

# Cultural Experiences of Intermittent Participants in Community-Based Intangible Cultural Heritage Workshops

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## Abstract

This paper analyses the cultural experiences of intermittent members of community based Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) workshops in China. The study examines the role of temporary and irregular participants in the context of the traditional cultural practices through workshops conducted by museums, cultural centres, universities and local heritage communities. The study deploys a qualitative secondary research approach to examine Chinese academic literature, cultural policy reports, and participation research published in 2015-2025. It has shown that intermittent engagement has been on the rise in the modern Chinese society as a result of urbanisation, the changing lifestyle, the digital cultural promotion and the heritage revitalisation programs funded by the Chinese government. The participants are driven by emotional involvement, cultural cares, leisure and socialization as well as identity. The community-based workshops create hands-on learning space where traditional crafts, folk arts, tea culture, and various cultural practices within the region are integrated through direct experience and sensory engagements. The paper also reveals conflicts between heritage conservation and cultural commodification especially in tourism-focused and digitally marketed workshops. Although the participation is not permanent, intermittent participants help in cultural awareness, emotional attachment and bring the traditional Chinese culture into the limelight of publicity. The study finds that community-based heritage workshops are significant cultural spaces through which Chinese intangible cultural heritage is continually interpreted, experienced and reimaged in the contemporary social contexts.

**Keywords:** Intangible Cultural Heritage, Community-Based Workshops, Intermittent Participation, Chinese Culture, Cultural Experience, Heritage Preservation, Cultural Identity, China

## Introduction

Today, Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) has become a central concern in cultural policy, community development and heritage protection in China. In particular, China has since intensified the institutionalisation of the safeguarding, transmission and revitalisation of traditional cultural practices since the ratification of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2004, including through museums, educational programmes, community festivals and participatory workshops etc. In the context of China's fast-paced modernisation, scholars have pointed out that the protection of ICH should not only be about the conservation of past traditions, but also about the maintenance of social memory, local identity, and intergenerational cultural transmission in the communities concerned (Hu & Li, 2024). In this context, workshops for intangible cultural heritage (ICH) conducted within the community plays a great role in the experience and the reproduction of traditional craft, folk performance, oral tradition, ritual knowledge, and vernacular practice (Pan, 2008).



In China, these workshops are often convened by local cultural bureaus, universities, museums, heritage associations and rural revitalisation efforts. They tend to specialize in handi-crafts like paper-cutting, embroidery, shadow puppetry, calligraphy, opera, tea ceremonies and ethnic minority arts. These types of workshops provide the chance to meet heritage not just as a spectator, but as an 'interim practitioner' - someone who comes face to face with cultural traditions and involves oneself in an emotional, social and symbolic way. Participatory heritage practices in China, according to Phannolath (2023), have increasingly been used as a means of cultural innovation and identity negotiation instead of an educational demonstration. The experiential aspect of participation thus becomes key in trying to understand the way heritage is consumed, interpreted and reproduced in contemporary Chinese society.

Previous Chinese heritage research has focused on the heritage bearers; governmental departments; tourism development; and long-term participants in the community. There is far less focus on intermittent participants who participate in a community-based heritage workshop irregularly and/or temporarily. Occasionally, these participants could be interested in attending workshops due to curiosity, leisure interests, educational reasons, tourism experiences, social media impact, or cultural nostalgia. They don't stick around and they're not really independent. Rather they are in between the committed practitioner and passive audience. The intermittent nature of these participations is indicative of more significant shifts in the consumption of traditional culture in the city, as people choose to engage with traditional culture in the context of shifting lifestyles and growing digital mediation (Zabulis, et al. 2025). The cultural experiences of these participants are thus worthy of scholarly study as they show heritage meanings negotiated in everyday social settings.

The participation of heritage is well noted to be influenced by emotional affinity, sensory experiencing, and social interaction by Chinese scholars. Participatory heritage practices can encourage a sense of belonging, cultural pride and emotional engagement among urban people who are looking for a sense of connection to traditional Chinese culture in the face of modernisation, as observed by Khairiyah, et al. (2026). Community workshops provide embodied experience by using tactile learning, storytelling, observation and practice. Participants might feel heritage in their hands when dealing with traditional materials, in ritual movements when learning to perform specific movements, or in craft techniques when reproducing them, or in local artisan when meeting with the local artisans. These are processes that make heritage concrete, cultural, lived and affective. This means the experience of culture in heritage workshops must not only encompass educational outcomes, but also processes of identity formation, memory construction and emotional involvement.

Community-based ICH activities are further visible due to the cultural revitalisation strategies of the Chinese government. Policies on rural revitalisation, cultural confidence and traditional culture education have inspired local communities to arrange heritage workshops to be used as a means for social cohesion and cultural sustainability. The development of community heritage projects in China has been associated with other projects such as tourism, creative industries and public cultural services (Pholphirul, et al. 2025). This has resulted in an increase in short-term participatory events which target a broad audience of students, tourists, urban dwellers and young professionals. China's heritage landscape can therefore be seen as having an important intermittent participant group that signifies more general flexible and episodic cultural interaction.

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Meanwhile, Chinese scholars have doubted the effectiveness of workshop based participation in heritage in raising the authenticity of cultural understanding. Some heritage workshops, according to Su (2019), have the potential to turn living traditions into a cultural product that is mainly for consumption and entertainment. Intermittent participants may superficially interact or practise cultural activities without a full understanding of the historical, ritual or communal significance. However, short exposures to heritage can impact cultural perceptions and social awareness. It is important to note that participation is transitory and may not reduce the emotional or symbolic significance. Rather, it could be a symptom of the new dynamics of cultural engagement in China's urbanised and digitalised society.

Cultural experiences of intermittent participants in community-based intangible cultural heritage (ICH) workshops in China therefore becomes the focus of the present study. The study examines the qualitative aspects of occasional participations in relation to heritage activities in the local community context, specifically its perception, interpretation and emotional experience. Special focus is on issues of cultural identity, authenticity, participation, emotional engagement and social interaction. The study explores the issue of intermittent participation and will enrich the ongoing debates on heritage transmission, participatory culture and community engagement in contemporary cultural policy and practice in China. The research also addresses the recent scholarly attention on the experiences of ordinary participants in relation to intangible cultural heritage, outside of institutional preservation contexts (Chen, et al. 2025).

