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On Inheritance and Innovation of Miao Folk Songs in Western Hunan Province

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Abstract

This Article aims to find (1) the key factors for successful innovation cases of the Miao folk songs, (2) driving factors and strategies for inheritance and innovation of the Miao folk songs and (3) how successful driving factors and strategies affect inheritance and innovation of the Miao folk songs. The thesis was selected by three successful typical cases. The SPS approach is used as a data collection tool to conduct case study and comparative research. Analysis date by Descriptive statistics and content analysis. Research results are concluded as follows: (1) there are 41 factors for successful case No. 1 and 38 factors for successful case No. 2 and (2) there are finally 32 driving factors and strategies for inheritance and innovation of the Miao folk songs that have been comparatively researched

Keywords

inheritance, innovation, original works, perspectives, strategies, driving factors

Introduction

"Intangible cultural heritage" is understood as untouchable forms of cultural heritage in the English context. In the Chinese version of UNESCO official documents, the term "non-physical" is accepted as the Chinese translation of the word "intangible". In the Chinese context, non-physical culture is a term corresponding to physical culture

which refers to tangible culture in the English context. In 2005, the *Opinions on Further Strengthening the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage* was promulgated by the General Office of the State Council in China, where "Intangible Cultural Heritage" is defined as traditional cultural expressions and cultural spaces closely pertinent to the people's life that are passed down from generation to generation. (Bureau for External Cultural Relations under Ministry of Culture.2005) As with the global tendency and national strategies and policies, great importance has been attached to heritage movement recently in China. Do we now have the ability to establish a country with Chinese characteristics that inherit the past and usher in the future worldwide? Today, heritage activities have become one of the important political and social cultural phenomena in China. The Miao folk songs (Serial No. 609 & Element No. II-109) in Jishou city, Hunan province were inscribed in the *Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Traditional Music* as one of the second batch of ICH elements in 2008. The Miao people have their own language but without characters. People don't know what the lyrics mean. And the singing style and melodies of the Miao folk songs are so simple and even too old-fashioned to cater to the modern aesthetics. As most of these folk singers are getting old or have passed away, the traditional Miao folk songs are disappearing. The innovative combination in singing-while-acting form and the emergence of new forms of tourism-themed dramas have enabled the Miao folk songs to rise and develop to a larger extent. Two typical innovation cases of the Miao folk songs are selected in the research. Both cases are academically acknowledged both at home and abroad. Previous research mostly focused on inheritance of the Miao folk songs. As every field rapidly develops, cross-border integration and innovation has become the key path for intangible cultural heritage to go globally. A number of achievements have been made in practicing the innovation of the Miao folk songs but to the best knowledge of the author, no academic research on innovation has been made.

The two cases in the research are selected from the innovation cases in recent 18 years. The research is made on the key factors for successful innovation cases and driving factors and strategies for inheritance and innovation of the Miao folk songs are obtained from the comparative research on the conclusion from the cases. This research will theoretically instruct the musicians who are interested in innovation of the Miao folk songs in their practice and lay a theoretical foundation for the scholars who are interested in research on innovation cases of the Miao folk songs.

Research objectives: 1. It is intended to discuss in this thesis the successful innovation cases and the methods and approaches used in case study. 2. It is intended to identify in this thesis the artistic characteristics, successful driving factors and strategies shared in the innovation cases of the Miao folk songs, providing theoretical basis for subsequent inheritance and innovation of the Miao folk songs. 3. Art features and successful driving factors and strategies will be concluded from different cases, serving as theoretical basis for subsequent inheritance and innovation of the Miao folk songs. 4. It's aimed to commit to creating local cultural brands, promote the development of Tourism-themed drama market, pay attention to the cultivation and publicity of successors, and construct Chinese characteristics. 5. It's also aimed to investigate the modern circulation and

development of Miao music in West Hunan. 6.It's aimed to commit to creating local cultural brands, promote the development of Tourism-themed drama market, pay attention to the cultivation and publicity of successors, and construct Chinese characteristics.7. It's aimed to investigate the modern circulation and development of Miao music in West Hunan

