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Educational Strategies for the Design of Cultural and Creative Products with Intangible Cultural Heritage

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Abstract: *Against the backdrop of modern design education, the design of cultural and creative products themed around intangible cultural heritage (ICH) serves as a vital means for cultural inheritance and innovation, possessing profound educational value. This study, based on the societal demand for ICH preservation, proposes a student-centered and practice-oriented educational strategy. It aims to cultivate students' design innovation abilities and cultural identity through methods such as project-based learning on ICH themes, experiential teaching, and interdisciplinary integration. By analyzing the current status and challenges of ICH-related cultural and creative education, the paper provides systematic recommendations covering curriculum design, teaching methods, and practical pathways. The findings indicate that integrating modern teaching concepts into ICH-themed cultural and creative education and adopting dynamic, practice-driven pedagogical models can achieve a balance between cultural preservation and innovation, offering valuable insights for the advancement of design disciplines.*

Keywords: Intangible Cultural Heritage, Cultural and Creative Product Design, Design Education, Cultural Preservation, Educational Strategies

1. Introduction

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) represents a vital cultural gene of the Chinese nation, embodying traditional craftsmanship and cultural values that face dual challenges of preservation and innovation in contemporary society (Tan et al., 2020). In recent years, with the rise of the cultural and creative industries, designing cultural and creative products themed around ICH has become a significant pathway for the creative transformation of ICH values (Liu & Pan, 2023). However, in higher education design programs, ICH-related teaching often remains confined to theoretical learning. Students tend to have a superficial understanding of its cultural essence and lack practical skills, leading to educational outcomes that fail to effectively support the inheritance and innovation of ICH (Moalosi et al., 2016). In response to the urgency of cultural preservation and the demand for reform in design education, integrating

ICH themes into the practice of designing cultural and creative products emerges as a pressing topic for exploration.

This study proposes educational strategies for cultural and creative product design based on ICH themes, adopting a perspective that combines theory and practice. It seeks to explore multidimensional teaching methods to foster students' in-depth understanding of ICH and their ability to innovate in design. By analyzing practical approaches such as ICH-themed project-based learning, experiential teaching, and interdisciplinary integration, this research aims to provide theoretical foundations and practical references for ICH-focused cultural and creative education. This study not only contributes to improving the quality of design education but also offers innovative approaches for the contemporary adaptation and dissemination of ICH. It holds significant practical value for enhancing the social impact of ICH preservation and achieving educational goals in cultivating talent within higher education institutions.

2. Current State and Challenges of ICH Education

Analysis of the Current State of ICH Education

The preservation and transmission of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) have become significant issues in contemporary cultural education. With the rise of the cultural and creative industries, the value of ICH in higher education design programs has gradually gained recognition. In design-related courses, an increasing number of educators are incorporating ICH themes into teaching practices (Xia et al., 2024), using cultural and creative product design to cultivate students' innovative capabilities and cultural identity (Shen et al., 2024). Currently, the primary forms of ICH education include thematic lectures, workshops, and project-based teaching. These approaches provide students with foundational cultural knowledge and, to some extent, enhance their practical design skills (Achille & Fiorillo, 2022). For instance, many universities collaborate with local ICH practitioners to introduce traditional crafts into the classroom, attempting to integrate traditional culture with modern design.

However, challenges persist in ICH education. On one hand, it often remains confined to individual courses or short-term projects, lacking systematization and continuity. On the other hand, existing curricula tend to focus on learning traditional crafts while neglecting the deeper cultural meanings and modern application scenarios of ICH. Moreover, ICH education frequently emphasizes students' imitation of cultural symbols while overlooking the cultivation of their creativity. As a result, student designs often fail to reflect the profound value of ICH (Huang et al., 2024). Therefore, constructing a student-centered ICH cultural and creative education system and achieving the creative transformation of ICH through modern teaching methods have become core issues that need to be addressed urgently.