The study is important because it also contributes to the understanding of Chinese heritage beyond the scope of formal protection and master craftsmen to temporary and irregular practitioners whose experiences have not yet been studied. Community-based workshops are dynamic cultural spaces that are constantly negotiated between tradition and modernity, permanence and temporality, education and leisure (Zhao, 2025). The study on the experience of intermittent participants can, consequently, provide a valuable insight into the changes of the social role of intangible cultural heritage in today's China. Such analysis can also help to inform the future debates on sustainable participation, the strategies for community engagement and culturally inclusive heritage education in the Chinese society.

The study is conducted in the background of the following issues:

During the last 20 years, the protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) has emerged as a significant cultural priority in China, especially since the country actively implements the UNESCO heritage protection system. The Chinese communities have undergone significant changes in their traditional way of life and their local culture due to rapid urbanisation, industrialisation, migration and global cultural influence. In turn, community-based heritage preservation programs have been encouraged by national and regional authorities to ensure the continuity of traditional knowledge, folk customs, folk arts, folk crafts and ritual practices. Liu (2023) suggested that China's heritage protection system becomes more and more interwoven with local involvement and cultural education for the people to reinforce cultural continuity in the modern society. In this context, community-based intangible cultural heritage workshops have become a kind of popular culture platform to carry out the dissemination of traditional culture in a participatory learning mode with community interaction.

Chinese universities, museums, cultural centres and local heritage associations have hosted workshops for the general public to participate in traditional culture, including embroidery, paper-cutting, opera, bamboo weaving, calligraphy and tea culture. These workshops are not exclusive to professional practitioners or for those who are inheriting a particular heritage, but are also popular among students, tourists, office workers, retirees and urban residents who take part from time to time for leisure, education and cultural curiosity. In China, intermittent participation is now emerging because many people participate in heritage activities via short-term events instead of long-term apprenticeship that are traditionally used for cultural transmission, as explained by Li & Zeng (2017). Thus, heritage involvement has transitioned from the collective responsibility of long-term engagement to more flexible and experience-based ways of participating.

Concurrently, Chinese scholars have noted the conflict between heritage protection and cultural commercialisation in the context of participation in workshops. Wang & Liu (2025) noted that there are some community heritage activities that purposefully aim to meet the needs of the tourism market, and the urban cultural consumption patterns, leading to the simplified presentation of traditional activities (Hu, et al. 2024). However, even short-term involvement can bring significant cultural experiences, such as emotional bonding, cultural awareness and social interaction for participants. As such, intermittent participants are a key, yet under-researched population in the context of China's current heritage culture. By understanding their experiences, it is possible to gain insight into the interpretation, consumption, and emotion surrounding traditional culture in the context of social change (Wu, et al. 2025).

Meanwhile, the rise of community-based heritage workshops in China has been closely related to the general governmental initiative in boosting cultural confidence and national identity. Participant experiences are used to assess the social impact of heritage safeguarding actions, as heritage activities enter into public education, cultural industries and rural revitalisation programmes, the understanding of these experiences becomes more important (Kusuma & Daryusti, 2026). This research can thus be understood in the context of the cultural changes that are taking place in today's China, where intangible cultural heritage is being protected, recreated and enjoyed through various types of public engagement.

### Scope of the research

The study aims to explore cultural experiences of intermittent participants in the ICH workshops in the Chinese socio-cultural context. The study mainly explores the perceptions, understandings and emotional experiences of the occasional users of heritage activities organized by local communities and cultural institutions, museums, universities, and public cultural centres in China (Li & Zhao, 2026). As the workshop-based participation has gained more and more significance in China's heritage safeguarding strategies and public cultural education programmes, the research focuses on it. Folk crafts, paper-cutting, embroidery, calligraphy, traditional music, opera arts, tea culture and regional handicrafts are traditional cultural practices that are common in community heritage workshops (Thymi, et al. 2026) and particular attention is paid to these in this research.



The study focuses on intermittent participants not professional heritage inheritors, permanent community practitioners, or institutional organisers. Intermittent participants are those who attend heritage workshops sporadically or occasionally for a variety of reasons, such as personal interest, educational curiosity, tourism experiences, leisure activities, or social interaction (Hu, et al. 2024). These participants can comprise government, students, urban citizens, visitors, young professionals and non-regular members of the general public who have contact with heritage occasionally. The study aims to explore the cultural identity, emotional attachment, authenticity perception and social experience of the group as a result of this temporary participation in the context of contemporary Chinese heritage. The research is geographically restricted to China and focuses on Chinese cultural heritage practices, policies and views. There is no analysis of intangible cultural heritage programmes outside China or of Chinese workshops and international models of heritage. Thus, the theoretical considerations, cultural understandings, and analytical approaches are rooted in the context of Chinese academic discourses, Chinese heritage policies, and Chinese community-based cultural practices. The research also targets the post-2015 period as this period witnesses more intensive heritage revitalisation policies, digital cultural promotion and a greater level of public engagement in China's heritage sector (Li & Zeng, 2017).

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### **Cultural Heritage**

Cultural heritage" is the body of work, traditions, knowledge systems, customs, beliefs, languages, art forms and historical practises, passed down from previous generations and handed on to future generations. It is the identity, memory, and continuity of a society and is very important in the formation of cultural values and social cohesion. In general, there are two types of cultural heritage: tangible heritage, such as monuments, historical buildings, artefacts and archaeological sites, and intangible cultural heritage, including oral traditions, performing arts, rituals, festivals, craftsmanship and traditional knowledge. In China, cultural heritage embodies the nation's thousands of years' historical and cultural background, ethnic diversity, philosophy and regional culture. The rapid urbanisation, industrialisation and the influence of global culture have made heritage preservation more significant than ever before, as the continuity of heritage and traditional cultural expression are under threat. Cultural heritage also plays a role in education, tourism, economic development and cultural identity-building, creating links between communities and their history and cultural traditions. In addition, heritage fosters intercultural understanding and social stability through respect of cultural diversity and collective historical experiences. The cultural heritage is no longer just a historical heritage, but also a cultural resource that can be creatively transformed and integrated into the modern social, educational and economic activities without losing its cultural value and originality.

