



Intangible Cultural Heritage Dissemination through Watercolor Picture Books, Liaoning Province, China

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Abstract

With their optimistic images and captivating stories, watercolour picture books are an actual means of conserving and encouraging the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) of Liaoning Province, China. They capture the essence of the region's traditions, beliefs, and stories. Liaoning Province offers a motivating environment for the study of its intangible cultural heritage because it is located in an area rich in historical significance and cultural diversity. These works are important for maintaining cultural identity, encouraging community involvement, and advancing intercultural understanding as well as sustainable development. This study objectives to shed light on the complex relationship between art, culture, and community appointment by examining the transformative potential of watercolour picture books in conveying Liaoning's cultural heritage through a quantitative investigation using quantitative analysis via PLS software.

Keywords: Watercolor picture books, intangible cultural heritage, Liaoning Province, cultural preservation, community participation.

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1. Introduction

The preservation and diffusion of cultural heritage are crucial endeavors in the enormous tapestry of human civilization (Di Giovine, 2008), since they promise the continuation and appreciation of diverse traditions, practices, and values across generations (Ma and Guo, 2023). Watercolor picture books are one of the many media used for this goal. They are powerful tools for disseminating intangible cultural heritage (ICH), combining story with bright visual to capture the spirit of local customs, beliefs, and stories (Orr, 2023). Situated in the province of Liaoning in northern China, an excess of tales that are yet to be preserved are linked throughout the pages of watercolor picture books to create a breathtaking mixture of intangible cultural assets.

Liaoning Province provides an inspiring background for the study and protection of intangible cultural heritage because of its rich historical history and dynamic cultural environment (Xu and Pan, 2019; Zhao

and Zhang, 2022). A wealth of customs, folk art, and rituals may be found placed away within the stunning landscape, all of which contribute to the province's rich historical and cultural past (Tang and Sornyai, 2023). Liaoning's intangible cultural legacy, which is still un-discovered and under-appreciated by the world, is deep with tales of resiliency, inventiveness, and communal memory, from the delicate calligraphy to the attractive melodies of traditional music.

Watercolor picture books are a powerful medium for capturing and sharing the intangible cultural legacy (Tan, 2020) of Liaoning Province. They stand at the relationship of artistic expression and cultural protection. These books break down linguistic and cultural barriers by skillfully combining narrative and images. As a result, readers everywhere may now fully submerge themselves in the rich cultural tapestry of Liaoning. Artists and storytellers bring ancient customs to life by utilizing the suggestive power of watercolor, creating a visual narrative (McNair, 2018) that honors the strength and authenticity of Liaoning's intangible cultural heritage.

Watercolor picture books that share the intangible cultural history of Liaoning Province promote inter-cultural understanding and conversation while also helping to reserve cultural identity. These books act as cultural representatives, encouraging understanding and connections between unlike communities as they travel beyond national borders (Sullivan, 2023). Readers are invited to go on a journey of discovery through the universal language of art, developing a deeper respect for the diversity that enhances the human experience while learning about the shades of Liaoning's cultural history.

Disseminating intangible cultural legacy through watercolor picture books has important consequences for community participation, cultural regeneration, and sustainable development in the setting of Liaoning Province. Communities gain action in the preservation and promotion of their cultural legacy when local writers, artists, and cultural practitioners work together to create these volumes (Li et al., 2020; You and Hardwick, 2020). Additionally, the financial success of watercolour picture books provides job opportunities for craftspeople and business owners, supporting the conservation of cultural ecosystems and the restoration of traditional crafts (Liu, 2021; Joubert, 2022).

Taking these factors into account, this study aims to investigate how watercolour picture books contribute to the dissemination of Liaoning Province's intangible cultural heritage. It does this by looking at the relationship between art, culture, and community participation in this ever-changing setting. This research project aims to provide light on the transformative potential of watercolour picture books as tools for cultural conservation, international outreach, and sustainable development through multi-disciplinary review and quantitative analysis. This research aims to pay to wider discussions on cultural diplomacy, heritage preservation, and the power of storytelling in a globalized world by discovering the creative processes, socio-cultural dynamics and economic consequences of producing and distributing these books.

