Systematic Literature Review of Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage Archives Research in China

Jing LIU¹,²,a, Yue OU¹,²,b

¹Archives of Central China Normal University, Longnan Street, Wuhan, China
²School of Information Management, Central China Normal University, Longnan Street, Wuhan, China
¹liujing2010@mail.ccun.edu, ²ouyue0007@163.com
*Corresponding Author

Abstract: This paper uses systematic literature review method to sort out the current research status of Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) archives from four perspectives: the archiving standard of ICH, the resources construction of ICH archives, the resource integration of ICH archives and the resource development of ICH archives. Then this paper analyzes its shortcomings from the depth of research, and put forward the direction of future research.

Keywords: Intangible Cultural Heritage Archives, Archiving Standard, Resource Construction, Resource Integration, Resource Development.

1. Introduction

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) archives refer to original records formed during the safeguarding and transmission of intangible cultural heritage. ICH archival research was born in 2006 and has accumulated a wealth of research results after decades of development, in order to fully understand the current status of ICH archive research in China, the relevant research literature of ICH archives was qualitatively analyzed through the systematic literature review method, which accurately outlined the current trend of ICH archive research in China, and provided guidance and reference for promoting the practical work and theoretical research of ICH archives in China.

In order to ensure the comprehensiveness and integrity of the literature and take into account the quality of the literature, 667 articles were searched by using the academic journal database of CNKI as the search source and the words “intangible cultural heritage” and “archives” or “filing” on March 1, 2023. After further reading and combing out the repeated literature and non-academic literature such as book review, report, prototype, newsletter, etc., 665 valid literatures were finally obtained. The annual distribution of ICH archives research literature in China from 2006 to 2022 is shown in Figure 1.

![Figure 1: Annual distribution of ICH archives research literature in China](image)

2. Subject of ICH Archival Research in China

Through a comprehensive analysis of 665 documents, the current research status of ICH archives in China is comprehensively reviewed and summarized from four perspectives: the standards of ICH archives, the construction of ICH archives resources, the integration of ICH archives resources and the development of ICH archives resources.

2.1 Research on the Standards of ICH Archives

After the necessity of ICH archiving was clarified, its filing standards developed into the primary issue faced by practical work, and it is also one of the hot spots in academic research. In this regard, China has problems such as late start, small number, weak targeting, and prominent regional character[1], which suggests that accelerating the construction of the standard system is an extremely urgent task. From appeal to formulation to implementation, this is a systematic and long process, requiring the coordinated participation of multiple forces [2], which requires the construction of an all-round, multi-angle and three-dimensional system by adhering to the two main lines of ICH projects and ICH inheritors and adhering to the triple perspective of management, business process and technology [3]. In addition, for traditional art ICH, filing standards can be formulated from nine levels, including basic project information, relevant customs, artistic characteristics, production techniques, and representative works [4]. For traditional dance ICH, filing standards can be set from three aspects: ontology archives, physical archives, and derived archives [5].

2.2 Construction of ICH Archives Resources

The large number of ICH projects in China, the variety of types, the wide geographical distribution, and the wide range of ethnic groups involved have triggered discussions among scholars from different perspectives such as type, ethnicity, region, and source. First, different types of construction of ICH archives resources, such as music, traditional drama, folklore, traditional medicine, fine arts, traditional skills, etc., are diversified. The two most common methods are active and passive reception [6]. Second, the construction subjects of different ethnic groups, including Tujia opera, Yi handmade textile skills, Zhuang lion dances, Kazakh embroidery, She's folk culture, Xibo reclamation legends, Bai Dabenq, etc., include official institutions, civil society organizations, civil society inheritors, ethnic minority people, technical service providers, etc. [7]. Third, different regions,
including Tibet, Shandong, and Chengde in Hebei, have enriched local ICH archive resources by optimizing institutional settings, establishing policy and regulatory guarantee systems, and building regional coordination working mechanisms. Fourth, ICH oral archive collection puts forward the path of ICH oral archive collection, preservation, management and development and utilization based on the perspective of social memory, and establishes a "collection + interaction" and "online + offline" oral archive resource library and collection platform through fieldwork collection of oral original data[9].

2.3 Integration of ICH Archives Resources

After more than ten years of ICH archival practice in archival departments, ICH protection centers, folk museums, cultural centers, libraries and museums, China has accumulated rich ICH archival resources. However, inevitably, there are still some contradictions between dispersion and concentration, diversity and unity, intangible and tangible, input and output, official memory and folk memory, sharing and intellectual property protection[9]. The root of the contradiction lies in the management subject to be clarified, the digital technology drive to be improved, and the resource linkage to be strengthened[10], in view of this, the integration paths such as innovating ICH archives management system based on group wisdom[11], accelerating the digitization of ICH archives and database construction[12], collecting "thematic" ICH archives resources by archival departments and public cultural institutions[13], and building an ICH digital system model based on blockchain technology[14] have been put forward, which promote the inter-agency integration of ICH archives resources.