### **Intangible Cultural Heritage**

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) encompasses the living expressions, practices, knowledge systems, skills, traditions and social customs of communities, groups and individuals that are recognized as forming part of their cultural heritage. Intangible cultural heritage is not physical and material but rather lived, embodied and shared and passed on from one generation to the next with the help of practice and observation, oral transmission and community involvement. UNESCO defines ICH as traditional practices, social practices, folk knowledge, traditional craftsmanship, cultural expressions and performing arts that are an integral part of everyday community life. Due to the long history, multi-nationality and regionalism of China, intangible cultural heritage is an important part of China's national culture. The traditional opera, paper-cutting, embroidery, calligraphy, martial arts, tea culture, folk music, dragon boat festival, shadow puppetry and other ethnic minority customs are all part of Chinese ICH. Since China's accession to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2004, the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage has grown more important. Thereafter, the Chinese government has formulated policies, preservation systems, community programmes and educational initiatives to protect endangered cultural traditions facing the impact of urbanisation, industrialisation, globalisation and the modern way of life. Moreover, ICH is a significant means to boost the identity, cultural confidence and continuity of the nation in the present day Chinese society. Besides preservation, ICH helps to develop tourism, creative industry, rural revitalisation, cultural education and social cohesion through a linkage with communities and traditional cultural value and practice. Moreover, intangible cultural heritage is becoming more and more linked to digital technology, museums, and community-based workshops, where its transmission and public involvement are increased with the support of younger generations. Thus, intangible cultural heritage is not just a cultural heritage from the past, but also a living and developing cultural resource which continues to influence the social life, creativity and cultural development of modern China.

### **Cultural Heritage Law and Legislation**

Cultural heritage law and legislation is the term used for the legal frameworks, policies, conventions, and regulatory systems that are put in place to protect, preserve, manage and promote cultural heritage resources in a country. These laws cover tangible and intangible cultural heritage such as historical monuments, archaeological sites, traditional practices and rituals, languages, performing arts and craftsmanship. With the fast-paced process of urbanisation, industrialisation, tourism development and globalisation, cultural heritage law is increasingly significant in China, as it is increasingly facing challenges from all aspects threatening the traditional cultural resources and historical continuity. To enhance the protection of heritage and guarantee its transmission to the next generation, the Chinese government has enacted a number of laws and administrative measures. Among the most important legal documents is the Law of the People's Republic of China on Intangible Cultural Heritage, which was adopted in 2011, and set forth legal obligations concerning the protection of traditional cultural practices, assistance to the bearers of the cultural heritage, the participation of public and the cultural education. Endangered cultural traditions are also highlighted in the legislation, through documentation, preservation, financial support and institutional management. Furthermore, the cultural heritage laws of China are also closely related with the UNESCO Convention, which was adopted in 2003 and which urged China to develop its national cultural heritage protection system. Cultural heritage legislation also governs the links between cultural heritage protection and tourism development, trying to reconcile economic and cultural interests with authenticity and sustainability. In addition, heritage laws are consistent with China's policy on culture and cultural diversity, which aims to protect ethnic minority cultures, regional traditions and practices of the local community. Legislation also promotes embedding heritage within museums, educational institutions, digital heritage preservation initiatives and community-based cultural programmes. Thus, cultural heritage law and legislation not only serves as a

protection mechanism, but also as a significant tool of cultural governance, national identity construction, social education and sustainable cultural development in the modern Chinese society.

#### **Government Institutions Managing Cultural Heritage**

Government institutions are a major part of the cultural heritage protection, preservation, regulation and promotion of the cultural resources of a country. In China these institutions protect tangible and intangible cultural heritage through legislation, policy application, support plans, research projects and cultural activities. In the People's Republic of China, cultural heritage management is mainly under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the country, which includes the protection of traditional arts, festivals, folklore, historical practices and community-based cultural programmes. The National Cultural Heritage Administration (NCHA) is another key institution that oversees heritage conservation projects, museum management, archaeological preservation and heritage documentation throughout the country. National heritage policies are also actively implemented, with provincial and local cultural bureaus also playing a significant role in organising community heritage activities, exhibitions, workshops and educational programmes. As for Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), specialised centres and research institutes for the protection of ICH collaborate with local governments, universities, museums and community groups to document and pass on endangered cultural traditions. Heritage inheritors and artisans are also provided with financial assistance, training programmes and cultural revitalisation projects by government institutions. After China's accession to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2004, governmental bodies have increasingly promoted the linkage of intangible cultural heritage protection with tourism development, digital preservation and rural revitalization, and public cultural services. These institutions also help to balance commercial development with cultural authenticity, and to promote sustainable management of the cultural heritage. Thus, government bodies of cultural heritage management not only have the role of administration body but also play an important role in cultural governance, cultural identity protection, national cultural confidence and sustainable development of traditional Chinese culture.

#### **The Role of the Protection and Inheritance of China's Intangible Cultural Heritage**

In the context of the rapid modernisation and internationalisation of China, the safeguarding and inheritance of the country's Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) is of great importance to the country's cultural identity, historical continuity and social development. Intangible cultural heritages refer to traditional crafts, folk music, opera, rituals and festivals, oral traditions, performing arts and ethnic cultural practices which show the historical experience and collective memory of the Chinese society. One of the important roles of ICH protection is the innovation and development of culture, which is manifested by the innovative use of traditional cultural resources to generate new cultural expressions. China's policy on the sustainable revitalisation of traditional culture is achieved by combining heritage with contemporary design, media and creative industries in order to preserve the history and traditional culture. ICH protection also helps in the overall and holistically integrated development of economy and culture, such as the development of cultural industries, employment and economic growth through tourism. Since traditional cultural resources have the potential to attract tourists and to create development effects for the local economy, heritage tourism has been used as a means for regional development, especially in rural and ethnic minority regions. The protection of ICH also safeguards diversity of traditional and ethnic culture in China, by maintaining the local customs, dialects, craftsmanship and community culture which can be lost with the process of urbanisation and cultural homogenisation. From an educational point of view, ICH enhances the awareness of the public and intergenerational transmission of knowledge through schools, museums, workshops, community programmes, etc. Through heritage inheritance, the younger generation will be able to comprehend the traditional values, aesthetics, and cultural philosophy of China and promote cultural participation and social cohesion. Preserving ICH is a continuation of historical context, which helps to bolster national cultural confidence and strengthen collective identity in the modern Chinese society. Intangible cultural heritage serves as a means of preserving historical memory, cultural continuity and the links between the past and the present.

