

# Research on the Integration Development Model of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Tourism Industry in Rongchang District of Chongqing from the Perspective of Cultural and Tourism Integration

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**Abstract:** Promoting the deep integration of culture and tourism has become an important goal for the development of Rongchang District, Chongqing. With its rich intangible cultural heritage, Rongchang District has a great opportunity to drive the deep fusion of culture and tourism, using culture to promote tourism and vice versa, thereby vigorously developing the cultural tourism economy. From the perspective of all-for-one tourism, this paper takes the integration of “intangible cultural heritage (ICH) +” cultural tourism in Rongchang, Chongqing as an example, analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of the construction of the cultural tourism industry in Rongchang District, Chongqing, and explores the integration development mechanism of rural “ICH +” cultural tourism industry. Using literature research, case analysis, and field investigations, and based on the theories of sustainable development and cultural tourism integration, this paper extracts the achievements and shortcomings of the deep integration of “ICH +” cultural tourism in Rongchang District through data collation and analysis. This provides valuable reference and lessons for realizing the inheritance of ICH and the sustainable development of tourism.

**Keywords:** Cultural tourism integration; Intangible cultural heritage; Tourism industry

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## 1. Research background and significance

### 1.1. Research background

With the release of the “Outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035” of the People’s Republic of China, the integrated development of cultural tourism has been elevated to a national strategic level. The goal of promoting the deep integration of cultural tourism has been clearly stated in the “14th Five-Year Plan,” emphasizing the importance of shaping tourism through culture and valuing the reflection of culture in tourism. Furthermore, the report of the 20th National Congress of

the Communist Party of China puts forward specific requirements on how to advance the high-quality integrated development of culture and tourism, further emphasizing the necessity of deep integration of cultural tourism.

## **1.2. Research significance**

This study focuses on the integrated development model of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and tourism in Rongchang District, Chongqing. It aims to identify issues in the current model of ICH and tourism integration in Rongchang District, propose improvement suggestions, and facilitate the integration of ICH resources to promote high-quality tourism development and achieve the strategic goal of deep cultural tourism integration.

### **1.2.1. Theoretical significance**

Through field research and interviews with relevant personnel to understand the current situation of the integration of ICH and tourism development in Rongchang District, this paper studies the mode of integration development using case analysis to promote further deep integration. This study can expand the research theory on the implementation mode of the integrated development of ICH and tourism, contributing to the lively and innovative inheritance of ICH and the innovative development of tourism.

### **1.2.2. Practical significance**

By analyzing the specific situation and cases of the “ICH + Tourism” integration mode in Rongchang District, and studying the advantages and disadvantages of the current integration development mode in Rongchang District, this study helps the Rongchang District government better understand the potential and direction of the integration development mode. This promotes better coordinated development between ICH and tourism. This study can provide practical guidance for improving the integrated development model of ICH and tourism in Rongchang District in the future.

### **1.2.3. Importance**

Driven by national strategic planning, the deep integration of culture and tourism has become a popular development direction. By studying the integrated development model of intangible cultural heritage and tourism in Rongchang District, this research can provide research theories and case studies for future related studies, promoting the advancement of research on the deep integration of culture and tourism. In summary, through in-depth research on the integrated development model of intangible cultural heritage and tourism in Rongchang District, this study will provide a certain degree of theoretical support for related cultural and tourism integration development models and offer corresponding practical guidance for specific practices. In terms of theoretical significance, practical significance, and importance, this study has certain research significance.

## **2. Research status at home and abroad**

### **2.1. Research on intangible cultural heritage**

According to the 2003 “Convention for the Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage” of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), ICH includes social practices, thoughts, expressions, knowledge systems, skills, and their related tools and objects. It is a key part of cultural diversity, reflecting human creativity and transmission, and is crucial for cross-cultural understanding and respect<sup>[1]</sup>. After the adoption of the Convention, ICH protection has become a global focus, and scholars have begun to conduct in-depth research on its protection methods.

