

Original Research Article

Research on the inheritance and innovation strategies of intangible cultural heritage in the context of rural revitalization—Taking Beichuan Qiang straw weaving in Mianyang as an example

WeiJia Chen

Sichuan College of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Mianyang, Sichuan, 621000, China

Abstract: The rural revitalization strategy provides an important development opportunity for the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage (ICH). As a provincial-level ICH in Sichuan, Beichuan Qiang straw weaving in Mianyang carries the cultural genes and regional characteristics of the Qiang ethnic group. However, it faces dilemmas such as a shortage of inheritors, insufficient innovation, and limited promotion. Combining the context of rural revitalization, this paper analyzes the inheritance status and value of Beichuan Qiang straw weaving, and proposes innovative strategies from four dimensions: talent cultivation, product innovation, industrial integration, and communication and promotion, aiming to provide practical paths for ICH to empower rural revitalization.

Keywords: rural revitalization; Beichuan Qiang straw weaving; intangible cultural heritage; inheritance; innovation

1. Introduction

The core of rural revitalization lies in cultural revitalization. As an important carrier of rural culture, intangible cultural heritage is not only a spiritual link for regional cultural identity but also a key resource for promoting rural economic development. With a history dating back to the era of Da Yu, Beichuan Qiang straw weaving in Mianyang has formed a unique craft featuring palm leaves as the main raw material and animal/totem images as the core after thousands of years of development. It regained vitality through rescue protection after the 2008 earthquake and has become an important starting point for rural cultural revitalization in Beichuan. In the context of rural revitalization, how to address the bottlenecks in ICH inheritance and achieve a positive interaction between cultural inheritance and economic development has become a crucial issue for Beichuan Qiang straw weaving. Based on relevant research results and practical experience, this paper explores its inheritance and innovation paths to provide reference for similar ICH projects to empower rural revitalization.

2. Inheritance value and current status of Beichuan Qiang straw weaving

2.1. Inheritance value

The value of Beichuan Qiang straw weaving is reflected in cultural, economic, and social dimensions. Culturally, its weaving techniques integrate the Qiang people's belief in "animism" and totem culture. Images such as dragons, phoenixes, and frogs carry the ethnic group's historical memories, and the "significant form" formed by the use of lines demonstrates a unique aesthetic pursuit, making it a living carrier of Qiang culture. Economically, the straw weaving industry has developed six series with thousands of varieties, driving local employment through the sales of handicrafts and tourism experiences, especially providing income-increasing channels for groups such as the disabled, and serving as an important supplement to rural industrial revitalization. Socially, the inheritance of straw weaving techniques has promoted ethnic cultural identity, and the restoration of the craft during post-disaster reconstruction has further consolidated rural cohesion, injecting cultural impetus into rural governance.

2.2. Current status of inheritance

Currently, the inheritance of Beichuan Qiang straw weaving has achieved certain results, forming a protection model of "government support + inheritor-led + university cooperation," with works participating in

domestic and international exhibitions and winning awards^[1]. However, dilemmas persist: first, the inheritance force is weak, with only about ten artisans proficient in the craft, mostly aged 45-60, and young people show little willingness to participate, facing the risk of "losing the craft with the passing of artisans" ; second, product innovation is insufficient, with some products still adhering to traditional styles or only engaging in superficial imitations, lacking in-depth innovation that combines cultural connotations with modern aesthetics^[2]; third, the industrial scale is limited, relying mainly on manual production with long cycles and low efficiency, and sales channels are dependent on government cooperation and offline exhibitions, resulting in a low degree of marketization ; fourth, communication and promotion are lagging, lacking a systematic publicity strategy, and social recognition and influence need to be improved .

3. Practical foundation for the inheritance and innovation of Beichuan Qiang straw weaving in the context of rural revitalization

3.1. Policy support lays a solid development guarantee

Policy support provides a favorable environment for the inheritance and innovation of straw weaving. The national rural revitalization strategy explicitly proposes protecting and inheriting intangible cultural heritage, and governments at all levels in Sichuan Province, Mianyang City, and Beichuan County have introduced a series of policies to support the straw weaving industry through funding, competitions, and base construction^[3]. From rescue protection after the disaster to regular industrial support, policy dividends continue to be released, providing a solid institutional guarantee for the inheritance of straw weaving techniques, product research and development, and market expansion.

3.2. Resource endowments create conditions for integration

Resource endowments offer natural advantages for integrated development. As a Qiang-inhabited area, Beichuan is rich in ethnic cultural resources, and straw weaving can form a cultural synergy with other ICH projects such as Qiang embroidery, Qiang costumes, and Qiang blockhouses; at the same time, Beichuan is abundant in ecotourism resources, and tourism IPs such as earthquake sites and Qiang village customs have high integration potential with straw weaving experiences, providing a carrier for the implementation of the "ICH + tourism" model. In addition, locally produced raw materials such as palm leaves provide material support for the sustainable development of the straw weaving industry.

3.3. University-local cooperation accumulates practical experience

University-local cooperation has become an important support for innovative development. Local universities have promoted in-depth integration of traditional crafts with modern design concepts by offering optional straw weaving courses, establishing training workshops, and carrying out cooperative scientific research projects. The participation of university teachers and students has not only injected fashionable elements and creative inspiration into straw weaving products but also cultivated a group of compound talents with both traditional craft skills and modern market thinking, reserving intellectual resources for the upgrading of the straw weaving industry.