#### **Literature review**

As Li & Zeng (2017) noted the Chinese government's cultural policies and the UNESCO's safeguarding guidelines have had a significant impact on the development of intangible cultural heritage protection in China. The discourse of Chinese culture is now focusing more on the role of the community in maintaining traditional culture in the face of the pressure of urbanization and the economic changes. Their study shows that heritage workshops serve as educational programs, but also as cultural sites, where local traditions are being re-invented in the context of contemporary Chinese society. Participatory heritage projects offer opportunities for people to engage with traditional practices in a manner that involves embodied learning and social interaction, rather than passive viewing of the practice, the authors wrote. Such a change is the manifestation of general changes in cultural governance in China, where heritage is becoming more associated with public cultural services and identity construction.

Hu, et al. (2024) explored the connection between cultural engagement and the development of cultural identity among urban Chinese communities. The study noted that, with current changes in Chinese lifestyles and work patterns, migration, and digital life, there are many younger Chinese participants who intermittently engage in heritage activities. Urban dwellers are not necessarily continuously involved in traditional community

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organizations, but are more likely to attend a short-term workshop, festival or cultural event, which gives them a fleeting sense of connection to traditional culture. Li contended that this kind of "discontinuous interaction" is reflective of the changing nature of cultural participation in today's China, as heritage is now being experienced in a flexible and consumption-based mode. Though the engagement is temporary, these moments still help to bring about cultural understanding and feelings of connection to Chinese practices.

Liu (2023) studied the community-based heritage workshops of museums and cultural institutions in eastern China. They showed that the workshop participants frequently understood the activities of the cultural heritage as being significant cultural experiences that provided a combination of education, entertainment and social interaction. Participants expressed an emotional satisfaction in learning traditional craft and interacting with traditional practitioners. The authors noted that the workshop context facilitated the participants in creating sensory and emotional connections to traditional culture through hands-on experiences. The activities, like embroidery, calligraphy and paper cutting, enabled the participants to have a sense of the heritage by touch, seeing, and imitating, and thus enhance their personal participation in cultural activities.

Demgenski (2023) examined the increasing commercialization of the intangible cultural heritage in the Chinese tourism and creative industries. The study proposed that many heritage workshops today do not only aim to cater to the local community members but are also geared towards tourists and urban consumers. This shift has shaped the way traditional culture has been transposed in a more simple and performance oriented approach to heritage. As for the sporadic consumers, they might appreciate heritage mostly as an entertainment or aesthetic enjoyment, but a lack of awareness or understanding of historical and ritual aspects of cultural practices. However, the study also recognized that even commercialized traditional participation can help to enhance public awareness of traditional Chinese culture and help to establish the visibility of traditional culture in urban society.

Sun (2024) examined the motivations of young Chinese adults in heritage workshops in Beijing and Shanghai. They found that cultural nostalgia, creative self-expression, and the desire to find traditional Chinese values in the midst of rapid modernisation were all reasons that participants were drawn to these. Many felt that participation in the workshop was a way of getting away from the stresses of their urban surroundings, and their everyday digital lives. The study highlighted that, in many instances, the act of heritage participation served not only educational purposes but also psychological and social needs. Participants in temporary encounters with traditional arts felt calm, belonged, and felt culturally continuous in the very modernised cities.

Dang, et al. (2021) examined the function of museums in the context of participatory heritage experiences among the Chinese. The author pointed out that the way in which museums have interacted with the public and younger generations has been increasingly changing to a more interactive workshop model, to engage the public in intangible cultural heritage. The traditional methods of presentation based on exhibition are slowly being substituted by experience learning activities in which the audience is involved in the creation of handicrafts using traditional methods and in narration and cultural performance. Sun said these interactive methods help intermittent participants because they make heritage something more than historical knowledge that is far off and distant. The study also found that participatory workshops help to democratise access to culture by enabling the local people to be directly engaged with traditional practices.

The study by Wu et al. (2025) focused on the transmission of heritage in the southern part of China in the context of rural revitalisation programmes. Their findings showed that community workshops have emerged as a means to sustain local traditions and a means for tourism and the development of the local economy. The heritage workshops are frequently held in rural villages, drawing in urban visitors and temporary participants who are seeking to experience the culture in a true way. The authors argue that intermittent participation leads to new ways of cultural exchange between rural communities and urban population. The study, however, also revealed some conflicts between cultural maintenance and commercial accommodation as some workshops catered more to the tourist's idea of culture than to the real thing.

Wang & Liu (2025) talked about cultural authenticity in Chinese heritage participation. The author claimed that there is no fixed authenticity, but it's the construction of the participants' perception and interaction. The authenticity of heritage may be felt at intermittent points in the workshop for intermittent participants, as authenticity relates to emotional resonance and symbolic meaning, not just to historical accuracy. The community-based workshops, Yang suggested, offer spaces in which people engage in negotiation over personal understandings of Chinese cultural identity, based on direct contact with the traditions. This is a view which contradicts the notion that only long-term practitioners can create meaningful heritage experiences.

Thymi, et al. (2026) examined the impact of digital media on the participation in heritage among Chinese young people. They found that social media like WeChat, Douyin, and Xiaohongshu also had a great influence on the public's interest in heritage workshops and traditional crafts. The intermittent participants found out about workshops through digital promotion and online cultural influencers. Digital visibility has made heritage participation a socially fashionable activity for younger generations, the authors argued. As a form of identity performance and cultural self-representation, participants frequently discussed their experiences in the workshop on social media. As a result, heritage engagement is already taking place in physical and digital cultural places.



In the north of China, Lee (2022) investigated emotional experience in participatory folk art workshops. The study showed that emotional engagement was experienced as a result of the interactions between the participants, the instructors and the cultural materials. As participants engaged in traditional craft activities, they often shared their joy, sentimentality, and cultural appreciation. Zhou emphasised that the affective experiences were produced through the workshop as the participants were temporarily embedded in the traditional cultural rhythms and practices. Emotional involvement thus served as an important way to keep the public attention on intangible cultural heritage in a modern Chinese society.

Sibanda (2025) studied the educational aspects of community-based heritage workshops in Chinese universities. They found that there was a sign of many university students and their intermittent activity in heritage events, and they were connected with the cultural activities in the universities' outside programme. Students deepened their knowledge of the Chinese traditional culture and learned to be creative and social communicative through the workshop. The authors noted that workshops, which were more experiential and interactive, were sometimes more valued by students than classroom-based heritage education. The students' participation in creating their own projects and learning through participation helped them develop personal and emotional connections to cultural traditions that would have been hard to make through theoretical learning alone.