When the concept of ICH was first introduced to China, research mainly focused on conceptual understanding, classification, and characteristic description, emphasizing knowledge popularization while lacking deep theoretical exploration. As time progressed, scholars began to combine theory with practice, focusing on the practical operation of ICH protection and exploring its integration and sustainable development in society and economy.

The introduction of the concept of cultural and tourism integration has brought new vitality to the development and protection of ICH tourism. Through field investigations, Wu pointed out the challenges faced by the inheritance of ICH skills and advocated that ICH inheritance should adhere to the principles of integrity, regionality, and innovation. She proposed the construction of a symbiotic and win-win relationship between ICH and the tourism industry, emphasizing the importance of government guidance, tourism environment optimization, and civilian participation <sup>[2]</sup>.

Zhou analyzed the protection and development of ICH in the renovation of historical blocks, advocating for sustainable development, integration, and authenticity principles, and achieving ICH's live transmission through a multi-level protection system <sup>[3]</sup>. Guo studied the ICH projects in Xinyu City, exploring new development models under the integration of culture and tourism, and opening up new paths for the protection and development of ICH <sup>[4]</sup>. Li and Liang focused on the inheritance, protection, and utilization of intangible cultural heritage in Guangming District. They identified deficiencies in professional talents, capital investment, tourism integration, and technology application, and proposed a protection and tourism integration development strategy from the perspective of cultural and tourism collaboration, aiming to inject new momentum into ICH inheritance <sup>[5]</sup>.

## **2.2. Research on the integration of culture and tourism**

The integration of culture and tourism describes the mutual combination of culture and the tourism industry. This combination not only contributes to the preservation and dissemination of cultural resources but also stimulates the growth and innovation of the tourism industry. In the international academic field, especially in English-language research, the focus on the integration of culture and tourism centers on two main aspects: exploring the role of culture in tourism and emphasizing comprehensive research on cultural tourism.

Vergori and Arima analyzed international cultural tourism data from Italy and concluded that developing cultural tourism is one of the key strategies for tourist destinations to cope with seasonal fluctuations <sup>[6]</sup>. Many countries use their rich historical and artistic heritage as a cornerstone to promote cultural tourism. After reviewing international literature, it is evident that foreign academic circles usually do not adopt the concept of “integration of the tourism industry and cultural industry,” but rather focus on cultural tourism phenomena in specific regions, including policy analysis and industrial development. In contrast, domestic academic circles, with policy support, have gradually increased theoretical research on the integration of the cultural and tourism industries, focusing on implementation paths, value significance, systematic frameworks, drivers, and synergies.

Wu and Bai advocated the use of digital technology to strengthen the combination of urban and rural cultural tourism and proposed various practical models. Based on scene theory, they constructed a multi-dimensional analysis framework that includes elements such as integration, creative design, dynamics, global experience, community participation, and sharing. They explored the role of the digital economy in the integration of culture and tourism. These theories provide a model for the cultural and tourism development of Zhanjiang City and help promote high-quality industrial development <sup>[7]</sup>.

Scholars such as Ming *et al.* believed that the deep integration of culture and tourism is crucial for promoting industrial division and collaborative evolution. They established a hierarchical and systematic framework and research model aimed at promoting the high-quality development of the cultural and tourism industries. They emphasized the importance of cultural and tourism integration for socialist modernization, enhancing cultural self-

confidence, and building an advanced cultural system. They believed that this helps meet people's pursuit of a better life and promotes national rejuvenation<sup>[8]</sup>.

Geng and Liu used a systematic framework to explore the integration of culture and tourism, revealing its development dynamics and mechanisms. They analyzed its connotations from the perspectives of happiness and spatial production. Based on China's reality, they proposed an integration path that balances multi-party relationships and establishes a comprehensive tourism concept. They advocated a circular development model that promotes a balance between supply and demand through core attractiveness and unique experiences, enhancing the self-development capabilities of cultural and tourism integration. This perspective provides theoretical and practical guidance for the integration of culture and tourism<sup>[9]</sup>.

