



# Characteristics Analysis of Intangible Cultural Heritage(ICH)in Dalian

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**Abstract.** City ICH is an important part of world civilization and an important expression of global cultural diversity. City ICH is the product of local traditional life and social activities, representing the protection and inheritance of local culture, and exploring the characteristics of City ICH can clarify the uniqueness of the city itself and promote the sustainable development of global cultural diversity in the increasingly homogenized global urban development. The characteristics of spatial and type distribution of ICH reveal the trajectory of ICH being sorted and the differences in local cultures. This paper takes Dalian, a city in Northeast China, as a research object and analyzes the characteristics of ICH culture in Dalian. Using IBM SPSS Statistics Data Editor to analyze ICH items in Dalian and applying attribution, type and year variables, we conclude that ICH in Dalian has the characteristics of spatial gathered tendency and imbalanced distribution of types. ICH is concentrated in relatively remote suburbs, which is considered to be more conducive to cultural preservation away from the city center; the proportion of the type of traditional skills is the highest among ICH in Dalian, it also leads in comparison with provincial and national program types. The reason is found from the history of Dalian. It is expected that our study can provide inspiration for the study of the cultural characteristics of City ICH and provide a reference for how to analyze the reasons for the ICH pattern from the geographical location and historical development of the city.

**Keywords:** ICH, spatial distribution, type distribution, cultural characteristics.

## 1 Introduction

ICH as a local culture of cities is the basis of national and world ICH and the concrete expression of the world's cultural diversity. ICH originates from local traditional life and cultural activities, has an irreplaceable role in the formation of local culture and city spirit. (Qiu 2023) believes that ICH is the "cultural soul" of a place, and that in the context of urbanization, neighborhoods, streets, towns and even entire cities tend to become homogenized, while ICH can provide a local identity<sup>[1]</sup>. It is argued that the cognition of the generation and evolution of regional cultures depends on the spatial

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and cultural characteristics of ICH, the morphological differences and regional characteristics of ICH are a manifestation of the diversity of national cultures, and that the identification of the characteristics of regional ICH contributes to local cultural preservation and development (Xu and Pan 2018)<sup>[2]</sup>.

For the distribution characteristics of ICH, geo-cultural scholars explore the characteristics of the spatial distribution of ICH, the characteristics of ICH in a particular region, and the study provides a global view of the development of ICH, the central region in China (Kuang et al. 2023)<sup>[3]</sup>, the Yangtze River delta in China (J. Chang et al. 2023)<sup>[4]</sup>, the Yellow River Basin (B. Chang et al. 2023)<sup>[5]</sup>, the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region (Pang and Wu 2023)<sup>[6]</sup>, and the South Tyrol's in Italy (Martínez-Rodríguez et al. 2022)<sup>[7]</sup>. The national distribution of a specific type of ICH also shows a concentrated trend, with Chinese medicine (Nie et al. 2023)<sup>[8]</sup>, and musical ICH in the western Hunan region (Zhang, Xiang, and Liu 2022)<sup>[9]</sup>.

In the previous studies on city ICH, (Qiu Qihang 2023) took Guangzhou, China, as an example to highlight the differences between cities and reveal the role of ICH in promoting the uniqueness of city destinations.

Although the relationship between region and ICH has existed in the research, scholars either take large regions as research objects, or take ICH works as a means to serve other fields or industries, and do not focus on the expression of ICH in cities or towns. The uniqueness of city culture with ICH as a component is an important manifestation of cultural diversity, but there is a gap in the research focusing ICH of a single city. We take the ICH in Dalian, Liaoning Province of Northeast China as the research object to identify the cultural characteristics of Dalian's ICH. By sorting out the status quo of Dalian's ICH, the characteristics of Dalian's ICH items in China and Liaoning Province is accurately identified. Analyzing the distribution of existing ICH items in Dalian District and explore the reasons from the development of the city.

## 2 Literature Review

The theoretical background of the previous research mainly includes spatial analysis theory and sustainable development theory, which make the research of ICH appear interdisciplinary and integrated with the development of society.

### 2.1 ICH Distribution Studies

The spatial distribution of ICH in China has been a hot research topic in recent years. The spatial distribution of ICH at the national, regional and provincial levels shows the overview of ICH in China from a macroscopic point of view. Chinese ICH has an centralized spatial distribution pattern, which is reflected in the ICH at the national level (B. Xu. 2018)<sup>[10]</sup> and the ICH in the Yellow River Basin (B. Chang et al. 2023) (Nie et al. 2022)<sup>[11]</sup>. The distribution of ICH is classified into the characteristics of agglomeration distribution (226 items), random distribution (89 items), and uniform distribution (14 items) (Pang and Wu 2023). The analysis of ICH tourism resources in Liaoning Province draws a conclusion that ICH tourism resources are concentrated and

distributed, from the perspective of the structural types of ICH, it is believed that seven types of ICH tourism resources are highly concentrated, and the other three types are more evenly distributed. It was concluded that there are seven types of ICH tourism resources that are highly concentrated, while the other three types have a more balanced distribution (Pang and Xu 2008). The spatial distribution of individual types of ICH is also reflected in the centralized tendency, and it is believed that ICH of traditional Chinese medicine shows a tendency of centralized tendency, with a strong distribution imbalance (Nie et al. 2023).