literature review

2.1 History of studies on the Miao folk songs in West Hunan Beginning period (1930-1960)

Studies on the Miao folk songs began with *History of the Miao*, a book by Savina in France in the 1820s, where the forms, contents, and characteristics of the Miao music were described and discussed and the cultural ecology of the Miao folk songs mentioned. "Since the 1930s, studies on the Miao's wedding songs have gone through four periods of development: beginning, dormancy, recovery and booming. Studies on the Miao folk songs were dispersed." (Lin C. F & L. Q, 2014; Wood, 2021; Wynn, 2021; Yang, 2021). The beginning period ranged from 1930 to 1960. "In 1956, Yang Yinliu, a famous musicologist, accompanied by ten more researchers from Central Conservatory of Music, went to West Hunan for collection of the Miao folk songs and finally a report was published." (Website of Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Traditional Music, the Miao folk songs in West Hunan) Research results first appeared in *Investigation of the Miao Minority in West Hunan*, a book edited by Lin Chunsheng and Rui Yifu, in which 44 Miao folk songs were included (Ling,C.S&R,2003.p7). Later on, another book, *Folk Songs in West Hunan*, published by Hunan Literature and Art Press in 1960 recorded the Tujia and Miao folk songs in West Hunan (Selected folk songs of Xiangxi8). In China, studies on the Miao folk songs began late and outcomes were mainly on investigation of the Miao folk songs, collection of lyrics and field interviews from 1930 to 1960 (Yue Z.Y, 2014), such as *Investigation of the Miao Minority in West Hunan* (Lin C.S & Rui Y.F, 1950) and Survey Report on Music in Hunan (Survey Report on Music in Hunan, 1960). In the 1950s, the primitive Miao folk songs received much attention. Literatures on the Miao folk songs such as narrative poems, folk songs and stories were collected. Two representative books were published, including *Collection of the Miao Songs* (Bo, L1953) by Shanghai Zili Bookstore and *Collection of the Miao folk Songs* (Ji.Z,1954) by Shanghai New Music Press. Further survey on the Miao produced more research results that can be divided into collective results and individual results. The representative collective results are *Flying Songs in the Miao Mountain* (1953) published by Editorial Committee of Flying Songs in the Miao Mountain and *Folklores of the Miao Minority in West Hunan* (1957) published by Guizhou Ethnic Languages Steering Committee.

Dormancy period (1960-1980)

The dormancy period ranged from 1960 to 1980. (Lin C.F, 2014) For the social and political reasons, there wasn't any research finding during this period. As far as the documents obtained by the author concern, few literatures was found in this period.

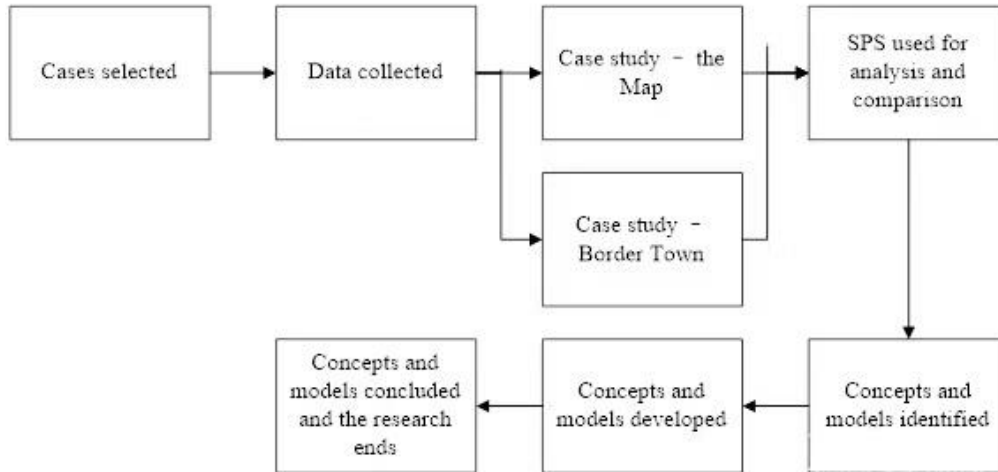
Recovery and booming period (1980~2012)