Challenges in ICH Cultural and Creative Education

Despite fostering a certain degree of integration between traditional culture and modern design, ICH cultural and creative education faces multiple challenges during its implementation. The complexity and regional specificity of ICH hinder the establishment of standardized teaching models. The geographic limitations of certain ICH crafts complicate the acquisition and dissemination of teaching resources. For universities without access to ICH resources, students often lack opportunities to experience authentic ICH culture, thereby limiting teaching effectiveness (Hu et al., 2024).

Furthermore, a market-oriented focus often leads to an imbalance between commercial appeal and cultural depth in ICH education. Some teaching practices overemphasize the visual design

and economic potential of cultural products while neglecting the intrinsic value of ICH. This superficial approach to ICH design prevents students from forming a deeper understanding of traditional culture. Additionally, students' interest in ICH cultural and creative education can be insufficient, particularly when targeting young consumer markets. Students struggle to balance the relationship between tradition and modernity, culture and market, in the design process.

The integration of ICH cultural and creative education with emerging technologies remains underdeveloped. Although digital tools such as virtual reality and 3D modeling are increasingly applied in ICH preservation and dissemination, their use in university teaching is still limited. This not only hampers the enhancement of students' design skills but also restricts the propagation and innovation of ICH in the digital era. Therefore, exploring diverse educational models for ICH cultural and creative products, emphasizing cultural depth and technological breadth in the curriculum, represents a critical direction for future design education reform.

3. Educational Strategies and Methods

To address the challenges faced by current ICH cultural and creative education, it is imperative to develop a systematic and actionable set of educational strategies to promote the inheritance and innovation of ICH in design courses in higher education. This section proposes practical pathways and methods focusing on three aspects: ICH-themed project-based teaching, experiential learning and situational simulation, and interdisciplinary teaching.

ICH-Themed Project-Based Teaching

Project-based teaching is a task-oriented instructional method that engages students in real-world design projects, allowing them to apply theoretical knowledge to practice and enhance their problem-solving and design innovation abilities. In ICH cultural and creative education, project-based teaching centers around ICH themes, guiding students to conduct research, analysis, and creation based on specific design tasks (Alvarez et al., 2023). For example, a course project themed on paper cutting could require students to explore the history, symbolic language, and craftsmanship of the art form and complete the entire process from cultural research to product design.

The key to implementing ICH-themed project-based teaching lies in the systematic and diverse design of tasks. On the one hand, instructors must create tiered tasks based on different types of ICH to help students progressively master the complete process, from extracting cultural connotations to realizing product designs. On the other hand, tasks should emphasize practical application scenarios, such as designing cultural and creative products for souvenirs or everyday items to align student work with market demands. Additionally, group collaboration mechanisms can be introduced during project implementation to foster student interaction and teamwork skills.

Experiential Learning and Situational Simulation

Experiential learning emphasizes active student participation and perception, making it an effective approach to deepen students' direct understanding and appreciation of ICH culture. Specifically, instructors can organize activities such as ICH workshops, immersive exhibitions, or field studies, enabling students to experience ICH craftsmanship and cultural charm first-hand. For instance, visiting the studios of ICH practitioners allows students to observe traditional production processes and engage in hands-on practice, gaining insights into the operational details and design logic.

Situational simulation complements experiential learning by leveraging technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) to create specific cultural contexts, allowing students to immerse themselves in ICH culture (Zhang et al., 2018). For example, in a cultural and creative course themed on Kunqu Opera, VR technology can reconstruct a Kunqu performance scene, helping students understand the aesthetic characteristics of costumes and stage design and inspiring related product designs. Situational simulation not only fosters emotional connections with ICH culture but also cultivates students' ability to extract design elements from complex scenarios.

ICH and Interdisciplinary Teaching

Innovation in ICH cultural and creative education requires support from interdisciplinary knowledge. Against the backdrop of the diversified development of education, interdisciplinary teaching has become an essential strategy for enhancing students' comprehensive skills. In ICH cultural and creative courses, interdisciplinary teaching is primarily reflected in the integration of design studies with disciplines such as marketing, information technology, and sociology (Hani et al., 2012). For example, in a course themed on pottery, students are required not only to master pottery-making techniques but also to analyze target audiences and market positioning using marketing theories and employ 3D modeling technologies to optimize product design processes.