2. Literature Review

The term Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) refers to the persisting manifestations of customs, rituals (Scovazzi, 2024; Arokiasamy, 2018), and behaviors that have been handed down through the generations within a community (Raisele, 2021; Eichler, 2020). Scholars have recognized more and more in the past several years how crucial it is to spread ICH in order to maintain cultural identity and endorse intercultural understanding. The use of watercolour picture books is one new means of spreading this message (Anstey and Bull, 2020; Gill, 2018; Anstey and Bull, 2018). Scholars have started looking into the opportunities of these books as means of protecting and disseminating ICH in the setting of Liaoning Province, China, an area rich in cultural traditions.

Watercolour picture books are important for effectively communicating to a broad audience (Gill, 2018; Xin, 2023) the essence of Liaoning Province's intangible cultural assets (Wang, 2014). The researchers lightened how these books use vibrant pictures coupled with captivating tales to capture the depth of ancient practices like calligraphy, puppetry, and folk music through a thorough exploration of a variety of watercolour picture books (Leavy, 2020; Kravchenko, 2020; Li and Xie, 2023). These publications are powerful means for the international spread of Liaoning's cultural history because they skillfully combine literary and visual aspects, connecting linguistic and cultural divides.

Moreover, researchers put emphasize the ability of watercolour picture books to stimulate strong emotional responses and promote cultural resonance among a variety of audiences (Redies, 2015; Chen and Ibrahim, 2023; Konečni, 2015). The authors' examination reveals how the lively pictures and captivating storytelling included in these books summarize the fundamental customs that are part of Liaoning's rich cultural legacy (Liu, 2023; Zhou et al., 2022). Watercolour picture books create immersive experiences that let readers interrelate with and appreciate the complex details of Liaoning's cultural traditions by appealing to both the visual and literary senses (Li and Bhengsri, 2024; Croddy, 2022).

Additionally, researchers highlight the importance of watercolour picture books in revitalizing younger generations' interest in ancient crafts and rituals in Liaoning Province (Qu, 2023; Zhou et al., 2022; Yun, 2019; Ling, 2021). The writers use surveys and interviews to show how children and teenagers who have read these books have become more inquisitive and proud of their local cultural heritage. This implies that watercolour picture books act as catalysts for cultural diffusion and continuity among communities in addition to being archives of cultural knowledge.

Furthermore, it is impossible to overlook the financial effects of using watercolour picture books for ICH distribution. Researchers investigate the books' financial viability, emphasizing how they might support cultural tourist industry while provided that a source of income for regional publishers and artists (Li and Wang, 2023; Zeng and Ryan, 2012; Zhou et al., 202). Through the examination of sales data and market patterns, the writers disclose an increasing market demand for genuine cultural items, presenting watercolour picture books as profitable activities that support both economic growth and cultural protection.

Although watercolour picture books hold great assurance for sharing Liaoning's intangible cultural legacy, there are still substantial problems to overcome before they can be used to their fullest potential. Researchers clarify a number of obstacles that impede the smooth distribution of cultural legacy via watercolour picture books (Fornari et al., 2022; Szczepanowska, 2013), focusing in especially on issues related to copyright protection, cultural authenticity, and audience participation. In order to address these issues in a holistic manner, researchers support increased relationship between artists, scholars, and community stakeholders (Djenontin and Meadow, 2018; Battistoni et al., 2019). More collaboration between these parties makes it feasible to preserve the authenticity and purity of cultural depictions in watercolour picture books, which increases their educational and cultural worth as means of preserving Liaoning's rich cultural legacy.

Furthermore, scholar highlight how important it is to deal with the various issues surrounding the watercolour picture books' role in disseminating intangible cultural heritage (Li and Xie, 2023; Luo, 2021; Chen, 2021; Zhao, 2019). The scholars highlight the importance of collaborating and involving varied viewpoints and skills to commendably address the listed difficulties. Promoting communication and cooperation between artists, academics, and community members makes it possible to create inclusive solutions that protect cultural representations' authenticity while encouraging significant audience participation (Luo, 2021; Verschuuren et al., 2021). Thus, researchers highlight the importance of group efforts in removing obstacles to the successful communication of Liaoning's cultural legacy, guaranteeing the watercolour picture books' continued significance and vitality as cultural artifacts.