“Since 1980, studies tended to recover. As new understandings happened to the Miao folk songs, people started to research from different points of view in a multilayer, multi-perspective and academic manner.” In this period, songs were collected and collated in a scientific manner. Publications include *Collection of the Tujia and Miao Folk Songs in West Hunan* (1983) by Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China in Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture in West Hunan, *A Brief History of the Miao* (1985), *Studies on the Miao Folk Songs* (Pu Hengqiang, 1988), *Music of the Miao Minority* (Li Weibai & Wu Rongfa, 1989), *Collection of Songs in West Hunan* (Liu.L.G,1990), *Studies on the Miao Folk Songs in West Hunan* (Hua L.H, 1994), *Collection of Chinese Folk Songs - Hunan Volume* (1994), *Universal History of the Miao Minority* (Wu X.H, 1999), *Studies on the Miao Culture* (He J.Q 1999) and *Primitive Religious Art in West Hunan* (Lu Q, 2012).

2.2. Analysis on the innovation case of the Miao folk songs

There are three performing theatre in West Hunan, Border Town, Fairy Fox in the Tianmen Mountain and Charming Xiangxi. They are featured for a mixture of modern composition techniques, musical elements, instruments and background music with the music in the minority areas in West Hunan(Hang H .W,2012).Charming features of West Hunan are exhibited to the whole world, which opens a new door for popularization and innovation of the Miao folk songs in West Hunan. The most influential and widely spread song is *A Man Looking Down from the Mountain* composed by Wang Yuanping based on the folk song of the same name in Sangzhi and premiered by Yu Jingming. Duan Yong sang it in his high-pitched voice in the middle section of Charming Xiangxi, which was widely praised inside and outside of the industry. Tan Dun toured West Hunan in 1991 and 2001 for collecting the folk songs. He recorded with camera the music and folk traditions of the Tujia and Miao in West Hunan, which became an important part of his *The Map*.the *Map*, short for the *Map – to Recover the Lost Roots (Ten Diaries un West Hunan)*, was created based on the original audio and video materials collected from the Tujia, Miao and Dong minorities in West Hunan during the two trips of Tan Dun. In the performance, the video of local songs were integrated with symphony. Sounds of stone beating and rubbing, etc. and duet of the Miao girls played in the video working with the cello made unique and refreshing performance. Tan Dun is also the first musician who combines the Miao folk songs in West Hunan and symphony. This form develops a new way for the folk songs in West Hunan going global.

2.3 Conceptual Framework



Research Methodology

3.1 Structured-Pragmatic-Situational (SPS) method

The SPS method can examine the complex development process of things in a profound manner and identify the figures and events as well as relationship, structures and logics implied between them (Shaw G,1927). Pan has developed a Structured Practical Situational research method or SPS for short. The SPS method is used in this thesis. SPS consists of eight steps and two important cycles: design and augmentation, as shown below.

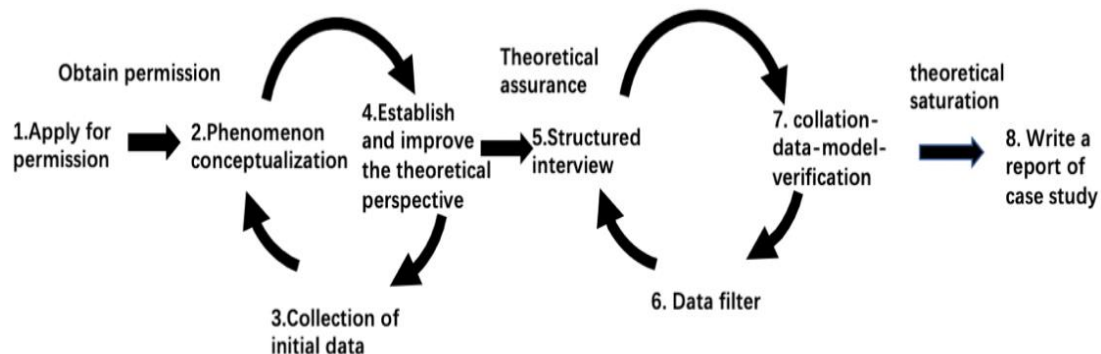


Figure 1 - SPS research process By Pan S.L.& Tan T.B. (2016) "Demystifying case research: A structured-pragmatic-situational (SPS) approach to conducting case studies", *Information and organization*, vol.21:3.pp.161-176.