3.4. Market demand drives upgrading momentum

The upgrading of the consumer market has brought new opportunities for the development of the straw weaving industry. With the improvement of cultural confidence and changes in consumption concepts, consumer demand for handicrafts with regional characteristics and cultural connotations continues to grow, no longer satisfying merely practical functions but also emphasizing the aesthetic value and emotional resonance of products. This trend provides broad space for the transformation of straw weaving products towards high-end, refined, and creative development, and also forces the industry to accelerate the pace of innovation.

4. Inheritance and innovation strategies of Beichuan Qiang straw weaving in the context of rural revitalization

4.1. Construct a diversified talent training system

Talent is the core of ICH inheritance. A diversified training model of "school education + master-apprentice

inheritance + social popularization" should be established. Optional straw weaving courses should be offered in primary and secondary schools to cultivate teenagers' cultural identity and inheritance awareness through simple craft experiences; local universities should set up optional straw weaving courses and training workshops, with ICH inheritors and professional teachers jointly teaching to systematically impart craft skills and innovative methods; incentive policies should be introduced to attract young people to learn from masters through entrepreneurship subsidies and craft recognition, while recruiting design, marketing, and other professional talents to optimize the structure of the inheritance team and address the talent gap^[4].

4.2. Promote product innovation and brand building

Product innovation is the key to enhancing market competitiveness. Based on the core of Qiang culture, extract core elements such as totem symbols and weaving lines, and combine them with modern life scenarios to develop refined and fashionable products such as stationery, accessories, and home decorations, realizing the transformation from traditional practicality to modern creativity. At the same time, focus on the high-end market, creating gift-level crafts with Beichuan regional characteristics through professional design and cultural packaging to enhance product added value. Strengthen brand standardization, regulate raw material processing, craft processes, and quality inspection, and establish a distinctive brand image of "Beichuan Qiang Straw Weaving" to enhance market recognition.

4.3. Deepen industrial integration and format expansion

Relying on the industrial integration policies in rural revitalization, promote in-depth integration of straw weaving with multiple formats. First, "straw weaving + rural tourism," building straw weaving experience workshops in Qiang village scenic spots and rural homestays, with exhibition areas, experience areas, and sales areas, allowing tourists to personally participate in the weaving process, extending the tourism industrial chain and increasing consumption added value. Second, "straw weaving + other ICH," cooperating with projects such as Qiang embroidery and Qiang costumes to develop composite cultural and creative products, forming cultural synergy. Third, "straw weaving + digital economy," expanding sales boundaries through new media channels such as e-commerce platforms and live streaming, and disseminating straw weaving culture through short videos and online courses to expand market coverage.

4.4. Strengthen communication, promotion, and atmosphere building

Strengthening communication and promotion is an important way to enhance influence. On the one hand, use new media such as short video platforms and social media to shoot content such as straw weaving craft demonstrations, product creation processes, and Qiang cultural stories from a young perspective to attract the attention of young audiences. On the other hand, actively participate in domestic and international ICH exhibitions and cultural events, both "introducing advanced experiences" and "promoting brand visibility overseas". Build online and offline exhibition platforms, construct straw weaving cultural experience halls, and hold creative design competitions and folk festivals, integrating straw weaving techniques into rural daily life and creating a good social atmosphere for supporting ICH inheritance.

5. Conclusion

Rural revitalization provides a broad platform for the inheritance and innovation of ICH. As an important carrier of ethnic culture and rural memory, the inheritance and innovation of Beichuan Qiang straw weaving is not only related to the continuation of the craft but also to rural cultural revitalization and economic development. By constructing a diversified talent training system, promoting product innovation and brand building, deepening industrial integration and format expansion, and strengthening communication, promotion, and atmosphere building, the dilemmas in straw weaving inheritance can be effectively addressed, realizing the unification of cultural and economic values. In the context of rural revitalization, ICH inheritance needs to be based on regional characteristics and closely aligned with the needs of the times. Through the joint efforts of the government, universities, the market, and inheritors, ICH projects such as straw weaving can become important forces empowering rural revitalization, achieving development through innovation while inheriting traditions, and radiating lasting vitality.

Fundings

2025 Annual Research Project of Northwest Sichuan Folk Culture Research Center - "Research on the Inheritance and Innovation Strategies of Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Context of Rural Revitalization—Taking Beichuan Qiang Straw Weaving in Mianyang as an Example" (No.: MY2025ZX487).

References

- [1] Lei, Y. (2021). New exploration of the artistic creation of Beichuan Qiang straw weaving. *Decoration*, (8), 138-139.
- [2] Huang, Y. T., Yang, W. Q. (2020). A brief analysis of the innovation research and application methods of Beichuan Qiang traditional straw weaving products. *Design*, (7), 64-67.
- [3] Wu, X., Pang, Z. H. (2021). Research on the integration of Beichuan Qiang straw weaving techniques into the construction of art basic courses. *West Leather*, 43(24), 18-19.
- [4] Ding, W. T. (2018). Reflections on the ten-year changes of traditional handicrafts in Beichuan. *Folk Art*, (6), 44-48.
- [5] Chen, P., Peng, D. M. (2019). Research on the importance of integrating Daoming bamboo weaving art into public art basic courses in local higher vocational colleges. *West Leather*, 41(22), 102-103.