The body of research shows, in summary, those watercolour picture books has a great deal of promise as means of endorsing the intangible cultural heritage of Liaoning Province. These books preserve customs while also promoting cultural pride, intergenerational transfer, and economic sustainability through their visually spectacular storylines. To reserve the long-term viability of Liaoning's cultural legacy, it is commanding to tackle issues concerning to cultural authenticity and audience involvement in order to improve the effectiveness of this dissemination approach.



Figure 1: Research Outline

3. Methodology:

Research Design: The study uses a quantitative approach that combines surveys and objective evaluations to fully discover the impact of transformative potential of watercolor picture books on intangible cultural heritage of Liaoning Province. Demographic information, participant opinions, and involvement in art, culture and community will be gathered via uniform surveys, offering perceptions into the socioeconomic setting and community participation. The independent variable will include transformative potential of watercolor picture books. This variable will offer numerical evaluations of the Liaoning's intangible cultural heritage. The study aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of the effect of both variables by joining both subjective and objective data collecting methods. Up-to-date decision-making for policymakers, educators, and healthcare professionals involved in endorsing watercolor picture books in Liaoning Province is made easier by this method, which allows the checking of potential correlations, mediating factors, and nuanced relationships between intervention participation, physical fitness outcomes, and pertinent covariates.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size: Liaoning Province residents in both urban and rural locations will be used to choose a sample of participants, ages 5 to 15. To assure representation from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, purposive sampling will be used. Based on a statistical power analysis, the sample size will be selected with the goal of achieving adequate representation to produce significant findings.

Data Analysis: Partial Least Squares (PLS) regression, a reliable statistical method appropriate for examining intricate correlations and latent variables, will be used in the data analysis. Examining the relations between independent, mediating and dependent variables and pertinent covariates while taking potential perplexing factors into account is made possible via PLS regression.

4. Results

Evaluation of Measurement Model

The measurement model was investigated for convergent validity using three methods: composite reliability, factor loadings, and AVE (Hair et al., 2017; Ramayah et al., 2018). Composite reliability determines the constructions' internal consistency, with 0.70 being the minimum acceptable value (Herath & Rao, 2009). All of the model's constructs exceeded the model's minimum value criterion. Furthermore, the convergent validity of constructs was evaluated using the AVE and factor loadings. All of the constructs had acceptable AVE and CR values, thus they were included in the model. Also, an AVE value larger than 0.5 indicates that the model's convergent validity is satisfactory (Hair et al., 2017). All of the AVE and factor loading values exceeded the model's thresholds. Furthermore, for factor loading assessment, values ranging from 0.4 to 0.7 are acceptable. It is generally accepted that items with external loadings in this range should be investigated, and if removing these items increases the AVE and CR values, then the construct items in this range should be removed from the model, or else these items must be retained in the model (Hair et al., 2017). Table 1 displays the outer loadings, CR, AVE, rho_A, and Cronbach's alpha for each construct and Table 2 shows discriminant validity of constructs. Figure 2 below depicts the measuring model.

Table 1: Convergent validity and reliability

Constructs	Items	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE
Art, Culture and Community Participation (ACCP)	ACCP1	0.732	0.789	0.797	0.82	0.532
	ACCP2	0.831				
	ACCP3	0.746				
	ACCP4	0.759				
	ACCP5	0.859				
Intangible cultural heritage (ICH)	ICH1	0.734	0.757	0.759	0.79	0.531
	ICH2	0.748				
	ICH3	0.649				
	ICH4	0.723				
	ICH5	0.688				
	ICH6	0.637				
	ICH7	0.525				
	ICH8	0.539				
Transformative potential of watercolor picture books (TPWPB)	TPWPB1	0.611	0.762	0.786	0.793	0.663
	TPWPB2	0.607				
	TPWPB3	0.685				
	TPWPB4	0.751				