Cases selected:

Case 1: the *Map* (Tan Dun's Concerto for violin in which the Miao music and symphony are integrated for the very first time)

Case 2: *the Border Town* (a tourism-themed drama in West Hunan)

3.2. Comparative research

Comparative research is defined as a method to investigate two or more items that correlate with each other to identify their similarities and differences and the

universal and special laws. In this method, information collected are collated and classified so as for the researchers to find the similarities and differences of the researched items in the systematic and comprehensive analysis using the methods they have decided. Comparative analysis is conducted on the conclusions from the three cases to find their similarities. Finally, the factors that have the same result are evaluated to elaborate the conclusion in all rounds.

Results and Discussion

Results from Case No. 1- the Map

Table 1: Case No. 1-Model of driving factors and strategies from the Map case

No.	A. Subject perspective	No.	B. Cultural perspective	No.	C. Political perspective
A'1	Conceptual art	B'1	Integration of Chinese and western cultures	C'1	Government supports
A'2	Total work of art (Visual pleasure, Audio pleasure and understandability)	B'2	Local Miao culture	C'2	Heritage policy orientation
A'4	Innovative consciousness and spirit of creators	B'3	Establishment and inspiration of cultural confidence	C'3	Orientation of literary and artistic thoughts
A'5	Emotional sustenance of creators	B'4	Diversification and no-rules (dialogue across time and space)	C'4	Political orientation of works
A'6	Power of execution of creators	B'5	Musical criticism		
A'7	Artistic expertise development of the founder	B'6	Rural culture		
A'8	Intention of the founder for global circulation of the Miao folk songs				
A'9	Features of Miao music				
A'10	Features of dialects				
A'9	Celebrity effect				
A10	Professional performing teams				
A11	Artistic charms of original works				
A12	Brand establishment				
	D. Resource perspective		E. Cross-border perspective		F. Communication perspective
D'1	Human resources	E'1	Integration of Chinese and western musical instruments	F'1	Celebrity effect
D'2	Financial resources	E'2	Combination of digital media and arts	F'2	Premiere overseas
D'3	Art resources	E'3	Diversification	F'3	Tour in China
D'4	Cultural resources	E'4	Integration of Chinese and western arts	F'4	Communication by media
D'5	Market resources	E'5	Integration of Chinese and western composition techniques	F'5	Art critique
		E'6	Integration of Chinese and western musical instruments	F'6	Circulation of music
		E'7	Integration of tradition and modernity		
		E'8	Musical interaction across time and space		

Results from Case No. 2- the Border Town

Table 2: Case No.2- Model of driving factors and strategies from the Border Town case

No.	A. Subject perspective	No.	B. Cultural perspective	No.	C. Political perspective
A''1	Technical expertise of creators	B''1	the Miao culture	C''1	Government supports
A''2	Innovative consciousness and spirit of creators	B''2	Ethnic cultures	C''2	Heritage policy orientation
A''3	Determination of creators	B''3	Rural culture	C''3	Orientation of literary and artistic thoughts
A''4	Meticulous efforts of creators for research	B''4	Inspiration for cultural confidence	C''4	Neutral political orientation of works
A''5	Power of execution of creators	B''5	Integration of Chinese and western cultures		
A''6	Building of artistic ability of creators				
A''7	Power of execution of creators				
A''8	Passion and proficiency for the Miao folk songs				
A''7	Features of the Miao folk songs				
A''8	Features of dialects				
A''9	Concept of total work of art				
A''10	Aspiration of inheritance and development				
A''11	Charm of original symphonic works				
A''12	Establishment of brand orientation				
	D. Resource perspective		E. Cross-border perspective		F. Communication perspective
D''1	Human resources	E''1	Integration of Chinese and western musical instruments	F''1	Circulation of theatre art
D''2	Financial supports	E''2	Cross-border integration of Chinese and western cultures	F''2	Circulation of music
D''3	Art resources	E''3	Cross-border integration of composition techniques	F''3	Circulation of academic research
D''4	Market resources	E''4	Cross-border integration of tradition and modernity	F''4	Art communication by multimedia
D''5	Cultural resources	E''5	Musical interaction across time and space	F''5	Communication in the market
		E''6	Integration of science and arts	F''6	Increase of popularity

The conclusion from Comparative research on three cases is shown as in the table below.

