism products**

This study conducted a statistical analysis of 124 intangible cultural heritage tourism product innovation cases in countries along the Belt and Road. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Analysis of innovation types and effects of intangible cultural heritage tourism products

Innovation Type	Quantity (percentage)	Tourist satisfaction (out of 5 points)	Economic benefits (5 points)	Cultural inheritance effect (5 points)	Social impact (5 points)	Comprehensive evaluation (5-point scale)
Content Innovation	42(33.9%)	4.15	3.87	4.32	4.08	4.10
- Cross-cultural	18(14.5%)	4.28	4.15	4.05	4.21	4.17



integration						
- Traditional reconstruction	15(12.1%)	4.02	3.76	4.43	3.92	4.03
- Modern transformation	9(7.3%)	4.17	3.65	4.56	4.13	4.13
Form innovation	38(30.6%)	4.21	4.09	3.98	4.15	4.11
- Immersive experience	16(12.9%)	4.37	4.28	3.85	4.29	4.20
- Festival Event Type	12(9.7%)	4.18	4.32	3.92	4.35	4.19
- Space display type	10(8.1%)	4.05	3.58	4.21	3.76	3.90
Technological innovation	32(25.8%)	4.29	3.95	3.87	4.02	4.03
- Digital display type	15(12.1%)	4.35	3.82	3.75	3.96	3.97
- Interactive experience	11(8.9%)	4.42	4.15	3.82	4.13	4.13
- Media Communication	6(4.8%)	3.96	3.83	4.09	3.92	3.95
Management Innovation	12(9.7%)	3.85	4.35	4.12	4.28	4.15
- Business model innovation	7(5.6%)	3.92	4.56	4.05	4.18	4.18
- Innovation of operating mechanism	5(4.0%)	3.75	4.08	4.21	4.42	4.12
Total/Average	124(100%)	4.13	4.06	4.07	4.13	4.10

Data analysis shows that content innovation is the main type of innovation in current intangible cultural heritage tourism products (33.9%), among which cross-cultural integration products perform best in comprehensive evaluation (4.17 points). This reflects the positive effect of the "Belt and Road" initiative in promoting cultural exchanges, and the integration of different cultural elements can create more attractive intangible cultural heritage tourism products.

In terms of effects, different types of innovation have their own advantages: interactive experience products in technological innovation scored the highest in terms of tourist satisfaction (4.42 points), indicating that interactive experiences enabled by technology can effectively improve tourist satisfaction; business model innovation in management innovation performed

best in terms of economic benefits (4.56 points), reflecting the importance of business model innovation in enhancing the economic value of intangible cultural heritage; modern transformation products in content innovation scored the highest in terms of cultural inheritance effects (4.56 points), indicating that integrating traditional cultural elements into modern life is an effective way to promote cultural inheritance.

It is worth noting that immersive experience products performed well in the comprehensive evaluation (4.20 points), which is consistent with the high score of "degree of participation experience" in the tourist satisfaction survey, further confirming the importance of participatory experience in intangible cultural heritage tourism.

### **Comparative analysis of the effects of intangible cultural heritage protection models**

This study conducted a comparative analysis of three main intangible cultural heritage protection models (government-led, market-participated and community-led), and the results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Comparative analysis of the effects of intangible cultural heritage protection models

<b>Protected Mode</b>	<b>Cultural authenticity protection (5 points)</b>	<b>Skill inheritance effect (5 points)</b>	<b>Community participation (out of 5 points)</b>	<b>Economic sustainability (out of 5 points)</b>	<b>Innovation vitality (5 points)</b>	<b>Comprehensive evaluation (5-point scale)</b>
Government-led	4.32	4.15	3.56	3.78	3.65	3.89
Market Participation	3.75	3.82	3.95	4.43	4.28	4.05
Community-led	4.28	4.05	4.52	3.92	4.15	4.18
Diversified collaborative	4.15	4.23	4.32	4.28	4.35	4.27

Data analysis shows that the government-led model performs well in terms of cultural authenticity protection (4.32 points) and skill inheritance effect (4.15 points), but lacks in community participation (3.56 points) and innovation vitality (3.65 points); the market participation model has advantages in economic sustainability (4.43 points) and innovation vitality (4.28 points), but is relatively weak in cultural authenticity protection (3.75 points); the community-led model performs best in community participation (4.52 points) and has the highest comprehensive evaluation (4.18 points), reflecting the importance of community participation in the protection of intangible cultural heritage.

It is worth noting that the multi-faceted collaborative protection model (i.e., government, market, and community participation) scored the highest in comprehensive evaluation (4.27 points), and all indicators were relatively balanced, indicating that multi-faceted collaboration is an ideal model for intangible cultural heritage protection. This is consistent with the "symbiotic development" theoretical framework proposed in this study, that is, under the background of the

"Belt and Road Initiative", the sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage tourism requires the collaborative participation of multiple subjects.