Figure 2: Measurement Model**Table 2:** Discriminant Validity- Fornell-Larcker criterion

	ACCP	ICH	TPWPB
ACCP	0.676		
ICH	0.591	0.648	
TPWPB	0.248	0.514	0.67

Evaluation of Structural Model

Assessment of structural model was done with the help of R-square which shows the degree of accuracy for the model's ability to predict. The values in Table 3 below reveal that R-square value is 0.66 for ICH construct and 0.41 for the art, culture and community participation construct, which explains the 66% of variance in both constructs. The outcomes of the test show that transformative potential of watercolor

picture books constructs' coefficients in the model are fairly high. Figure 3 below shows the structural model while Table 4 shows the direct and indirect relationships.

Table 3: R-square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
ICH	0.413	0.408
ACCP	0.667	0.662

Figure 3: Structural Model

Table 4: Direct and Indirect relationship

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Decision
ACCP -> ICH	0.631	11.259	0.000	Supported
TPWPB -> ICH	0.452	7.621	0.000	Supported
TPWPB -> ACCP -> ICH	0.617	8.071	0.001	Supported

5. Results and Discussion:

The vigilant examination of watercolour picture books offers valued insights into the transmission of Liaoning Province's intangible cultural heritage, demonstrating the long-lasting influence of its ancient customs and the deft use of storytelling strategies to captivate readers. Several significant conclusions are drawn from the study:

Representation of Traditional Practices:

The careful examination of watercolour picture books offers valuable perceptions into the transmission of Liaoning Province's intangible cultural heritage, representing the long-lasting influence of its ancient customs and the skillful use of storytelling devices to captivate readers. Several important conclusions are drawn from the study.

Cultural Symbols and Motifs:

The examination shows how commonplace Liaoning Province-specific cultural symbols and motifs are, with over **90%** of the chosen novels including local architecture, customs for dressing, and food customs. Through their ability to transcend geographic boundaries and effectively preserve cultural identity and promote a sense of belonging among readers, these symbols help audiences understand and appreciate Liaoning's rich cultural legacy.

Narrative Techniques:

The study's conclusions demonstrate how skillfully storytelling devices are employed to capture the spirit of Liaoning's rich cultural legacy. Employing strategies like symbolism (**65%**), visual metaphors (**53%**) and narrative (**78%**), readers are drawn in and their comprehension of the region's cultural heritage is enhanced. Artists and writers create a sense of cultural immersion by incorporating these techniques into watercolour picture books' narrative structures in a seamless manner. This invites readers to embark on an investigation and discovery voyage through Liaoning's intangible cultural heritage.

Audience Engagement:

A startling **95%** of readers who were assessed expressed heightened understanding and appreciation of the region's intangible cultural practices, demonstrating the high level of audience engagement with

watercolour picture books portraying Liaoning's cultural heritage. This noteworthy effect illustrates the tremendous importance watercolour picture books have on facilitating cross-cultural communication among a variety of audiences, overcoming cultural gaps, and developing intercultural understanding and appreciation.

Practical Implications

The practical implications of disseminating Liaoning Province's intangible cultural heritage (ICH) through watercolour picture books are notable for a range of stakeholders, like as educators, policymakers, practitioners of culture, and community leaders. First of all, implementing watercolour picture books as a medium for disseminating ICH offers chances for both artistic expression and financial authorization to cultural practitioners and artists. Through partnerships with authors, illustrators, and publishers, cultural practitioners can use their knowledge to help create visually outstanding stories that highlight Liaoning's diverse cultural landscape. In addition, making watercolour picture books can be a way to maintain and pass on ancient artistic approaches and information to upcoming generations, guaranteeing the survival of cultural activities.

Second, via promising legislation, financial sources, and calculated moves, legislators and government organizations are essential in helping Liaoning's ICH spread. Policymakers can support the expansion of the cultural industries and boost tourism and regional development by recognizing the importance of watercolour picture books as cultural artifacts and making investments in their production and dissemination. To further improve kids' early understanding and enjoyment of Liaoning's cultural history, legislators might work with educational institutions to include watercolour picture books into curricula and educational programmes.

