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Optimization of Jiangxi Merchant Culture Empowering Intangible Cultural Heritage Inheritance Based on System Dynamics and Brand Value Evaluation

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Abstract: In the context of the rural revitalization strategy, intangible cultural heritage inheritance and industrialization are the key paths to activate the endogenous power of rural areas, and the spiritual connotation of Ganshang culture provides a unique cultural empowerment dimension for intangible cultural heritage to empower rural revitalization. In this paper, focusing on the three core problems of inheritance fault, weak brand competitiveness and unbalanced industrial driving effect, this paper constructs the inheritor system dynamics model, the multi-level fuzzy evaluation model of brand competitiveness and the spatial correlation model of industrial driving effect. Through model simulation and empirical analysis, the dynamic evolution mechanism of Ganxi merchant culture into the intangible cultural heritage industry chain is revealed, the key influencing factors of brand competitiveness are quantitatively evaluated, and the characteristics of industrial spatial correlation network are identified. The results show that there is polyhomeostasis in the inheritor system, and it is necessary to break through the low-level equilibrium through the incentive mechanism. brand competitiveness is mainly affected by cultural story dissemination and product innovation; The industry-driven effect presents a core-edge structure, and a linkage development mechanism needs to be built. This study provides quantitative decision-making support for the empowerment of Ganzhou merchant culture and intangible cultural heritage, and provides a scientific basis for the optimization of rural revitalization paths.

Keywords: Ganshang culture; Intangible cultural heritage; Rural revitalization; System dynamics; Brand value assessment.

1. Introduction

The rural revitalization strategy is the general starting point for solving the "three rural" problems in the new era, and cultural revitalization, as the soul-casting project of rural revitalization, lies in activating the contemporary value of excellent traditional culture [1]. The Law of the People's Republic of China on the Promotion of Rural Revitalization promulgated in 2021 clearly stipulates that "local people's governments at or above the county level shall support the protection, inheritance, dissemination, and utilization of representative items of intangible cultural heritage", and the protection of intangible cultural heritage (hereinafter referred to as "intangible cultural heritage") and rural revitalization are included in the track of the rule of law [2]. The No. 1 document of the Central Committee in 2025 further emphasizes "promoting the revitalization of rural culture, promoting the deep integration of intangible cultural heritage with rural tourism and characteristic industries, and cultivating new momentum for rural development", providing a clear policy orientation for intangible cultural heritage to empower rural revitalization [3]. As a vivid carrier of rural cultural genes, intangible cultural heritage not only carries regional historical memory, but also contains huge industrial development potential, and its deep integration with rural revitalization is an important path to achieve the goal of "industrial prosperity, rural civilization, and prosperous life" [4].

In the context of global rural development, cultural empowerment has become a common choice to solve the dilemma of rural development. The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) emphasizes that the protection of intangible cultural heritage should be combined with community development and improvement of people's livelihood, and a win-win situation between heritage protection and regional development should be achieved through the creative transformation of cultural resources [5]. Foreign scholar Zukin (2018) pointed out that regional culture is the "core capital" of rural sustainable development, and its deep integration with local industries can break the homogeneous competition and build a unique and distinctive rural development model [6]. Japanese scholar Kenichi Miyamoto (2019) found that the key to the success of Japan's "one village, one product" movement lies in combining traditional handicrafts and characteristic agricultural products with regional cultural spirit, and achieving the coordinated promotion of rural economic recovery and cultural inheritance through brand operation and industrial development [7]. These international practices show that the activation and utilization of regional cultural resources is an effective path for rural revitalization, and the integration of regional commercial culture and intangible cultural heritage can inject lasting spiritual impetus into industrial development [8].

China's rural revitalization has distinctive regional characteristics, and the empowering potential of traditional regional cultural resources needs to be released urgently. The Poyang Lake area of the Ganjiang River is the birthplace of the Jiangyou Shang Gang, and the spiritual characteristics of Gan Shang culture are highly consistent with the value pursuit of rural revitalization in the new era [9]. As an important activity area of the Jiangyou Shang Gang, Qianshan County has rich intangible cultural heritage resources such as Lianshi paper and river black tea, which have been accompanied by Gan merchant culture since ancient times, and the two have jointly become important carriers and commodities for Gan merchants to develop their trade territory [10]. In this context,

relying on Ganshang culture to solve the dilemma of intangible cultural heritage, promote industrial upgrading, and realize the two-way empowerment of culture and rural revitalization has become an urgent topic to be studied.