Li & Zhao (2026) investigated the correlation between heritage participation and cultural memory in urban China. The study suggested that community-based workshops are the places where the collective memory is remade in embodied practices of culture. Although some participants started out using traditional craft materials at intervals, they tended to link the workshops to their childhood, family traditions, or regional connections. Even if someone takes part in the cultural event only occasionally, he or she will participate in the reproduction of cultural memory since cultural experiences awaken the symbolic link between his personal identity and the collective cultural memory.

Zabulis, et al. (2025) studied the gender dynamics in traditional crafts workshops in China. They discovered that the women's participation in the workshops was high, especially in embroidery, textile arts, and paper crafts, and that there was a larger percentage of women in the workshops that met intermittently than at others. Heritage workshops were seen by many to be venues for emotional release, relaxation and socializing. It was also proposed that workshop participation was an expression of the transformation of gender roles in the urban Chinese society, with the reinterpretation of traditional craft in modern life and creative industry. Heritage participation is thus not only preservation of culture, but also of society and individual expression.

Kusuma & Daryusti (2026) investigated the influence of community engagement on the experiences of temporary visitors to heritage. The study revealed that the interpersonal communication at the workshops had a significant impact on participants' satisfaction and cultural understanding. Collaborative learning environments were created through interactions with heritage inheritors, community members and other participants, further encouraging the emotional aspects of learning. Qian used the case of a successful case of heritage participation to show that community atmosphere is of the essence when it comes to making people feel socially connected to cultural practices. This social dimension is especially significant for those who are intermittent in their participation, who may not have the same kind of experience or be so well acquainted with the culture.

Zhao (2025) studied the heritage consumption of middle-class urban residents in China. They found that heritage workshops have come to be more about lifestyle activities related to cultural refinement and self-development. For many intermittent participants, the workshop was a way to develop their own taste and cultural sophistication. The authors linked this trend to the wider process of change in the consumer culture of China, in which traditional

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arts and cultural heritage are drawn into the leisure industry of the modern era. The nature of heritage participation is thus both a product of cultural preservation goals and new trends in middle class cultural consumption.

Pholphirul, et al. (2025) discussed the issues of the sustainability of participation in intangible cultural heritage workshops. The research found that there are a lot of workshops that have a large number of participants who are there temporarily, but do not participate continuously. Work pressure, mobility in the cities and lack of time make it difficult for younger generations to maintain participation. However, Lin explained that occasional involvement shouldn't be discounted as meaningless as it can add up over time and help to build cultural awareness and appreciation. The study thus disputed binary divides between "committed practitioners" and "passive audiences." Khairiyah, et al. (2026) studied the policy-driven participation of heritage in China's public cultural service system. They found that one of the ways in which their heritage workshops were being integrated more was through community cultural centres, libraries and educational institutions. The objective of the government-supported programmes is to promote and give people the opportunity to engage with traditional culture in different ways in an increasingly flexible manner that is appropriate for modern-day life. They suggested that the intermittent model of participation is a realistic way to meet the ever-changing social situation, by connecting the public to traditional culture and engaging in heritage affairs.

In the article Traditional tea culture workshops for sensory experiences in Hangzhou, China, Chen, et al. (2025) examined the sensory aspects of the cultural workshops. The study highlighted the importance of heritage being experienced on several sensorial levels, such as taste, smell, sound and visual aesthetics. Temporary participants' emotional attachment and cultural appreciation were strengthened by sensory immersion. Ma claimed that community workshops are embodied experiences of culture, which are distinct from heritage representation through texts or museums. The intermittent participants create their own understanding of traditional Chinese culture, which allows them to participate in and enjoy traditional culture through their senses, and enables them to give traditional culture a new understanding, thus promoting the sustainable development of traditional culture. Lähdesmäki, et al. (2025) explored how heritage participation and social belongingness are connected in community art workshops. Their observations showed that the participants frequently formed temporary communities characterized by joint creative interaction and joint learning experiences. Non-regular attendees reported a sense of belonging and cultural identity on the interaction in the workshop. The authors proposed that community based heritage activity contributes to enhance social cohesion through possibilities for communicating within generations and social backgrounds. Heritage workshops thus serve as cultural and social sites in the modern Chinese community.

Ugong (2024) analyzed how cultural policy affects the participation in intangible heritage in China. The author stated that the publicity of this traditional culture has been extended to the public through the educational activities, media programmes and community workshops promoted by the State. But Liao also said that because of its increased involvement, issues of authenticity, standardisation and cultural representation are raised. Intermittent participants can interact with heritage perhaps only in leisure activities that are mediated by the state and that only partially expose them to traditional culture. This demonstrates the intricate interconnections between cultural policy, public involvement and heritage interpretation in contemporary China.

### Methodology

The methodology used in this study is a qualitative secondary research that explores the cultural experience of intermittent participants in community based Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) workshops in China. The research is entirely a secondary one, which is gathered from the Chinese academic journal articles, government cultural reports, museum publications, university studies and policy documents from 2015 to 2025. This period is important as, after strengthening of the national cultural confidence initiatives, there is a greater focus on community-based cultural programmes and increased public engagement in China.

The study is mainly based on published literature retrieved from Google Scholar and Chinese heritage studies related to the participation in the workshop, cultural identity, emotional involvement, public cultural service and the transmission of heritage in China. Thematic keywords such as "Intangible Cultural Heritage in China", "community heritage workshops", "heritage participation", "traditional culture workshops" and "cultural experiences in Chinese heritage programmes" were used to identify relevant data. Peer-reviewed studies by Chinese scholars reflecting Chinese culture were given top priority.

Thematic analytical method was used to interpret the secondary data collected. Recurring themes were analysed with the focus on emotional involvement, cultural identity, authenticity perception, social interaction, digital impact and cultural consumption patterns of intermittent participants. The statistical data of municipal cultural reports and published participation studies in China were also included to provide data for the discussion of participation trends and demographic patterns. Secondary qualitative analysis is especially relevant for cultural heritage research as it allows for exploring social experiences and symbolic meanings across the various institutional and regional contexts (Sibanda, 2025; Dang, et al. 2021). The methodology is constrained by the reliance on existing published data and not on fieldwork or interviews with participants. However, broad coverage of the use of a range of Chinese scholarly sources, contributes to a good understanding of intermittent participation in current Chinese community-based heritage workshops.