## **2.3. Research on the integration of intangible cultural heritage and tourism**

Research on the combination of "ICH + tourism," both domestically and internationally, generally believes that the integration of ICH and the tourism industry is a mutually beneficial development model. This model can promote cultural inheritance and development while enriching tourism experiences.

Wang and Yuan proposed suggestions for tourism resource planning under a new paradigm for the integration of ICH and cultural tourism in Jiaozuo City. They suggested taking Tai Chi culture as the lead, expanding promotion, cultivating professional talents, improving infrastructure, and utilizing digital technology to enhance the image of ICH tourism and enrich visitor experiences<sup>[10]</sup>. Wen analyzed the current situation of Rongchang tourism and proposed promoting the comprehensive development of "culture + education + tourism" with the ICH study travel base as the core. This approach aims to facilitate ICH protection and sustainable tourism while transforming the single tourism model<sup>[11]</sup>.

Pang focused on the micro level, studying how to stimulate the tourism potential of folk ICH in cultural tourism integration. She established a research framework and activation path model, conducting an in-depth analysis using the example of the Huairan Wanghuo custom and proposing tourism activation strategies<sup>[12]</sup>. Yu explored innovative ways to combine ICH with cultural and creative products, promoting innovative development in both ICH and the tourism industry<sup>[13]</sup>. Xia and He examined the organizational forms of ICH entering scenic areas, proposing a development model that combines ICH and scenic resources. This provides a new perspective for the integration of ICH and the tourism industry<sup>[14]</sup>.

## **2.4. Literature review**

By summarizing the referenced literature, it can be observed that scholars both domestically and internationally have studied the integrated development model of ICH and the tourism industry from different perspectives. With the progression of time, researchers have developed various tourism models and mechanisms based on the cultural value of different ICH and tourism experiences, greatly facilitating the integration of ICH and the tourism industry. Most research in China on the integrated development of ICH and the tourism industry involves discussing innovative development models for cultural tourism integration. Many ICH-related tourist attractions across the country are exploring cultural tourism integration models tailored to their unique characteristics.

# **3. Research design**

## **3.1. Case study location**

Firstly, representative integration cases were selected from the integrated development of ICH and tourism in



Rongchang. The Rongchang District fully utilizes its local ICH cultural resources to promote tourism development by establishing the Grass Cloth Town, the Antao Town, and the historically and culturally famous Wanling Ancient Town.

Secondly, using grass cloth as a medium, Rongchang vigorously promotes the development of ICH cultural and creative products. By combining traditional grass cloth with modern design concepts, a series of stylish and practical grass cloth cultural and creative products have been created, which have been well-received in the market. This initiative not only preserves the craftsmanship of grass cloth making but also extends its reach to a broader market.

In addition, Rongchang actively promotes the integrated development of ICH and tourism. ICH experience projects and ICH performance activities are organized in scenic areas, allowing tourists to experience ICH skills and deepen their understanding and knowledge of local culture. Simultaneously, Rongchang encourages local residents to participate in ICH tourism projects, improving their income levels and achieving mutual benefit and win-win results between ICH and tourism.

### 3.2. Data sources

The data is divided into two parts (**Table 1**). One part consists of field research meeting records. The research team participated in the on-site symposium on “Developing the Cultural Industry to Empower Rural Revitalization” in Rongchang District from April 13 to 14, 2024. They also conducted field research in Rongchang’s Grass Cloth Town and Antao Town to collect relevant information on the integrated development of ICH and tourism, providing detailed first-hand data. The other part comprises interview materials. On April 28, 2024, the research team conducted a focused interview with industry association personnel who have a deep understanding of the Rongchang Grass Cloth Fashion Week. The materials are comprehensive, align with the field research findings, and accurately reflect the current status of ICH and tourism development in Rongchang District, Chongqing.