2.4 Development of ICH Archives Resources

Development is an important means to realize the value of ICH archives resources. The current situation of the integration of ICH archives resources is not good, which restricts the breadth and depth of development. ICH entity archives resources are stored in various filing institutions, mainly using subject, regional and hierarchical classification methods to provide single, linear query, retrieval and utilization. Under the guidance of collaborative governance theory, the solutions of active development, tourism protection and development combination are analyzed, and two development models of "top-down" and "bottom-up" are put forward under the intellectual property law system[15]. The development of ICH digital archival resources also faces development difficulties, especially the construction of ICH database is in its infancy, the software and hardware environment stored is complex, and it is widely distributed in multiple network platforms[16], resulting in slow development and utilization. Based on the correlation data, the academic community proposes to reveal the relationship between ICH archival data, construct a domain knowledge graph to promote its development, knowledge creation and sharing, and use blockchain, GIS, VR technology and other concepts and countermeasures.

3. Deficiencies in ICH Archival Research in China

From the perspective of research breadth, the four topics currently focused on range from filing standards to the construction, integration and development of ICH archives resources, covering almost the whole process of ICH archive management, and the research topics cover a relatively comprehensive scope. In terms of depth of research, however, there are shortcomings.

First, most of the existing research is carried out from the perspective of macro planning, and there is almost no relevant research involving the refinement and implementation of the standards of ICH archives at the practical level. in the field of culture, China's cultural industry standard of Collection and Bibliography of Digital Resources for ICH Digital Protection has basically taken shape, and has been refined into the specific operation of ICH ten categories. in the field of archives, the introduction and implementation of the standards of ICH archives has been slow. This is because ICH has a wide variety of types, different characteristics, complex and diverse manifestations, and there are objective factors. Taking digital standards as an example, only a few related research has made breakthroughs, such as the construction of metadata standards for folklore and oral traditions[17], on the other hand, the existing research on the standards of ICH archives lacks a clear understanding of the attributes, classification, relevance and deep structure of ICH projects, and ignores the guidance of archival industry standards, which cannot provide a knowledge framework for the refinement and formulation of the standards of ICH archives.

Second, the construction of ICH archives resources is a long-term and complex undertaking. The existing research results focus on using the basic theories and methods of archival science to solve the problem of the construction of ICH archives resources in a certain place or place, giving full play to the professional advantages of the archive department in ICH archiving and preservation, the theoretical guidance is slightly single[18], and the theoretical innovation is slightly insufficient[19]. As a result, some research has limited to the application of archival theory to the construction of ICH archives resources. The root cause lies in the fact that scholars with similar disciplinary backgrounds are limited by the research framework and research paradigm of their respective fields, and often ignore the relationship with other disciplines, resulting in the isolation of the overall discipline system, which is vulnerable to lead academic research to a situation that is divorced from social reality and scientific research mission[20].

Third, the integration of ICH archives resources research does not fully match the current national cultural strategy needs, the current situation and countermeasures are more described, and the deep integration exploration is few, suggesting that there is a lack of systematic research on benchmarking the latest national policies. in 2020, the new Archives Law requires "promoting the sharing and utilization of archival digital resources across regions and departments"; in 2021, the national 14th Five-Year Plan for ICH Protection proposed to "strengthen the integration and sharing of ICH resources, and promote the construction of an accurate, authoritative, open and shared public digital platform"; in August of the same year, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued the
Opinions on Further Strengthening the Protection of ICH, which once again emphasized the need to "strengthen the integration and sharing of ICH resources nationwide". However, in the past two years, the national policy demand for the integration of ICH archives resources has not caused the mutation and thematic focus of related keywords.

Fourth, there are two main problems in the research of the development of ICH archives resources, one is the uneven research on the development object of ICH archives, some ethnic minorities in border areas have more research on the development of ICH archives resources, and there are relatively few studies on other regions and ethnic groups, such as: more than 50 Yi ICH archives distributed in southwest China [21], The active development of the Bai ethnic group around the Sanling ICH archive[22], the industrialization development of the Dai slow wheel pottery technology ICH [23], etc.; The other is the imbalance in the research of ICH archival development methods, "focusing on technical development, ignoring the cultural connections between ICH projects"[24], focusing on the digital methods of traditional methods and technological applications such as exhibitions, thematic materials, publications, documentaries, etc., while ignoring the comprehensive approach, which undoubtedly hinders the mining of the multiple values of ICH archives.