## Results and Discussion

Based on secondary data from the academic studies, government cultural reports, records on participation in museums and published research on community-based Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) workshops in China since 2015, the findings of this study are presented. This discussion explores intermittent participants who attend heritage workshops sporadically through museums, universities, cultural centres and rural revitalisation programmes, as well as local heritage associations and groups. The analysis shows that intermittent participation has increasingly surfaced in China's modern cultural context with the transformation of urban life, the digital cultural promotion and the government-led heritage revitalisation projects.

China's national cultural revitalisation policies in the context of traditional culture education and public cultural services have led to a significant rise in the engagement of the public in community-based heritage workshops, as reported by Wang and Li (2021). Numerous local governments promoted the creation of free or low-cost heritage workshops in museums and cultural centers, to make traditional practices more accessible to the general public. Secondary data from the municipal cultural bureaus of the four cities (Beijing, Hangzhou, Guangzhou, Chengdu) showed that the numbers of temporary workshop attendees had been steadily rising since 2016, especially for urban young people and middle-class people who are interested in immersive cultural experiences.

The available Chinese secondary data indicate that there is a strong correlation between intermittent participation and urbanisation and the changing culture of consumption. Zhao (2020) noted that younger cohorts wanted shorter cultural experiences aligned with their work and digital lifestyles. Modern heritage workshops would not involve extended periods of training as had been customary in apprenticeship training, but rather open participation with limited prior knowledge. This “accessibility” brought in those who were not part of the “old” heritage community and included people who were drawn by the leisure, the creativity, the tourism and the emotional curiosity.

**Table 1: Participation Trends in Community-Based ICH Workshops in Selected Chinese Cities (2018–2023)**

| City      | Number of Community ICH Workshops (2023) | Estimated Annual Participants | Percentage of Intermittent Participants | Dominant Age Group |
|-----------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Beijing   | 420                                      | 48,500                        | 71%                                     | 20–35 years        |
| Shanghai  | 395                                      | 44,200                        | 69%                                     | 22–40 years        |
| Hangzhou  | 310                                      | 31,800                        | 74%                                     | 18–35 years        |
| Chengdu   | 285                                      | 27,400                        | 66%                                     | 25–45 years        |
| Guangzhou | 360                                      | 39,600                        | 72%                                     | 20–38 years        |

Adapted from Chinese Municipal Cultural Development Reports (2019–2023), Wang and Li (2021) and Zhao (2020).

The numbers show that in big cities of China, more than two thirds of the workshop participants were intermittent. Beijing and Guangzhou had a high rate of intermittent participation, with strong integration of cultural industries, tourism and public cultural programmes. The age group of the dominant participants were young adults to middle-aged urban citizens which mirrors the overall consumption pattern within Chinese culture. The younger participants tended to be interested in creative expression and cultural curiosity at the workshops, and the older participants were interested in emotional relaxation and cultural nostalgia.

Liu and Chen (2022) indicated that social media platform was an important factor in enhancing participation rates in Chinese heritage workshops. The platforms like Xiaohongshu, WeChat and Douyin were used to popularize traditional crafts and workshops with visual storytelling and digital cultural marketing. Many people were “intermittent participants” who found heritage workshops in the internet and participated in events based on recommendations they received from influencers or friends. Digital exposure made the workshops for heritage a lifestyle activity with a high cultural affiliation, visible in the social sphere, and linked to creative leisure.

The discussion of participant motivation indicates that emotional involvement was an important determinant of cultural experiences in the Chinese workshops. Many urban residents had psychological stress related to the fast speed of modernisation, long working hours and a way of life that was mediated through digital technologies, as Xu (2019) explained. Slow speed manual crafts like embroidery, pottery, tea making and calligraphy were used to provide temporary emotional relief in heritage workshops. Workshop settings were described as relaxing, contemplative and culturally significant. Embodied learning of traditional crafts enabled the participants reconnecting with traditional Chinese culture through the emotional aspects perceived in the process.

**Table 2: Descriptive Themes of Cultural Experiences Among Intermittent Participants in Chinese ICH Workshops**

| Research Theme       | Findings from Chinese Studies                                                                             | Key Chinese Authors    |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Emotional Engagement | Participants experienced relaxation, nostalgia, and emotional satisfaction through craft-based activities | Xu (2019); Zhou (2018) |

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|                         |                                                                                                              |                     |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Cultural Identity       | Workshop participation strengthened feelings of cultural pride and symbolic attachment to Chinese traditions | Yang and Wu (2021)  |
| Social Interaction      | Temporary communities formed through collaborative learning and participant communication                    | Qian (2020)         |
| Digital Influence       | Social media significantly increased awareness and attendance of heritage workshops                          | Liu and Chen (2022) |
| Cultural Consumption    | Workshops increasingly functioned as leisure and lifestyle activities among urban middle-class groups        | Zheng (2021)        |
| Authenticity Perception | Participants associated authenticity with emotional immersion rather than historical accuracy                | Hu (2022)           |
| Educational Experience  | Interactive learning enhanced cultural understanding more effectively than passive observation               | Tang (2020)         |

The descriptive results indicate that cultural experience in Chinese heritage workshops is not limited to the technical dimension. Three key aspects of participation were identified as emotional immersion, interpersonal interaction, and symbolic identity formation. This validates Sun (2018)'s claim that participatory heritage activities are about making ICH into lived experience instead of culture representation.

The results also show that the intermittent participation is related to general changes in the social and cultural life in China. The traditional methods of passing down Chinese heritage involved long-term apprenticeships and the continuity of culture within families. However, today's urban society has grown more receptive to flexible and ephemeral cultural experiences, caused by the mobility, working pressure and digital lifestyle. Therefore, intermittent participation, according to Lin (2020), should be considered as a way of adapting in order to engage with one's heritage rather than a cultural decline. Short-term participation is contributing to the exposure of large parts of society to traditional culture without an obligation to ongoing participation.

Another key theme that has arisen from the secondary data is the commercialisation of heritage workshops. Workshops are increasingly located in tourism economies and creative cultural industries, several Chinese scholars pointed out. Some workshops were found to be "tourist friendly," as noted by Chen and Gao (2021) in that they simplify the traditional practices to make it easy for tourists to understand and stay engrossed. Activities are frequently repurposed to create visually pleasing and marketable social media worthy experiences. This process can run the risk of turning down intricate cultural traditions into aesthetic shows without a historical background and the ritual aspects.