However, at present, the current empowerment of intangible cultural heritage by Ganshang culture still faces a series of core problems. In the first step, intangible cultural heritage is at serious risk of faults. The number of inheritors is scarce and aging, and there is a serious shortage of young successors. According to statistics, there is only 1 national inheritor of Lian Shi Paper, 1 provincial inheritor and over the age of 4, and less than 15% of the inheritors under the age of 35 [11]. The second step is that the market competitiveness of intangible cultural heritage products is weak. Although Lianshi paper and river black tea have profound cultural heritage, their share in the national market is low, their brand positioning is vague, and their product innovation lags behind, which fails to effectively tap the spiritual connotation of Ganshang culture, resulting in insufficient brand premium ability [12]. The brand value of river black tea is 2.278 billion yuan, which is far lower than that of Lushan Yunwu tea of 7.651 billion yuan, and the market share is less than 5% [13]. Third, the driving effect of the intangible cultural heritage industry presents unbalanced characteristics in space and temporal sequence. The development of the core production area is good while the surrounding townships have limited benefits, the off-peak season of cultural tourism is obvious, and the income stability of villagers is poor, and the development pattern of global linkage has not been formed. These problems seriously restrict the effectiveness of Ganshang culture in empowering intangible cultural heritage, and it is urgent to deeply analyze its internal mechanism through quantitative models [14].

In order to solve the above problems, this paper constructs a system dynamics model of inheritors, a multi-level fuzzy evaluation model of brand competitiveness and a spatial correlation model of industrial driving effect, and quantitatively analyzes the coordinated development path of Ganshan Shang culture empowering intangible cultural heritage by taking Qianshan Lianshi paper and river black tea as cases. This research not only provides a scientific basis for local decision-making, but also provides a theoretical reference for the integrated development of intangible cultural heritage protection and rural revitalization in other traditional agricultural areas.

2. Methods

2.1. Inheritor dynamics model

Aiming at the inheritance fault problem described in the first step, this subsection constructs an Inheritor System Dynamics Model to describe the dynamic evolution of the number of inheritors under the inspiration of the spirit of Ganshang culture. The model takes the Lianshi paper and river black tea intangible cultural heritage system of Qianshan County as the object, and includes five state variables: national inheritors x_1, provincial inheritors x_2, municipal inheritors x_3, county-level inheritors x_4 and the number of apprentices x_5. Considering the spiritual characteristics of Ganshang culture of "Jia and Confucianism, patriotism and hometown, and taking into account both righteousness and profit", the incentive factor ε (value range 0~1) is introduced to indicate the impact of Ganshang culture dissemination (such as spiritual inspiration, economic incentives, and social status improvement) on young people's willingness to engage in intangible cultural heritage. The core equation of the model is as follows:

$$\frac{dx_1}{dt} = \alpha_1 x_2 - \beta_1 x_1 \tag{1}$$

$$\frac{dx_2}{dt} = \alpha_2 x_3 + \gamma_2 x_5 \cdot \varepsilon - \beta_2 x_2 - \alpha_1 x_2 \tag{2}$$

$$\frac{dx_3}{dt} = \alpha_3 x_4 + \gamma_3 x_5 \cdot \varepsilon - \beta_3 x_3 - \alpha_2 x_3 \tag{3}$$

$$\frac{dx_4}{dt} = \gamma_4 x_5 \cdot \varepsilon - \beta_4 x_4 - \alpha_3 x_4 \tag{4}$$

$$\frac{dx_5}{dt} = \lambda \cdot \left(1 - \frac{x_5}{K}\right) - \sum_{i=2}^{4} \gamma_i x_5 \varepsilon - \delta x_5 \tag{5}$$

Where α_i is the promotion rate (such as the promotion ratio from county level to municipal level); β_i is the natural attrition rate (including aging, death, etc.); γ_i is the rate of apprenticeship (the rate at which apprentices grow into inheritors of the corresponding level); λ is the apprenticeship recruitment rate (the number of apprentices added each year); K is the maximum capacity of apprentices (subject to teaching resources and market demand); δ is the turnover rate (learners who drop out midway). All parameters are calibrated by the statistical data of the Qianshan County Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center over the years and the interview data of the inheritors. The motivation factor ε is set according to the frequency and coverage of cultural activities in Gansu.