The challenge of interdisciplinary teaching lies in the seamless integration of knowledge from different fields. Instructors need to carefully select relevant interdisciplinary content based on course themes and incorporate it into multidimensional learning tasks through case studies or cross-disciplinary group projects. For instance, in a cultural and creative development course on embroidery techniques, instructors might invite marketing experts to deliver lectures on product promotion strategies or integrate information technology courses to teach students how to use digital embroidery technology to enhance traditional craftsmanship (Li & Xie, 2023).Through interdisciplinary collaborative teaching, students can develop a multidimensional understanding of ICH culture, improving the market competitiveness and technical sophistication of their design works.

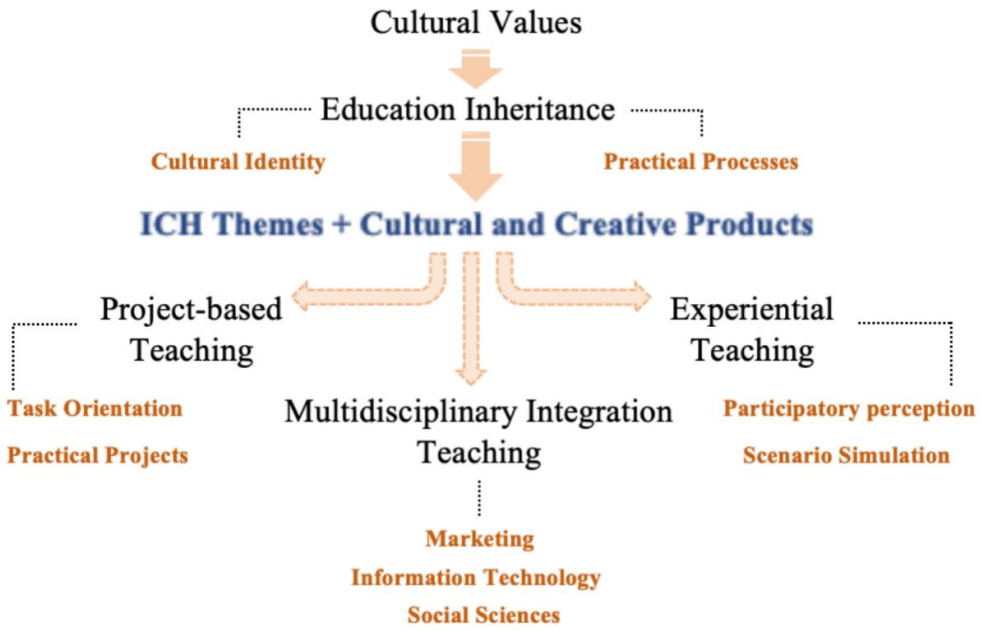

Figure 1: Educational Approaches to Incorporating ICH Themes into Cultural and Creative Products

4. Practical Pathways and Effectiveness Evaluation

4.1 Pathway Planning

To effectively implement ICH cultural and creative education strategies, a systematic practical pathway must be developed, integrating theoretical learning, skill cultivation, and cultural inheritance (Cai et al., 2024). Pathway planning should encompass four levels: teaching objectives, content, implementation, and evaluation feedback, with an emphasis on aligning with contemporary demands and student characteristics.

4.1.1 Integrating Teaching Resources and Designing Systematic Course Content

The first step in the pathway is to integrate ICH educational resources and design a systematic curriculum that spans theoretical learning to practical application. On the theoretical level, the curriculum should focus on interpreting the connotations, historical evolution, and social significance of ICH, using case studies to help students grasp the fundamental logic of ICH cultural and creative design. On the practical level, the curriculum can be divided into four stages: cultural research, craft learning, product design, and market testing. For instance, a pottery course could include modules on process analysis, prototype creation of cultural and creative products, and commercialization testing.