These concerns aside, the available evidence indicates that the intermittent participants also get value from involvement in the workshop. When people are passionate about a topic, it can make up for a lack of technical expertise or a brief time they have spent on a topic. In their study on the role of sensory immersion in tea culture workshops, Ma (2022) showed that temporary experiences created a deep emotional bond among participants with less knowledge of traditional tea culture. Likewise, many embroiderers and paper-cutters at the workshops reported cultural appreciation and personal fulfilment after just one workshop.

Government policy was also a key theme among the findings. Since 2015, the Chinese government has ardently advocated the cultivation of traditional culture and community-based participation in the cultural heritage. Workshops were organised in neighbourhood cultural centres, schools, libraries and museums through public cultural service systems. Liao (2021) states that these policies were intended to boost cultural self-confidence and social cohesion by providing more opportunities for citizens to engage with traditional culture. Intermittent involvement was thus institutionally encouraged as part of national culture revitalisation policies.

**Table 3. Major Research Hotspots and Trends in Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage Studies (2003–2020)**

| Research Theme          | Main Focus in Chinese ICH Studies                                                   | Research Trend                    |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Heritage Protection     | Safeguarding traditional cultural practices and inheritance systems                 | Most dominant research topic      |
| Cultural Tourism        | Integration of ICH with tourism development and cultural industries                 | Rapid increase after 2015         |
| Digitalisation of ICH   | Use of digital media, animation, AI, and online platforms for heritage preservation | Emerging frontier topic           |
| Rural Revitalisation    | Role of ICH in rural economic and cultural development                              | Unique Chinese research direction |
| Community Participation | Public involvement and local identity in heritage transmission                      | Increasing scholarly attention    |
| Productive Protection   | Combining heritage preservation with economic production and crafts industries      | Strong policy-related focus       |
| Cultural Identity       | Relationship between heritage and national/cultural confidence                      | Expanding after 2017              |

|                                  |                                                 |                             |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Intellectual Property Protection | Legal protection and ownership of ICH resources | New interdisciplinary trend |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|

Source: Adapted from Dang et al. (2021).

Major research hotspots and trends in Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) research from 2003 to 2020 are given in Table 3. Results show that the research in the domain of heritage protection had continued to be the most dominant domain with a focus on protecting traditional cultural practice and inheritance systems. Since 2015, studies on cultural tourism have rapidly grown, focusing on the connection between heritage and tourism industries and economic development. Digitalisation was also identified as a key frontier topic, including online dissemination and animation tools and technologies for digital preservation. Focusing on local development in rural areas, rural revitalisation emerged as a unique research direction in China, in line with government policies on heritage and local development. As community studies and the examination of public engagement and cultural confidence increased, so did communities' importance in shaping their own identity. IP protection emerged as a new interdisciplinary issue around issues of ownership and legal protections of cultural heritage resources.

**Table 4. Top 10 Authors in Intangible Cultural Heritage Retrieval Records in China**

| Ranking | Name        | Published Quantity | Proportion | First Year |
|---------|-------------|--------------------|------------|------------|
| 1       | Xu X.       | 15                 | 0.54%      | 2014       |
| 2       | Song J. H.  | 12                 | 0.45%      | 2006       |
| 2       | Gao X. K.   | 12                 | 0.45%      | 2007       |
| 3       | Tan H.      | 11                 | 0.40%      | 2009       |
| 4       | Li X.       | 10                 | 0.36%      | 2008       |
| 4       | Ma Z. Y.    | 10                 | 0.36%      | 2010       |
| 4       | Chen W.     | 10                 | 0.36%      | 2009       |
| 5       | Niu A. J.   | 9                  | 0.33%      | 2008       |
| 5       | Huang Y. L. | 9                  | 0.33%      | 2013       |
| 5       | Tang G. X.  | 9                  | 0.33%      | 2017       |
| 6       | Chen X. R.  | 8                  | 0.30%      | 2017       |
| 6       | Pu C. L.    | 8                  | 0.30%      | 2009       |
| 7       | Jiang X. H. | 7                  | 0.25%      | 2013       |
| 8       | Ma Q. L.    | 6                  | 0.22%      | 2017       |
| 8       | Wu A. X.    | 6                  | 0.22%      | 2008       |
| 9       | Li R. Q.    | 5                  | 0.18%      | 2006       |
| 10      | Wang J. Z.  | 4                  | 0.14%      | 2005       |

*Note: The proportion refers to the percentage within the total literature sample. The first year indicates when the author first published research related to Intangible Cultural Heritage.*

Table 4 shows the most prolific Chinese authors on the issue of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) research by the occurrence of the name in the retrieval records. Xu X. published the highest number of publications, 15 (0.54% of all publications), and first published in 2014. It was found that several authors, such as Song J. H., and Gao X. K., published 12 papers respectively, which suggested that they were actively engaged in Chinese ICH research. The table further indicates that majority of the influential researchers started publishing between 2005 and 2017, indicating the rapid growth of ICH research since the UNESCO heritage safeguarding policies were put into force in China. While the number of publications by individual authors is relatively low, the data indicate that there is a growing academic interest and a diversified scholarly participation in China's heritage protection, cultural transmission, tourism, and digital preservation studies.

**Table 5. Data Collection and Analysis Protocol**

|                   |                                |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Research Protocol | Retrieval Results and Contents |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|

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|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Research database      | Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index (CSSCI)                                                                                                                                                   |
| Language               | Chinese                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Publication type       | All publication types                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Time span              | January 2003 – December 2020                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Retrieval criterion    | Title contained “Intangible Cultural Heritage” or the Chinese abbreviation “Feiyi”                                                                                                               |
| Exclusion criteria     | Meeting abstracts, editorial materials, book chapters, book reviews, conference proceedings papers, letters, conference notices, brief introductions of research centres, and profile interviews |
| Inclusion criteria     | Peer-reviewed quantitative and qualitative studies related to Intangible Cultural Heritage                                                                                                       |
| Number of samples      | 2,761 articles                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Data analysis software | CiteSpace Version 5.7.R5                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Analytical methods     | Co-network analysis, co-occurrence analysis, and noun-term burst analysis                                                                                                                        |

Table 5 presents the research protocol adopted for the collection and analysis of literature related to Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in China. The data were retrieved from the Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index (CSSCI), focusing exclusively on Chinese-language publications published between January 2003 and December 2020. The retrieval process included studies whose titles contained the term “Intangible Cultural Heritage” or its Chinese abbreviation “Feiyi”. To maintain academic quality, only peer-reviewed quantitative and qualitative research articles were included, while materials such as conference notices, book reviews, editorial materials, and interviews were excluded. A total of 2,761 relevant studies were identified and analysed. The collected data were examined using CiteSpace Version 5.7.R5 through analytical approaches including co-network analysis, co-occurrence analysis, and noun-term burst analysis to identify major research trends and thematic developments in Chinese ICH studies.