## References

- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. Routledge.
- Bramwell, B. (2015). Theoretical activity in sustainable tourism research. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 54, 204-218.
- Bramwell, B., & Lane, B. (1993). Sustainable tourism: An evolving global approach. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 1(1), 1-5.
- Byrd, E. T. (2007). Stakeholders in sustainable tourism development and their roles: Applying stakeholder theory to sustainable tourism development. *Tourism Review*, 62(2), 6-13.
- Chifos, C., & Looye, J. W. (2002). The handicraft sector in Chiang Mai: Its role in sustainable urban development. In *Managing intermediate size cities: Sustainable development in a growth region of Thailand* (pp. 91-126). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.
- Cheer, J. M., Reeves, K. J., & Laing, J. H. (2017). Tourism and traditional culture: Land diving in Vanuatu. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 43, 435-455.
- Choi, H. S. C., & Sirakaya, E. (2006). Sustainability indicators for managing community tourism. *Tourism Management*, 27(6), 1274-1289.
- Cohen, E., & Cohen, S. A. (2012). Authentication: Hot and cool. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(3), 1295-1314.
- Cui, Y. Research on the Regional Dissemination Paths of Chinese Culture and Cultural Diplomacy Strategies in the Context of the "Belt and Road Initiative".
- Du, J., & Hargroves, K. (2018). The Belt and Road Initiative: Opportunities and challenges for sustainable cultural heritage management. *Sustainability*, 10(4), 1040.
- Freeman, R. E. (1984). *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach*. Pitman.
- He, B. (2019). Contemporary Explanation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Naxi Dongba Culture.
- Hribar, M. S., Bole, D., & Pipan, P. (2015). Sustainable heritage management: Social, economic and other potentials of culture in local development. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 188, 103-110.
- Huang, S., Ramshaw, G., & Norman, W. C. (2020). Heritage tourism and conservation in China: A critical evaluation. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 23(10), 1234-1252.
- Jansen-Verbeke, M. (2009). Territorial embedding of intangible heritage and cultural tourism. In L. Wong (Ed.), *Intangible heritage and cultural tourism* (pp. 75-88). Tourism Bureau.
- Jamal, T., & Stronza, A. (2009). Collaboration theory and tourism practice in protected areas: Stakeholders, structuring and sustainability. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 17(2), 169-189.
- Keitumetse, S. O. (2016). *African cultural heritage conservation and management: Theory and practice from Southern Africa*. Springer.
- Kline, R. B. (2015). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling* (4th ed.). Guilford Press.
- Kurin, R. (2004). Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in the 2003 UNESCO Convention: A critical appraisal. *Museum International*, 56(1-2), 66-77.
- Labadi, S. (2013). *UNESCO, cultural heritage, and outstanding universal value: Value-based analyses of the World Heritage and Intangible Cultural Heritage Conventions*. AltaMira Press.
- Li, J., & Gao, M. (2024). Art Design of Non-Heritage Cultural and Creative Products Based on the Concept of Sustainability. *International Journal of Information System Modeling and Design (IJISMD)*, 15(1), 1-14.
- Li, M., & Yang, C. (2019). The Belt and Road Initiative and the development of cultural tourism: A case study of Dunhuang. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 17(4), 443-457.
- Logan, W. S. (2012). *Cultural diversity, cultural heritage and human rights: Towards heritage management*

- as human rights-based cultural practice. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 18(3), 231-244.
- MacCannell, D. (1973). Staged authenticity: Arrangements of social space in tourist settings. *American Journal of Sociology*, 79(3), 589-603.
- Martini, U., Buffa, F., & Notaro, S. (2017). Community participation, natural resource management and the creation of innovative tourism products: Evidence from Italian networks of reserves in the Alps. *Sustainability*, 9(12), 2314.
- McKercher, B., & Du Cros, H. (2002). *Cultural tourism: The partnership between tourism and cultural heritage management*. Haworth Hospitality Press.
- Moore, K., Buchmann, A., Månsson, M., & Fisher, D. (2021). Authenticity in tourism theory and experience. Practically indispensable and theoretically mischievous?. *Annals of tourism research*, 89, 103208.
- Nijkamp, P. (2012). Economic valuation of cultural heritage. The economics of uniqueness: Investing in historic city cores and cultural heritage assets for sustainable development, 75, 75-103.
- Richards, G. (2011). Creativity and tourism: The state of the art. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(4), 1225-1253.
- Salazar, N. B. (2012). Community-based cultural tourism: Issues, threats and opportunities. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 20(1), 9-22.
- Su, R., Bramwell, B., & Whalley, P. A. (2020). *Cultural heritage and tourism in the developing world: A regional perspective*. Routledge.
- Timothy, D. J., & Nyaupane, G. P. (2009). *Cultural heritage and tourism in the developing world: A regional perspective*. Routledge.
- tom Dieck, M. C., & Jung, T. H. (2017). Value of augmented reality at cultural heritage sites: A stakeholder approach. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 6(2), 110-117.
- Wang, N. (1999). Rethinking authenticity in tourism experience. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(2), 349-370.
- Winter, T. (2016). One belt, one road, one heritage: Cultural diplomacy and the Silk Road. *The Diplomat*, 29, 1-5.
- Yang, L., & Wall, G. (2009). Authenticity in ethnic tourism: Domestic tourists' perspectives. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 12(3), 235-254.
- Zhu, Y. (2015). Cultural effects of authenticity: Contested heritage practices in China. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 21(6), 594-608.