

# Cultural sciences

## CONSERVATION AND PROMOTION OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES IN CONNECTION WITH TOURISM ACTIVITIES: INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS FOR VIETNAM

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### **Abstract**

Intangible cultural heritage is a valuable resource that significantly contributes to the sustainable development of communities, including Vietnam. However, intangible cultural heritage also confronts many challenges and risks of disappearance due to factors such as globalization, urbanization, climate change, and a lack of effective conservation policies. In this context, the article aims to investigate and analyze international experiences in preserving and promoting the value of intangible cultural heritage associated with tourism activities, thereby proposing some solutions for Vietnam to exploit the potential of intangible cultural heritage in sustainable tourism development while also contributing to socio-economic development and preserving national culture. The article is divided into three main parts: Part 1 provides the theoretical basis of the research problem; Part 2 presents international experiences in preserving and promoting the value of intangible cultural heritage associated with tourism activities; and Part 3 proposes solutions for Vietnam based on the mentioned international experiences.

**Keywords:** tourism, intangible cultural heritage, conservation, lessons learned

### **1. Introduction**

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) is a spiritual product associated with the identity, history, and culture of communities, individuals, and peoples. Intangible cultural heritage encompasses a wide range of disciplines, including language, music, performing arts, festivals, cuisine, traditional costumes, and traditional knowledge related to nature and society. This is not only a valuable resource for the richness and diversity of humanity but also an important factor to contribute to the sustainable development of communities. It creates economic, social, and environmental values for tourism activities while enhancing cohesion, self-respect, and respect among different communities.

ICH can attract tourists with the uniqueness and appeal of cultural expressions, creating meaningful and unforgettable tourism experiences, promoting cultural exchange and learning between nations and regions, and serving as a tool for heritage preservation and dissemination.<sup>1</sup> However, intangible cultural heritage also confronts numerous obstacles and dangers of loss as a result of globalization, urbanization, climate change, and a lack of effective conservation policies.

Vietnam is a country rich in intangible cultural heritage. According to the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, Vietnam currently has 15 heritages recognized by UNESCO as intangible cultural heritages of humanity. In addition, Vietnam also has hundreds of heritages listed on the National List. These heritages not only reflect Vietnamese national identity but also provide inspiration for a variety of tourism activities that appeal to both local and international visitors. Despite efforts, preserving and promoting intangible cultural heritage assets through tourism in Vietnam remains challenging and limited. Some heritages are deteriorated or gradually lost due to a lack of successors, financial resources, management, and exploitation expertise. Some heritages are transformed or lose their identity due to excessive intervention by tourism or inappropriate duplication. Some heritages are cut off from the community of practice or over-commercialized due to a lack of awareness and respect from tourists and tourism enterprises. Therefore, effective strategies and solutions are required to exploit ICH in tourism in a responsible and reasonable manner.

Given the above situations, this article raises the following research question: How to preserve and promote the value of intangible cultural heritage associated with tourism activities in Vietnam effectively and sustainably? In this section, we will compare and draw lessons from other nations' experiences in exploiting

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<sup>1</sup> Lopez-Guzman, T., and Gonzalez Santa-Cruz, F. (2016), "International tourism and the UNESCO category of intangible cultural heritage," *International Journal of Culture, Tourism, and Hospitality Research*, Vol. 10 No. 3, p. 310-322. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/IJCTHR-03-2015-0025/full/html>; Access date August 12, 2023.