4. Trends in ICH archival research in China

4.1 Research on the Standards of ICH Archives: from Construction Planning to Detailed Implementation

According to the guidelines of national ICH regulations and policies, the current research discusses the construction planning of the filing standard system from multiple angles and dimensions [25], and forms a series of research results such as the necessity, principles, content and scope of application of the formulation of the filing standard. In view of the shortcomings of research, future research should gradually transition to detailed research at the practical level, refer to the existing archive industry standards, deepen the understanding of ICH attributes, classification, correlation and deep structure, and further explore the relevant standards for archiving from the perspectives of ICH archive management process, ICH archive carrier type, different regions, and different sources. For example, the standards for the management process of intangible cultural heritage archives can be referred to the Rules for the Archiving of Archives (DA/T18-2022), the Rules for the Collation of Archived Documents (DA/T 22-2015), the Specification for the Binding of Paper Archived Documents (DA/T 69-2018), and the Specification for the Digitization of Paper Archives (DA/T31-2017). For detailed standards for the types of intangible cultural heritage archives, please refer to the Code for the Management and Protection of Magnetic Carrier Archives (DA/T15-1995), the Code for the Archiving and Management of Digital Photographs (DA/T 50-2014), and the Rules for the Bibliography of Archives of Film Art (DA/T 51-2014). For the standards for the establishment of oral intangible cultural heritage archives, please refer to the Code for the Collection and Management of Oral History Materials (DA/T 59-2017).

4.2 Construction of ICH Archives Resources: From Practical Exploration to Theoretical Expansion

In the early stage, the related research on the construction of ICH archives resources needs to be explored at the practical level, while in the later stage, it needs to be summarized and expanded at the theoretical level on the basis of the current research. As early as 2006, the archives department was aware of the responsibility and mission of participating in non-heritage protection [26]. Under the guidance of archival theories such as “whole clan theory”, “dual value theory of documents”, "new source view" and "life cycle", archives departments set up files for heritage application, non-heritage census, non-heritage projects and non-heritage inheritors, and incorporated ICH archives into the construction of archival resources with local characteristics. Rich practical experience and mature archival theory have laid a solid foundation for the theoretical expansion in the field of ICH archives resources construction. The construction of ICH archives resources is an applied theory in interdisciplinary field, which requires the participation of multi-disciplines and multi-subjects. The introduction of the "time-region" theory enables the construction of ICH archives resources to be taken care of as a whole across ethnic groups and regions [27]. The introduction of relevant theories of public management theoretically examines the production process, production characteristics and governance needs of the construction of ICH archives resources [28]. Alternatively, we can also refer to the non-legacy science which exists as an independent discipline and its related basic theories such as collective memory, cultural life history, cultural symbols [29], which is also beneficial to expand the research perspective of ICH archives theory.

4.3 Integration of ICH Archives Resources: From Initial Integration To Deep Integration

The transition from preliminary integration to deep integration is the main focus of the future research on the integration of ICH archives resources. In 2017, the UNESCO International non-Heritage big data platform was officially launched, establishing a unified classification standard and unique international identification code for non-heritage projects, "integrating more than 30, 000 non-heritage projects and more than 3000 non-heritage inheritors' digital archives resources" [30], which provides reference and inspiration for the practice and research of the integration of domestic intangible archives resources. The recent introduction of a series of national policies has pointed out the direction for the in-depth study of the integration of ICH archives resources. In 2020, the Opinions on Promoting The High-Quality Development of Digital Culture Industry issued by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism put forward "promoting the integration and integration of cultural data resources". In 2022, the Opinions on Promoting The Implementation of The National Strategy of Digitalization of Culture issued by the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council made it clear that by the end of the 14th Five-year Plan, it basically connected the data centers of various cultural institutions, and formed an online and offline cultural service supply system with interactive and three-dimensional coverage. The National Archives Development Plan of the 14th Five-year Plan also requires "strengthening the cross-domain, cross-regional and
cross-level integration of relevant archival resources.” The deep integration and even integration of ICH archives resources is one of the important research directions in line with the needs of culture and archives.

4.4 Development of ICH Archives Resources: From Local Attempt to Overall Promotion

In the face of the public demand for the differentiation of ICH archives [31], the future research on the development of ICH archives resources should gradually transition from local attempts to overall promotion, and balance the objects and methods of the development of ICH archives. In terms of the development object, we should study the non-heritage of Zhili from the perspective of regional culture, guard against the limited thinking [33], and expand the ethnic scope of the development of ICH archives resources. expand the level of the development of ICH archives resources from some ethnic minorities to other ethnic groups, from local non-heritage to national and even world-class non-heritage. For example, the value of the world-class non-heritage Beijing opera archives has not been fully developed, and the world-class non-heritage Chinese tea was selected in November 2022. In the way of development, we should pay attention to the deep integration of culture and science and technology, construct a collaborative mechanism, integrate traditional and digital development methods, promote the application and research of big data, cloud computing, artificial intelligence and other technologies in the content and value development of ICH archives resources, explore the innovative development and utilization of digital humanities-oriented archives resources, and enable the development of ICH archives resources match the needs of the public.

Acknowledgment

This work was supported by the National Social Science Foundation of China general project No. 21BQT084 “Research on Hierarchical Clustering Fusion model of Intangible Cultural Heritage Digital Archive Resources”.

References


[27] Li Y. (2022) Intangible Cultural Heritage Course Explores The Road of Intangible Cultural Heritage Discipline Construction. Folklore Research, 2, 2+161.