**Table 1.** Sources of symposium text materials and interview text data

Data type	Interviewee/Source	Time
Rongchang District Intangible Cultural Heritage & Tourism Symposium Meeting Minutes	Deputy Director, Cultural and Tourism Commission	April 13, 2024
	Chongqing University Career Mentor	
	Head, Chongqing University Research Delegation	
	Head, Chongqing University Alumni Association	
	Representative 1, Corporate Inspection Delegation	
	Representative 2, Corporate Inspection Delegation	
Interview Record	Deputy Secretary-General, Chongqing Garment & Textile Association	April 28, 2024

## 4. Research on the integrated development model of intangible cultural heritage and tourism in Rongchang District, Chongqing

### 4.1. Open coding

Open coding was used to annotate and name the relevant raw data content related to the research topic and to extract initial conceptual categories. Based on the research topic, data processing and analysis were conducted on the collected raw data. Key sentences were screened through keywords such as intangible cultural heritage, intangible cultural heritage inheritors, cultural innovation, culture and tourism-related words, government, enterprises, etc. Twenty basic concepts were extracted, including innovation and promotion of cultural heritage,

tourism economy and cultural innovation, cultural tourism and industrial integration, brand and market of the intangible cultural heritage industry, international marketization of intangible cultural heritage, government support and promotion, innovation and comprehensive development of the cultural industry, brand building and market strategy, promotion of intangible cultural heritage, inheritance and value of intangible cultural heritage, artistic promotion of intangible cultural heritage, media drive and industry linkage, industry association supervision and promotion of culture and tourism, market strategy and value growth of intangible cultural heritage products, market adaptability and development of intangible cultural heritage products, integrated promotion and inheritance innovation of intangible cultural heritage, local industrial development driven by the integration of culture and tourism, brand linkage and cultural dissemination, industrial cooperation and creative development, market adaptability and business model innovation (see **Table 3** for details). The coding process is shown in **Table 2**, and only part of it is displayed due to space limitations. Since it is a mixed coding of text materials from symposiums and interviews, during the coding process, the key sentences contained in the collected text materials are summarized for better understanding. The original representative sentences belonging to the cultural tourism symposium are set as a1, a2, ..., and those belonging to the interview record text materials are set as b1, b2, ...

**Table 2.** Example of open coding

Conceptualization	Primary sources
A1 Heritage Innovation & Promotion	a1. Rongchang was named in 1373... developing the “Millennium Rongchang Historical Culture Week” as a flagship IP event. a2. Planning major projects for the Chengdu-Chongqing Ancient Route, where Rongchang serves as a key node.
A2 Tourism Economy & Cultural Innovation	a3. Xiabu (Grass Cloth) Town is best visited at night for its lantern displays. a4. Antao (Pottery) Town requires enhanced commercial formats... New e-commerce talents are needed to guide online sales.
A3 Cultural-Tourism-Industry Integration	a5. Rongchang integrates culture, sports, and tourism. a6. Rongchang is among China’s first National Model Zones for Public Fitness and the only such district in Chongqing. a7. The Commerce Bureau is establishing a Food E-commerce Industrial Park leveraging influencer economy.
...	...
A6 Government Support & Promotion	b1. Led by Chongqing Municipal Commission of Economy and Informatization. b2. Officials from national cultural authorities, including the Intangible Cultural Heritage Department, conducted inspections in Rongchang.
...	...
A13 Industry Association Oversight & Promotion	b10. Organized by Chongqing Garment & Textile Association (registered with Civil Affairs Bureau), supervised by Chongqing Municipal Commission of Economy and Informatization.
...	...
A17 Cultural-Tourism Driven Local Industry Development	b16. Every cultural-tourism base can establish a national defense education base. a10. Collaborating to build an Industry Integration Training Center and practical training base.
...	...
A20 Market Promotion & Business Model Innovation	b21. Persistently high costs constrain sales channels to traditional models (physical stores/dealers). We aim to catalyze e-commerce adoption.

## 4.2. Axial coding

Using axial coding methods, the logical relationships between 20 basic concepts were analyzed and categorized into seven areas: innovative development of the intangible cultural heritage industry, integrated development of cultural tourism, brand building and market positioning, industry integration model innovation, government support and policy guarantees, enterprise cooperation and industry synergies, intangible cultural heritage education and industry cooperation, denoted as Cn; this ultimately formed four main categories: industry, culture, governance, and talent, denoted as Fn, as shown in **Table 3**.