Table 3: Conclusion of driving factors and strategies for inheritance and innovation of the Miao folk songs

No.	A. Subject perspective	No.	B. Cultural perspective	No.	C. Political perspective
A1	Innovative consciousness of creators	B1	the Miao culture	C1	Government supports
A2	Innovative spirit of creators	B2	Combination of modern and traditional cultures	C2	Ideological orientation of literature and art
A3	Artistic ability of creators	B3	Integration of Chinese and western cultures	C3	Heritage policy supports
	Total work of art (audio sense, visual senses and comprehensibility)	B4	Cultural confidence	C4	Political orientation of artworks
A4	Power of execution of team	B5	Musical criticism		
A5	Sense of communication of the Miao folk songs				
A6	Musical features of the Miao folk song				
A7	Features of dialects				
A8	Original works				
A9	Brand consciousness				
	D. Resource perspective		E. Cross-border perspective		F. Communication perspective
D1	Human resources	E1	Integration of Chinese and western musical instruments	F1	Communication of stage art
D2	Market resources	E2	Integration of Chinese and western composition techniques	F2	Communication of music
D3	Cultural resources	E3	Integration of science and technologies	F3	Communication of academic research
D4	Financial resource	E4	Cross-border integration of tradition and modernity	F4	Communication of multimedia art
		E5	Musical interaction across time and space		
		E6	Integration of Chinese and western cultures		

Research conclusion above shows the driving factors and strategies for inheritance and innovation for the Miao folk songs from six perspectives. The subject perspective is a direction that is most important and valued. The cultural perspective comes the second. The resource perspective, cross-border perspective and communication perspective rank the same. The political perspective is the last. The Comparative Research is used in three typical cases to clearly identify the necessary driving factors and strategies for successful development of these cases. From these typical cases, a brand-new mode of development is concluded. Necessary driving factors and strategies for successful development of these cases are identified from the following six perspectives and other plans are suggested.

5. Suggestions

Researcher have long been working on innovation cases on the Miao folk songs in West Hunan, who participates in the lead creators and is a successful case creator. Three cases are good examples in the industry but the cases for the research are limited to the number. Are the driving factors and strategies for innovation cases on the Miao folk songs in West Hunan identified using the SPS method and the comparative method adaptable for other innovation cases? Besides, considering the regional disparity, are these driving factors adaptable for inheritance and innovation of other minority folk songs? Under the trend of cross-border integration and rapid development of digital media, the objects of research selected herein are confined to an extent. There must be works to be created which will perform better in cross-border integration and extension in the future. Hence there is a large space of expansion in this research. To replenish the inheritance and innovation of the Miao folk songs in West Hunan, it's proposed to conduct future researches in the aspects as follows:

1. A quantitative research method should be used to express the acting force of the driving factors in quantitative coefficient so as to cover up the subjectivity of case study in respect of quantitative assessment criteria.
2. Innovation cases used in this thesis are those on the Miao folk songs in West Hunan. Subsequent research and verification are required to confirm if the conclusion herein works universally for other cases other than on the Miao folk songs in West Hunan. Subsequent research and verification are also required to confirm if the conclusion herein works for innovation cases on other minority folk songs.
3. This research improves and adds to theory of inheritance and innovation of the Miao folk songs in West Hunan and hence contributes to the system of theory of innovation and development of the Miao folk songs in West Hunan. It's suggested that future research in this regard should move further from this theoretical basis. New innovation models should be researched in the context of cross-border integration. Performance repertoires are the most active innovation model today. Over recent years, high attention has been paid to the culture industry and traditional cultures in the national level. Development of digital media at a high speed and surge of innovative ideas of cross-border integration will produce more

innovation models. Comparison will be made on more research conclusions of innovation models in the future to identify anything in common and similar for detailed analysis and find more driving factors and innovation models. As a result, a conclusion of regularity may be formed and be instructive for more innovation cases

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