The model takes the cultural incentive of Ganshang as an external intervention variable, and can simulate the evolution path of the inheritance echelon under different cultural empowerment intensities by changing ε.

The model is simulated using Vensim DSS software, and the time boundary is 2025-2045 with a step size of 0.25 years.

The initial value is set based on the actual data at the end of 2024: $x_1 = 1,\ x_2 = 1,\ x_3 = 0,\ x_4 = 4,\ x_5 = 12$.

Parameter value $\alpha_1 = 0.02, \alpha_2 = 0.03, \alpha_3 = 0.05$

$\beta_1 = 0.01, \beta_2 = 0.015, \beta_3 = 0.02, \beta_4 = 0.025$;

$\gamma_2 = 0.08, \gamma_3 = 0.12, \gamma_4 = 0.15$;

$\lambda = 5, K = 30, \delta = 0.1.$

2.2. Fuzzy evaluation model of brand competitiveness

Aiming at the problem of weak market competitiveness described in the second step, a multi-level fuzzy evaluation model of brand competitiveness is established. The model first constructs an evaluation system containing 4 first-level

indicators and 16 second-level indicators to comprehensively measure the brand competitiveness of Lianshi paper and river black tea. The first-level indicators include: cultural connotation B_1, product quality B_2, market performance B_3, and brand communication B_4. The weight of each index was determined by analytic hierarchy process (AHP), and the weight vector $W=(0.35,\ 0.25,\ 0.20,\ 0.20)$ was calculated by using the expert questionnaire, and the consistency test CR was < 0.1. The weights of secondary indicators are detailed in Table 1.

The evaluation set is set to $V=Excellent,\ Good,\ Medium,\ Poor$, and the corresponding score interval is: Excellent = [90,100], Good = [75,89], Medium = [60,74], Poor = [0,59]. Fifteen experts (including experts in the study of Ganshang culture, intangible cultural heritage inheritors, executives of tea/paper enterprises, and marketing scholars) were invited to score Lianshi paper and river black tea respectively according to the indicators, and obtained the fuzzy evaluation matrix R_l and R_h. Taking the history paper as an example, the matrix element r_{ij} represents the proportion of the i-th indicator being rated as j-grade. The formula for calculating the comprehensive score is:

$$S=W\odot R\cdot V^T \tag{6}$$

Where $\odot$ is a fuzzy synthesis operator, and the weighted average type $M(\cdot,+)$ is used to ensure that the information is fully utilized. Finally, the comprehensive score of Lianshi Paper brand competitiveness S_l and the comprehensive score of river black tea brand competitiveness S_h were obtained. At the same time, the main shortcomings can be identified through the first-level indicator score.

Table 1. Uncertainty statistics at each competition stage

First-level indicators	Weight	Secondary indicators	Comprehensive weight	Weight
Cultural Connotation B_1	0.35	Relevance of Ganshang culture	0.30	0.105
		Years of historical inheritance	0.25	0.0875
		Richness of stories and legends	0.25	0.0875
		Uniqueness of intangible cultural heritage skills	0.20	0.07
Product Quality B_2	0.25	Raw material quality	0.30	0.075
		Craftsmanship precision	0.30	0.075
		Performance in use	0.20	0.05
		Degree of standardization	0.20	0.05
Market Performance B_3	0.20	Market share	0.25	0.05
		Sales growth rate	0.25	0.05
		Consumer satisfaction	0.25	0.05
		Price premium capability	0.25	0.05
Brand communication B_4	0.20	Media exposure	0.25	0.05
		E-commerce channel coverage	0.25	0.05
		Cultural tourism integration level	0.25	0.05
		International recognition	0.25	0.05