**Table 3.** Axial coding table

Primary category	Sub-category	Initial concepts (from Open Coding)
F1 Industry Sector (ICH Culture & Innovation)	C1 ICH Industry Innovation & Development	A1 Heritage Innovation & Promotion; A2 Tourism Economy & Cultural Innovation; A7 Cultural Industry Innovation & Integrated Development; A9 ICH Cultural Promotion; A10 ICH Inheritance & Value Enhancement; A11 Artistic Promotion of ICH; A17 Integrated ICH Promotion & Innovative Inheritance
F2 Cultural Sector (Cultural-Tourism Industry & Market Positioning)	C2 Cultural Industry Convergence	A3 Cultural-Tourism-Industry Integration
	C3 Brand Building & Market Positioning	A4 Branding & Market Expansion for ICH Industries; A8 Brand Development & Marketing; A14 Market Strategies & Value Growth for ICH Products; A15 Market Adaptability & Development of ICH Products; A18 Brand Synergy & Cultural Dissemination
	C4 Industrial Integration Models	A19 Industrial Collaboration & Creative Development; A20 Market Promotion & Business Model Innovation
F3 Governance Sector (Government Administration & Policy Support)	C5 Government Support & Policy Safeguards	A6 Government Support & Promotion
F4 Talent Sector (ICH Practitioners & Enterprise Engagement)	C6 Enterprise Collaboration & Business Innovation	A12 Media-Driven Industry Linkage; A13 Trade Association Oversight & Promotion
	C7 ICH Education & Industry Partnerships	A17 Cultural-Tourism Driven Local Industry Development

## 4.3. Selective coding

Using selective coding methods, the “core category” was extracted, resulting in a core concept—the reciprocal symbiosis of intangible cultural heritage and tourism development. This forms a core element model of “intangible cultural heritage + cultural tourism integration development” driven by three core collaborative entities: intangible cultural heritage inheritors, the government, and enterprises, to further integrate intangible cultural heritage and tourism, better attract the tourist market, provide products and services to tourists (consumers), and thus inherit intangible cultural heritage.

## 4.4. Elements of cultural tourism integration development

- (1) Government: The government’s main interests are to protect and inherit intangible cultural heritage, maintain cultural diversity, promote regional economic development to achieve common prosperity, enhance regional brand image, and strengthen cultural soft power. Therefore, the government formulates

and implements relevant policies, provides governance and policy guarantees, ensures the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, provides human and financial support, promotes industrial development, and provides policy support and guidance. The goals are to achieve sustainable development in the cultural tourism integration area, promote common prosperity, and drive deep industrial integration.

- (2) Intangible cultural heritage inheritors: By showcasing and inheriting cultural identity and lifestyle, intangible cultural heritage inheritors attract public attention and participation. They provide cultural content for the cultural tourism industry by demonstrating and imparting skills while earning economic benefits.
- (3) Enterprises: Enterprises aim to enhance market competitiveness, achieve benefit growth, and fulfill social responsibilities. To achieve this, they participate in the formulation and coordination of intangible cultural heritage projects, promote industrial development, adjust and improve the industry's momentum to ensure healthy industrial development, provide employment opportunities, and engage in cultural tourism industry development. Their goals are to achieve market positioning and industrial agglomeration, drive industrial innovation and development, and enhance brand value.
- (4) Tourists (consumers): Consumer demand for intangible cultural heritage products drives the formation and development of the market. Consumer feedback helps enterprises and intangible cultural heritage inheritors improve their products and services to better meet market demand.