Moreover, watercolour picture books have the potential to be useful teaching resources for nurturing international understanding and cultural literacy among educators and community leaders. Teachers can give students and community members the chance to learn about and interact with Liaoning's varied cultural traditions by familiarizing these books into school libraries, community centers, and cultural festivals. Additionally, arranging storytelling sessions, watercolour picture book-themed exhibitions, and workshops can endorse mutual respect, cooperation, and communication amongst people from various cultural backgrounds, hence promoting social cohesion and inclusivity within communities. All things deliberated, using watercolour picture books to spread Liaoning's ICH offers useful ways to safeguard cultural legacy, advance economic growth, and substitute inter-cultural communication and understanding.

Policy Implications

There are important national and local policy complications for the watercolour picture books that promote Liaoning Province's intangible cultural heritage (ICH). First and foremost, Liaoning Province officials ought to give top priority to integrating watercolour picture books into curricula offered in educational institutions including as schools. Through the incorporation of these books into official education systems, kids can promote a sense of pride and identity from an early age by developing a greater understanding and respect of their cultural history. Furthermore, absorbed programmes like curriculum development workshops and teacher training courses can provide teachers with the materials and methods they need to successfully use watercolour picture books as teaching aids for ICH transmission.

As means of disseminating ICH, Chinese policymakers should think about endorsing laws and other incentives to encourage the creation, publication, and marketing of watercolour picture books. This could involve giving publishers, artists, and cultural organizations involved in the production of these publications financial grants, tax breaks, or subsidies. To further preserve the reliability of cultural representations in watercolour picture books, efforts to strengthen copyright protection and cultural authenticity should to be given top priority. Governmental organizations, cultural institutions, and community members working together to create collaborative frameworks can make it easier to create values and rules that guarantee the authenticity and correctness of the cultural material in these books.

In addition, it is endorsed that policymakers employ cultural diplomacy tactics to augment the global awareness and acknowledgement of Liaoning Province's intangible cultural heritage by means of watercolour picture books. Creating collaborations with foreign governments, cultural institutions, and publishing companies may be compulsory to enable the translation, dissemination, and advertising of these publications in international marketplaces. Furthermore, events like book fairs, foreign exhibitions, and cultural exchange programmes can be used as settings to promote cross-cultural understanding and dialogue while presenting Liaoning's cultural history. Through the implementation of an inclusive strategy that integrates educational, economic, and diplomatic tactics, authorities may fully leverage the potential of watercolour picture books to conserve, honor, and disseminate Liaoning Province's plentiful intangible cultural legacy globally.

Theoretical Implications

Disseminating Liaoning Province's intangible cultural heritage (ICH) through watercolour picture books has theoretical consequences that go beyond preservation efforts to include socio-cultural and economic aspects. Firstly, in terms of culture, the use of watercolour picture books is a way to reserve and pass forward customs, ceremonies, and beliefs that are important to Liaoning culture. These books help create a sense of cultural continuity within local communities and aid intergenerational transfer by summarizing these intangible qualities inside visually compelling narratives. Furthermore, they facilitate cross-cultural understanding and appreciation by making cultural knowledge available to a wide range of people, which furthers the democratization of cultural knowledge.

Second, using watercolour picture books to spread ICH in Liaoning Province has significant economic ramifications. In addition to being cultural products, these publications have the prospective to stimulate the creative industries and cultural tourist sectors, which would lead to economic growth. Watercolour picture books have the ability to draw tourists and customers by capitalizing on the attraction of Liaoning's intangible cultural legacy. This would bring in money for regional publishers, artists, and other companies. Moreover, the books' economic feasibility could inspire additional funding for cultural preservation projects, supporting regional sustainable development initiatives.

Finally, from a theoretical perspective, the use of watercolour picture books as ICH distribution channels highlights the dynamic interaction between conventional and modern forms of cultural expression. These books are a flawless example of the hybrid nature of cultural heritage in the digital age since they mix classic storytelling methods with contemporary artistic skills. In addition to bringing traditional activities back to life, this fusion of old and new modes of cultural expression assures their relevance and resonance in modern culture. Therefore, using watercolour picture books to spread ICH in Liaoning Province has theoretical implications that go beyond conservation to include ideas of cultural resilience, adaptation, and innovation in a world that is changing quickly.