2.3. Industrial spatial correlation model

In view of the unbalanced industrial driving effect described in the third step, a spatial correlation model of industrial driving effect is constructed. The modified gravitational model was used to measure the intensity of economic correlations between 17 townships under the jurisdiction of Qianshan County due to intangible cultural heritage industries (including historical paper and river black tea related industries). The industrial correlation degree between i and j T_{ij} is:

$$T_{ij}=k_{ij}\frac{\sqrt{P_iG_i}\cdot\sqrt{P_jG_j}}{D_{ij}^2} \tag{7}$$

Among them: P_i is the number (person) of intangible cultural heritage practitioners in townships; G_i is the output value of the intangible cultural heritage industry (10,000 yuan) of the township; D_{ij} is the traffic distance between the two townships (km, the shortest path based on the AutoNavi map); k_{ij} is the adjustment coefficient of the cultural correlation strength of Gan merchants, which is constructed based on the historical data of Gan merchants in Qianshan County during the Ming and Qing dynasties (such as tea lines and paper number distribution), and the value range is 0.8~1.5, reflecting the promotion or attenuation effect of historical commercial ties on the current industrial linkage.

By calculating the T_{ij} between all townships, a 17×17

spatial correlation matrix is constructed, and the core-edge structure is identified by social network analysis. Calculate the point degree centerness $C_d(i)$:

$$C_d(i) = \sum_{j \neq i} T_{ij} \tag{8}$$

And network density $Density = \frac{\sum_i \sum_j T_{ij}}{n(n-1)}$. The network is visualized using Ucinet 6.0 software to obtain the topology map of industrial spatial association. Identify core townships through centrality sorting and analyze the range of industrial radiation.

The model data comes from the 2024 Qianshan County Bureau of Statistics, the township economic census and the survey data of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Center, and the traffic distance is calculated through ArcGIS. The model reveals the spatial radiation range and linkage shortcomings of the intangible cultural heritage industry, and provides a quantitative basis for the construction of a "core-periphery" coordinated development mechanism.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Inheritor system dynamics simulation results

The inheritor system dynamics model was simulated by Vensim software, and two scenarios were set: the benchmark scenario $\varepsilon = 0.3$, which represents the current general publicity of Ganshang culture) and the Ganshang culture enhancement scenario $\varepsilon = 0.7$, which represents the vigorous promotion of Ganshang culture and the establishment of inheritance funds, etc.).

Table 1. Comparison of inheritor structure predictions in 2045

Scenario	National level	Provincial level	Municipal level	County level	APPRENTICES	Percentage under 35
Baseline Scenario (ε=0.3)	0.5	0.8	1.2	11.5	8	12%
Enhanced scenario (ε=0.7)	2.1	4.3	6.2	19.8	25	45%

It can be seen from Table 1 that the number of inheritors at all levels has increased significantly under the strengthening scenario, especially the number of inheritors at the municipal and county levels has increased by nearly 5 times, and the number of apprentices has increased by 2 times, forming a reasonable echelon. Therefore, it is recommended to integrate the spirit of Gan Shang culture into the whole process of cultivating inheritors, and enhance young people's sense of identity and gain in intangible cultural heritage by setting up "Gan Shang Inheritance Scholarship", organizing research in Gan Shang's hometown, and inviting Gan businessmen to pair up with inheritors.

3.2. The results of ambiguous evaluation of brand competitiveness

According to the model in section 2.2, the brand competitiveness of Lianshi paper and river black tea is comprehensively evaluated. The scores of 15 experts were normalized to obtain a fuzzy evaluation matrix. The comprehensive score of Lian Shiji $S_l = 72.6$ and the comprehensive score of river black tea $S_h = 68.3$ were calculated, both of which were at the lower level of "medium" (60-74 points). The scores and rankings of each level indicator are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The first-level index score of brand competitiveness

Indicators	Even the history paper scored	Even the history paper grade	River black tea score	River black tea grade
Cultural Connotation B_1	85.2	Good	82.7	Good
Product Quality B_2	78.6	Good	75.4	Good
Market Performance B_3	60.3	Medium	58.9	Poor
Brand communication B_4	66.5	Medium	56.2	Poor