#### **4.5. Innovative integration development model of culture and tourism**

- (1) "Intangible Cultural Heritage + Tourism" utilizes intangible cultural heritage resources to create a full chain. For example, the transformation of intangible cultural heritage into cultural tourism products is achieved through innovative experiences and digital activation in places like Antao Town and Xiabu Town.
- (2) "Scenic Area + Tourism" promotes the transformation of scenic areas. With the help of cultural IP and innovative formats, Wanling Ancient Town and Gufo Mountain Scenic Area extend visitors' stay time and increase secondary consumption.
- (3) "Village + Tourism" constructs a three-industry integration path. Qingsheng Town and Anfu Street rely on intangible cultural heritage and ecological resources to increase farmers' income and rural tourism revenue.
- (4) "Service + Tourism" improves service through intelligence and standardization. Platforms like "One Code Travel Rongchang" and "Intangible Cultural Heritage Service Station" enhance visitor satisfaction and form a high-quality service network.

### **5. Countermeasures and suggestions for the integrated and innovative development of the cultural tourism industry in Rongchang District**

#### **5.1. Strengthening the cultivation of young inheritors**

Currently, the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage faces challenges such as the aging of inheritors and a lack of interest among the younger generation, leading to the risk of skill transmission gaps. To address this issue, multiple parties should work together. The government and relevant departments should provide financial support, fund intangible cultural heritage projects, create training bases, and attract young people. Scholarships and vocational training should be provided to young people to stimulate their participation and enthusiasm, injecting vitality into the inheritance. Collaboration with cultural and educational institutions can enhance the knowledge and communication skills of intangible cultural heritage inheritors. Favorable conditions for inheritance should be

created by strengthening talent cultivation and introduction, providing policy and technical support, and facilitating market access. Multiple measures should be taken to create a good atmosphere where the entire society values intangible cultural heritage.

## **5.2. Promoting the development and innovation of cultural tourism products**

Currently, there are issues such as insufficient integration between Chongqing's rural intangible cultural heritage and modern design, a lack of depth and breadth, and high prices for innovative products, which restrict the dissemination and innovation of intangible cultural heritage. To address this, designers and inheritors can be encouraged to collaborate, merging traditional skills with modern aesthetics, promoting cross-border cooperation, organizing design competitions, and developing diverse cultural and creative products. Cultural festivals and activities can enhance the experiential and interactive aspects of intangible cultural heritage. Additionally, digital technology can be utilized to establish an intangible cultural heritage database, develop virtual exhibitions, formulate reasonable pricing strategies, and encourage social forces to participate through public-private partnerships, comprehensively promoting the sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage.

## **5.3. Strengthening brand building and market positioning**

To enhance the brand value of Chongqing's rural "intangible cultural heritage," a multi-pronged approach is necessary. Firstly, a clear brand image and positioning must be established, deeply exploring intangible cultural heritage stories and aligning them with modern aesthetics and market demands. Innovative design of tourism products and experiential activities should be pursued to strengthen emotional connections with consumers and enhance brand influence and market recognition. Simultaneously, expanding sales networks through online e-commerce platforms and offline experience stores is crucial. International cultural exchanges, such as collaborations with foreign museums, should be enhanced, and a cooperation platform between inheritors and enterprises should be established to facilitate resource sharing. Additionally, actively promoting the integration of intangible cultural heritage with industries like tourism, education, and fashion, and developing diversified products and experiences, can comprehensively broaden the dissemination channels of intangible cultural heritage.

## **5.4. Enhancing the precision and supervision of government support**

The government plays a leading role in promoting the integrated development of intangible cultural heritage and the tourism industry. Firstly, the government should establish and improve the evaluation and supervision mechanism for policies related to intangible cultural heritage and tourism. Through in-depth research on the characteristics of intangible cultural heritage and tourism market demands, precise and targeted policies should be formulated and adjusted based on feedback to facilitate deep integration. Secondly, increased financial investment is necessary to provide funding support for the promotion, protection, inheritance, and innovation of intangible cultural heritage projects and the tourism industry. Policy guidance should be utilized to cultivate inheritors of intangible cultural heritage, especially among the younger generation, and encourage cross-industry collaboration. Furthermore, promoting community participation in intangible cultural heritage protection and enhancing public awareness are crucial. Policies should also be leveraged to support the brand building and promotion of intangible cultural heritage, and international exchanges should be conducted to comprehensively promote the sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage and the tourism industry.

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