4.1.2 Creating a Diversified Teaching Environment

In practice, students should be provided with a diversified teaching environment, including on-campus laboratories, off-campus ICH heritage bases, and virtual teaching platforms. Off-campus visits and lectures by ICH practitioners allow students to experience the unique charm of traditional craftsmanship. Utilizing virtual reality (VR) and other technologies enables students to engage with the dynamic features of ICH culture in an immersive environment. Additionally, collaborations with local cultural institutions to establish practice bases offer students opportunities for long-term participation in ICH projects, further enhancing the authenticity and effectiveness of teaching.

4.1.3 Introducing Interdisciplinary Team Collaboration Models

The complexity of ICH cultural and creative design necessitates an interdisciplinary teaching approach. Teachers can organize students into interdisciplinary teams where design students handle creative extraction and prototype production, marketing students analyze target audiences and promotion strategies, and information technology students provide technical support and digital implementation. Through team collaboration, students can learn to integrate interdisciplinary knowledge into practical outcomes while cultivating collaboration and communication skills.

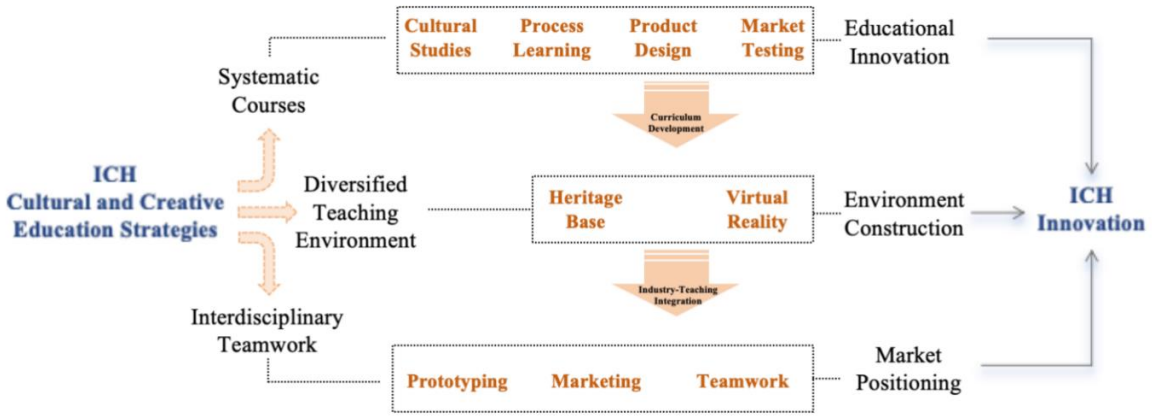

Figure 2: Innovations in education strategies for ICH-themed cultural and creative products

4.2 Effectiveness Evaluation Metrics

To scientifically evaluate the effectiveness of ICH cultural and creative education practices, multi-dimensional evaluation metrics should be established at the levels of students, courses, and society to comprehensively measure the implementation and impact of teaching strategies.

Student-Level Metrics

Evaluation at the student level should focus on their depth of understanding of ICH culture, improvement in design innovation skills, and the practical application rate of learning outcomes. Surveys and interviews can assess students' comprehension of core ICH values and their recognition of its societal significance. Analysis of the quality, creativity, and cultural alignment of students' works can evaluate the effectiveness of teaching activities in enhancing design capabilities. Additionally, the practical application of student works—such as market feedback or achievements in competitions—can be tracked to gauge the practical translation of learning outcomes.

Course-Level Metrics

Course-level evaluation emphasizes the achievement of teaching objectives, the rationality of course design, and the satisfaction levels of students and instructors. The accomplishment of teaching objectives can be measured by comparing student performance at the start and end of the course, observing progress in skills such as cultural symbol extraction, application of design methods, and outcome presentation (Ai et al., 2024). Course satisfaction can be gauged through surveys that collect feedback on teaching content, methods, and practice modules, providing insights for course optimization. For interdisciplinary teaching models, the effectiveness of team collaboration and the promotion of interdisciplinary knowledge integration should also be assessed to evaluate overall course quality.