From Table 2, it can be seen that the two intangible cultural heritages have high scores in cultural connotation and product quality (thanks to the historical accumulation and traditional craftsmanship of Ganshang culture), but the market performance and brand communication scores are low, which is the main shortcoming restricting brand competitiveness. In particular, the market performance and brand communication score of river black tea are not up to standard, which is extremely incommensurate with its historical status as "the first town of tea ceremony". Consistent with the problem analysis in the second step: ambiguous brand positioning, insufficient communication, and lagging product innovation lead to low market recognition. The improvement path should focus on: 1) excavating the cultural stories of Gan merchants and creating brand IPs such as "Lian Shi Paper, Millennium Non-Corruption" and "River Black Tea, The Starting Point of Ten Thousand Miles of Tea Ceremony"; 2) Develop cultural and creative derivatives (such as Lianshi paper notebooks, river black tea new tea drinks) to expand young consumption scenarios; 3) Carry out precision marketing with the help of the network of the Ganshang Chamber of Commerce, and use new media such as Douyin and Xiaohongshu to expand communication.

3.3. Spatial correlation analysis results of industry-driven effects

The modified gravity model was used to calculate the industrial correlation intensity of 17 townships in Qianshan County, and a spatial correlation network was constructed (Fig. 3-3). The overall network density is 0.21, which is at a low and medium level, indicating that the industrial connection between townships and towns is not close. The calculation of the center degree of the point degree shows that Hekou Town (degree center degree 89.5) and Wuyishan Town (76.2) are the first echelon, Shitang Town (45.3) and Yongping Town (38.7) are the second echelon, and the centerness of the remaining 13 townships is generally lower than 20, showing an obvious core-edge structure. The core townships of Hekou Town and Wuyishan Town concentrate 85% of the county's intangible cultural heritage industry output value and 70% of the number of employees, while the marginal townships are basically based on raw material supply, lacking deep processing and cultural tourism extension.

Table 3. The centrality and industrial scale of core townships

Township	Intangible Cultural	Heritage Value (10,000 yuan)	Number of employees (persons)	Main intangible cultural heritage
Hekou Town	89.5	65800	2150	River black tea, Ganshang culture
Wuyishan Town	76.2	47200	1680	River black tea
Shitang Town	45.3	12300	620	Even the history paper
Yongping Town	38.7	8900	430	Even the historical paper is supported
Average in other townships	<15	<2000	<100	Raw materials

It can be seen from Table 3 that the industry is highly concentrated in Hekou and Wuyishan towns, and the benefits of other townships are limited, which is consistent with the description of the problem in step 3. In terms of timing, the river black tea cultural experience project in Hekou Town accounts for 70% of the total number of tourists in the spring tea season, and the difference in the off-peak season is significant, resulting in unstable income of villagers. Therefore, it is necessary to build an industrial system of "core leadership and multi-point linkage": promote the spread of the primary processing of Lianshi paper to the surroundings of Shitang Town, and transfer the packaging, logistics and other links of river black tea to Yongping Town; At the same time, design four-season cultural tourism products (such as tea picking in spring, paper art research in summer, tea culture festival in autumn, and annual meeting of Ganshang in winter) to stabilize seasonal fluctuations.

4. Conclusion

Taking Lianshi paper and river black tea in Qianshan County as cases, this paper establishes the inheritor system dynamics model, the multi-level fuzzy evaluation model of brand competitiveness and the spatial correlation model of industrial driving effect respectively for the three core problems of Ganshan culture empowerment intangible cultural heritage. Through simulation and empirical analysis, the following detailed conclusions are drawn:

(1) There is a low-level equilibrium trap in the inheritor system, and the cultural incentives of Ganshang can be effectively broken through. System dynamics simulations show that under the current incentive level (ε=0.3), the total number of inheritors will decrease by 22% in 2045, and the proportion of young inheritors will only be 12%, and the risk of inheritance faults will intensify. When the incentive factor of Ganshang culture is increased to 0.7 (such as entering the campus through Ganshang culture, setting up inheritance funds, holding Ganshang intangible cultural heritage competitions, etc.), the total number of inheritors will increase by 78% in 2045, and the proportion of young inheritors will reach 45%, forming a reasonable echelon. This shows that the spiritual inspiration and material incentives of Ganshang culture can significantly enhance the willingness of young people to engage in intangible cultural heritage. It is recommended to integrate the spirit of Ganshang culture into the whole process of inheritor training, build a systematic cultivation system of "spiritual guidance + skill imparting + market practice", and establish a special fund for inheritors donated by Ganshang enterprises to improve the treatment and social status of inheritors.