**Table 6. Most Productive Research Institutions in Intangible Cultural Heritage Retrieval Records in China**

| Ranking | Institution                               | Records | Proportion | Year Began |
|---------|-------------------------------------------|---------|------------|------------|
| 1       | Sun Yat-sen University                    | 62      | 2.32%      | 2006       |
| 2       | Central China Normal University           | 56      | 2.09%      | 2011       |
| 3       | Chinese Academy of Social Sciences        | 51      | 1.90%      | 2005       |
| 4       | China National Academy of Arts            | 41      | 1.53%      | 2006       |
| 5       | South-Central Minzu University            | 37      | 1.39%      | 2006       |
| 6       | Tianjin University                        | 34      | 1.27%      | 2012       |
| 7       | Chongqing University of Arts and Sciences | 29      | 1.09%      | 2009       |
| 8       | Chongqing University                      | 19      | 0.71%      | 2007       |
| 9       | Shandong University                       | 14      | 0.52%      | 2011       |
| 10      | Peking University                         | 9       | 0.35%      | 2005       |

*Note: The proportion refers to the percentage within the total literature sample. The first year indicates when the institution first published research related to Intangible Cultural Heritage.*

Table 6 lists the top ten China research institutions for Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) studies. Among them, Sun Yat-sen University has the greatest number of publications with 62 records, accounting for 2.32% of the total publications, followed by Central China Normal University and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The data suggest that, since the mid-2000s, the universities and the national academic institutions have been at the heart of Chinese ICH research. The publication of most institutions started from 2005 to 2012, which indicates the fast development of heritage studies since China enforced the cultural safeguarding policy and its activity in UNESCO. The table also shows that research is geographically distributed with different areas of China, and academic interest in the field of heritage protection and cultural transmission, tourism development, folklore studies and community-based cultural preservation initiatives is nationwide.

**Table 7. Distribution of Intangible Cultural Heritage Research Papers in China (2003–2020)**

| Research Stage            | Time Period | Characteristics                                                                           | Average Annual Publications | Percentage of Total Literature |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Steady Development Period | 2003–2006   | Initial stage of ICH research with limited scholarly attention and low publication output | 14                          | 0.51%                          |

|                           |           |                                                                                                     |     |       |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Rapid Growth Phase        | 2007–2013 | Significant expansion of research due to increased national and UNESCO-related heritage initiatives | 193 | 19.3% |
| Fluctuation Decline Phase | 2014–2020 | Research became more mature and diversified with stable publication growth                          | 201 | 51.0% |

Source: Adapted from Dang et al. (2021).

The descriptive statistical analysis of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) literature in China demonstrates a clear expansion of academic interest between 2003 and 2020. A total of 2,761 research papers were published during this period, with an average annual publication rate of 153 articles. The publication trend can be divided into three major stages. During the steady development period (2003–2006), research activity remained limited because ICH studies were still emerging within Chinese academia. The rapid growth phase (2007–2013) witnessed a substantial increase in publications following China's stronger engagement with UNESCO heritage safeguarding policies and cultural preservation programmes. In the fluctuation decline phase (2014–2020), publication numbers remained consistently high, indicating the gradual maturity of Chinese ICH research. This later stage reflected broader research interests including digital heritage, rural revitalisation, tourism development, cultural identity, and community participation.

### Conclusion

The study illustrates how community-based Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) workshops in China have emerged as significant cultural venues that enable intermittent participants to access cultural traditions in today's society. The rapid urbanization, digital lifestyles, and various cultural participatory modes have brought about a new interaction between Chinese citizens and heritage. Instead of the long-term apprenticeship model or the traditional culture that is handed down within a community, more people are experiencing traditional culture by participating in short-term workshops. These workshops make Chinese heritages accessible to urban residents, students, tourists and other occasional participants, through direct interaction, sensory experiences and collaborative learning activities. The results indicate that multiple cultural and emotional reasons drive the motivations of intermittent participants: curiosity, nostalgia, leisure, self-expression, cultural identity and social interaction. Their involvement tends to be short-term and sporadic, but the experiences created in workshops are culturally relevant. Calligraphy, embroidery, tea ceremony, paper cutting and folk crafts are activities that allow the participants to connect emotionally and symbolically with Chinese traditions. Emotional immersion, social communication, and embodied learning were found to be key aspects which influenced the participants' experience in heritage workshops in various regions of China.

The study also suggests that government policy, museums, universities, and cultural centres as well as rural revitalisation programmes can play a key role in increasing public access to intangible cultural heritage. Since 2015, the cultural revitalisation efforts in China have been expanded in order to involve the whole community by incorporating heritage workshops in public cultural services and educational activities. The use of digital media platforms adds to the visibility and involvement, with the aim of promoting traditional culture to younger urban audiences. As a result, heritage involvement in China is becoming more and more a combination of preservation, education, tourism, leisure and creative industries. Meanwhile, this study highlights the continuous conflicts between heritage protection and the cultural economy. Some workshops take traditional practices and adjust them for simplified and market-oriented experiences for tourism and social media consumption. However, the research shows that there is a positive effect on cultural awareness and public appreciation of traditional Chinese culture even with these concerns, as long as there is a certain level of participation that is intermittent in nature. Often the sense of authenticity in workshop participation is emotional and not historical; thus, participants' personal meanings can be cultivated as they immerse themselves temporarily in a culture. The study finds that while the intermittent population is a growing part of China's modern landscape of heritage, the study reveals that the population of intermittents is a significant part of China's contemporary heritage. They speak about their experiences which are representative of larger shifts in cultural consumption and identity formation in contemporary Chinese society. Community-based heritage workshops thus serve as mechanisms of preservation as well as dynamic social and cultural spaces where traditional Chinese heritage is constantly being interpreted, experienced and re-imagined in the shifting contemporary contexts.

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