Societal-Level Metrics

At the societal level, the focus is on the contribution of ICH cultural and creative education practices to cultural dissemination and industrial development. Social impact evaluation can start with analyzing the reception of students' works in the cultural and creative market, including their societal value and dissemination effectiveness. For instance, whether the works gain wide recognition or increase awareness of ICH culture among younger demographics. Additionally, the outcomes of collaborations with local ICH practitioners can be examined to assess the reutilization of cultural resources in teaching projects, measuring the effectiveness of cultural inheritance and innovation. Regarding industrial contribution, metrics can include the commercialization success rate of students' design outcomes and the brand effects or

economic benefits generated in the market (Ling, 2021). Such evaluations verify the practical value of ICH cultural and creative education in industry development. Through this multi-level evaluation system, the effectiveness of ICH cultural and creative education practices can be comprehensively reflected, providing scientific evidence for optimizing future teaching models and injecting new momentum into the inheritance and innovation of ICH culture.

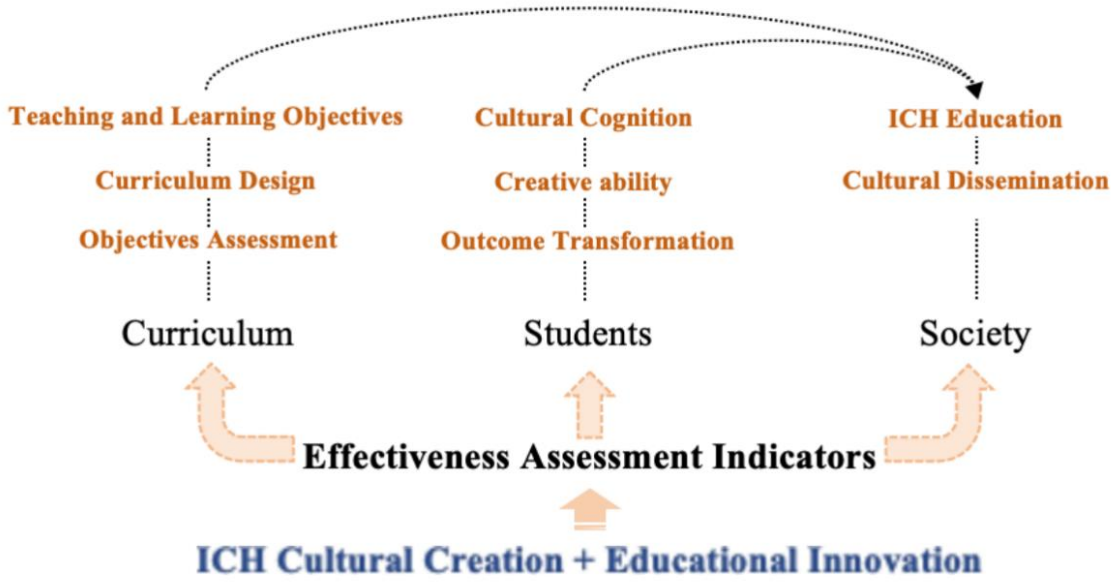

Figure 3: Effectiveness evaluation metrics of educational innovations

5. Conclusion

ICH cultural and creative education holds significant value in both design education reform and cultural heritage preservation. This study focuses on educational strategies for designing ICH-themed cultural and creative products, proposing a systematic practical pathway that incorporates project-based learning, experiential teaching with situational simulation, and interdisciplinary integration. A multidimensional effectiveness evaluation system was constructed across the levels of students, courses, and society. The implementation of these educational strategies not only fosters students' design innovation skills and cultural identity but also provides new possibilities for the modern dissemination and creative transformation of ICH culture.

Looking ahead, ICH cultural and creative education should further explore pathways that align with societal needs and technological advancements, emphasizing multi-stakeholder collaboration, resource integration, and the application of digital tools to enhance the practical and contemporary relevance of education. Additionally, the continuous optimization of evaluation mechanisms can drive the promotion of educational outcomes, achieving the multiple goals of cultural preservation, design innovation, and social value creation. As the ICH education system becomes increasingly refined, its role in the development of design disciplines and the revitalization of cultural industries will become more prominent, injecting strong momentum into the global dissemination of China's outstanding traditional culture.

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