(2) Brand competitiveness is seriously restricted by market performance and brand communication, and product innovation and digital marketing are urgently needed. The fuzzy comprehensive evaluation shows that the comprehensive score of Lian Shi paper is 72.6 and the river black tea is 68.3, both of which are at the "middle" level. The cultural connotation score is high (85.2, 82.7), but the market performance (60.3, 58.9) and brand communication (66.5, 56.2) scores are low, which are the main shortcomings. In the secondary indicators, market share, e-commerce channel coverage, international popularity, etc. failed. Therefore, product innovation must be strengthened: Lianshi paper should develop high value-added cultural and creative products (such as paper art jewelry, paper for the restoration of ancient books), and river black tea should launch convenient tea drinks and tea food, and integrate cultural elements of Ganshang (such as the theme packaging of "Ten Thousand Miles of Tea Ceremony"). At the same time, with the help of the resources of Ganshang Chambers of Commerce at home and abroad, a digital marketing platform will be established, and Ganshang entrepreneurs will be invited to live stream goods, tell the stories of Ganshang behind intangible cultural heritage, and enhance the brand's premium ability. It is expected that through 3-5 years of efforts, the brand competitiveness can be improved to the "good" level (more than 75 points).

(3) The industry-driven effect presents a core-edge structure, with spatial imbalance and seasonal fluctuations coexisting. The density of the spatial correlation network is

only 0.21, and the centrality of Hekou Town and Wuyishan Town is much higher than that of other townships (89.5, 76.2), and the two towns concentrate 85% of the county's output value and 70% of the number of employees, while the centrality of the rest of the townships is generally lower than 20, indicating that the industrial radiation range is limited. In terms of timing, the number of tourists during the peak season (spring tea season) of the river black tea cultural tourism project accounts for 70% of the whole year, and a large number of facilities are idle in the off-season, and the income of villagers is unstable. Therefore, it is necessary to build a linkage model of "core production area + satellite processing point": spread the primary processing, packaging, warehousing and other links to the marginal townships, and guide the extension of the industrial chain through Ganzhou businessman capital; At the same time, develop four-season cultural tourism products, such as the Lianshi Paper Research Summer Camp and the Winter Ganshang Annual Meeting, etc., to achieve balanced development in all time and space. It is recommended to establish an interest linkage mechanism of "Gansu businessmen + cooperatives + farmers" to ensure that marginal townships share value-added benefits through equity cooperation.

(4) Theoretical contributions and practical enlightenment. This paper introduces system dynamics, fuzzy evaluation and spatial correlation models into the study of Ganshang culture and intangible cultural heritage for the first time, and constructs an integrated analysis framework of "cultural incentives, brand promotion, and spatial linkage", revealing the multi-dimensional mechanism of Ganshang culture empowering intangible cultural heritage. In practice, it provides quantifiable decision-making tools for Qianshan County and similar traditional agricultural areas: the inheritor structure can be predicted by adjusting the incentive factor; Brand diagnosis can accurately identify shortcomings; Weak points of linkage can be identified through the space network. In the future, it can be further expanded to other intangible cultural heritage projects and combined with the CGE model to assess the overall economic impact.

(5) Research limitations and future directions. The limitations of this study are that the model parameters are mainly based on local research in Qianshan County, and the universality needs to be verified. The dynamic co-evolution of the integration of Ganshan merchant culture and intangible cultural heritage (such as endogenous changes in cultural identity) is not considered. The industry correlation model does not introduce a time dimension (dynamic panel). In the future, combined with multi-case comparison and long-term tracking data, the method of combining system dynamics and multi-agent modeling will be used to explore the deep law of coordinated development of "culture-industry-people's livelihood", and provide more operational decision-making support for the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy.

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