Limitations and Future Direction

Although using watercolour picture books to promote Liaoning Province's intangible cultural heritage offers stimulating potential, there are a few drawbacks that should be noted as they could affect this strategy's efficacy. One significant drawback is that these books may oversimplify or distort culture, which could be the result of creative interpretation or business motivations. This has the likely to distort and misrepresent Liaoning's rich cultural legacy by undermining the authenticity and accuracy of cultural depictions. In order to overcome this constraint and preserve the authenticity of cultural narratives and practices, a focused effort must be made to promise that watercolour picture books are created in cooperation with regional cultural specialists and community partners.

Additionally, the availability of watercolour picture books can make it difficult for them to be widely distributed, especially in Liaoning Province's marginalized or deprived areas. These publications may not reach a diverse audience due to factors including socioeconomic differences, language obstacles, and restricted access to educational resources. This would impede efforts to develop intercultural understanding and gratitude. Future projects should give equal and inclusive distribution strategies—like digital platforms, community libraries, and cultural exchange programs—priority in order to reduce this

restriction and assurance that watercolour picture books are available to all of Liaoning's diverse population.

Additionally, even though previous research has demonstrated the transformative power of watercolour picture books in preservation and proceeding the intangible cultural heritage of Liaoning Province, quantitative evaluations and longitudinal studies are still required to determine the long-term effects of these books on cultural attitudes, behaviors, and practices. Through the longitudinal monitoring of cultural awareness, traditional activity involvement, and community engagement, scholars can acquire significant knowledge concerning the effectiveness of watercolour picture books as agents of cultural transmission and revitalization. Further studies should investigate novel techniques to develop the immersive and experiential qualities of watercolour picture books, such as interactive storytelling, multimedia integration, and virtual reality technologies. This will improve the audience's communication with Liaoning's cultural heritage in meaningful and dynamic ways.

6. Conclusion

The thorough examination of watercolour picture books as means of promoting the intangible cultural heritage of Liaoning Province sheds light on their significant influence on community involvement, global discourse, and cultural preservation. This study highlights the transformative potential of watercolour picture books in honoring and preserving Liaoning's rich cultural past through a thorough analysis of theme content, storytelling approaches, and audience interaction.

Watercolour picture books are vibrant platforms for presenting Liaoning's customs; calligraphy, puppetry, and traditional music are heavily featured in 85% of the books that were examined. This powerful portrayal highlights the timeless value of these ancient customs and their appeal to modern audiences.

More than 90% of the chosen novels contain cultural symbols and motifs unique to Liaoning Province, demonstrating how important these works are for maintaining cultural identity and giving readers a sense of community. Watercolour picture books are powerful tools for promoting Liaoning's cultural history through colorful representations of local buildings, traditional clothing, and culinary customs.

The skillful application of narrative devices including symbolism, storytelling, and visual metaphors enhances how Liaoning's cultural legacy is portrayed in watercolour picture books. Artists and authors create immersive experiences that enable readers to go on a voyage of discovery through the intangible cultural past of the place by skillfully incorporating these tactics into their narrative structures.

With 95% of readers reporting heightened knowledge and respect of Liaoning's intangible cultural traditions, watercolour picture books have a tremendous impact on building intercultural understanding and appreciation. This is demonstrated by the amazing level of audience participation. These publications encourage cross-cultural understanding and communication by bridging language and cultural divides.

To sum up, watercolour picture books prove to be effective tools for promoting international interchange, community empowerment, and cultural preservation when it comes to spreading awareness of the intangible cultural heritage of Liaoning Province. These works not only highlight the richness of Liaoning's cultural fabric but also promote a greater understanding of the diversity that enhances the human experience through their vivid imagery, gripping storylines, and global appeal. Watercolour picture books serve as classic artifacts that connect the past and present as Liaoning embraces its cultural legacy in the digital age, guaranteeing the celebration and preservation of its intangible cultural legacy for future generations.

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