Scholars have also paid attention to the temporal differentiation of ICH, which is the statistics from the time when the ICH was published in batches. The statistics on the five batches of national ICH items in the Yellow River Basin show that the temporal distribution pattern shows a "northeast to southwest" trend (B. Chang et al. 2023).

## 2.2 Influencing Factors of ICH

(B. Chang et al. 2023) states that the ICH is the expression of the unique cultural symbols of each place, reflecting the regional characteristics of the culture. The relationship between ICH items and local culture can be said to be causal and mutually reinforcing. Tracing the influencing factors in the formation and development of ICH from its characteristics, (Pang and Wu 2023) argues that there is a relatively large degree of divergence in the type of structure, distribution space and living environment of ICH in Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei, which is related to the geographical environment, economic development and awareness of cultural preservation. Mainly, it is analyzed that the influencing factor of the level of socio-economic development is an important factor on ICH, and it is argued that regional GDP, tertiary sector GDP, cityisation rate and the spatial distribution of ICH are highly consistent (Jiang et al. 2023). The conclusion from (B. XU 2018) shows whether geographic environmental factors, historical and cultural factors, ethnic distribution and economy also affect regional ICH. In the case of Dalian ICH, Dalian's geographical location, history and culture, and marine ecology are all external environments for ICH, and these factors will be taken into account in the data analysis process to determine whether and to what extent they affect ICH in the Dalian city.

## 3 Materials and Methods

### 3.1 Material Collection

Definition of ICH in China are subtle different from UNESCO. With regard to the concept of ICH, based on the concept of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH (2003), the Law of the People's Republic of China on ICH defines ICH as the various traditional cultural expressions handed down from generation to generation by the peoples of the Republic of China and regarded as an integral part of their cultural heritage, as well as the physical objects and places associated with the traditional cultural expressions.

The ICH items and data in the research materials are based on the documents published by government departments. The data at the national level were obtained from the official website of China's ICH [www.ihchina.cn](http://www.ihchina.cn), the ICH data at the provincial level in Liaoning were obtained from the official website of the Liaoning Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism <https://whly.ln.gov.cn/>, and the ICH data in Dalian were obtained from the Dalian Digital Culture Museum <http://szwhg.dlqzysg.com/>. The national and provincial statistics include the type of item, number of items and the year in which the item was approved, while the name of the item and the specific attribution to which it belongs were added for the items at the municipal level.

When collating the ICH in Dalian, the principle of "higher rather than lower" is applied, i.e. if the same item belongs to both municipal and provincial levels, only the provincial level is counted, and so on. It should be noted that since some of the items at the national and provincial levels are not specific to the attribution under Dalian city, and the names of some items are slightly different, the final municipal items were consulted with the official staff to ensure the accuracy of the data. When analyzing the positioning of ICH in Dalian, the criterion of place of belonging was adopted, i.e. ignoring the national, provincial and municipal classifications of ICH, they were all referred to as ICH of Dalian; the ICH of Liaoning Province were treated in the same way. When analyzing the characteristics of Dalian's ICH, the level attributes of ICH items are repositioned and analyzed in a hierarchical classification.

The criteria for the types of ICH items are based on the official website of China's ICH, [www.ihchina.cn](http://www.ihchina.cn). This website has also adjusted UNESCO's classification of ICH according to the current situation in China, and we observed a total of ten ICH types, including Folk custom, Folk literature, Folk musical theatre, Traditional dance, Traditional drama, Traditional fine art, Traditional medicine, Traditional music, Traditional skill, Traditional sports, entertainment and acrobatics. These 10 types are also the basis for our categorization and analysis.

### **3.2 Methods**

This study used SPSS to analyze the materials and data. The variables we apply are level, type, year, and attribution. Descriptive analysis-frequency was used to analyze whether the distribution of ICH in Dalian had a trend of regional concentration, and frequency was used to analyze whether the distribution of ICH in terms of type was similar at the three levels of China, Liaoning Province and Dalian City. Use crosstabs to analyze the performance of the types in different years. Summarize the characteristics of the Dalian ICH.

## **4 Results**

### **4.1 Geographical Distribution**

Administratively, Dalian consists of 6 municipal districts, 3 county-level cities, and 1 county. 6 municipal districts are Zhongshan District, Xigang District, Shahekou Dis-

trict, Ganjingzi District, Lvshunkou District, and Jinzhou District. 3 county-level cities are Wafangdian City, Pulandian City, and Zhuanghe City. 1 county is Changhai County.

However, the attribution of ICH is slightly different, with some ICH belonging to cultural institutes and hospitals. From a rigorous point of view, we have followed the official criteria for attribution, so the distribution is somewhat different from the administrative division. Due to the limited number of exceptions, we do not believe that this affects the overall spatial distribution.

The following “Fig. 1. Spatial Distribution of ICH in Dalian” makes it clear that Dalian's ICH items show a trend of concentration, and Jinzhou District has the quantitative advantage when compared with other attributions. In terms of proportion, Pulandian City, Wafangdian city and Zhuanghe City have also reached 10%, and the total proportion of these four areas has reached 60%. In the distribution of items above the provincial level, only the four regions mentioned above have a percentage of more than 10%. It shows that the ICH items in Dalian are concentrated, Including items above the provincial level.

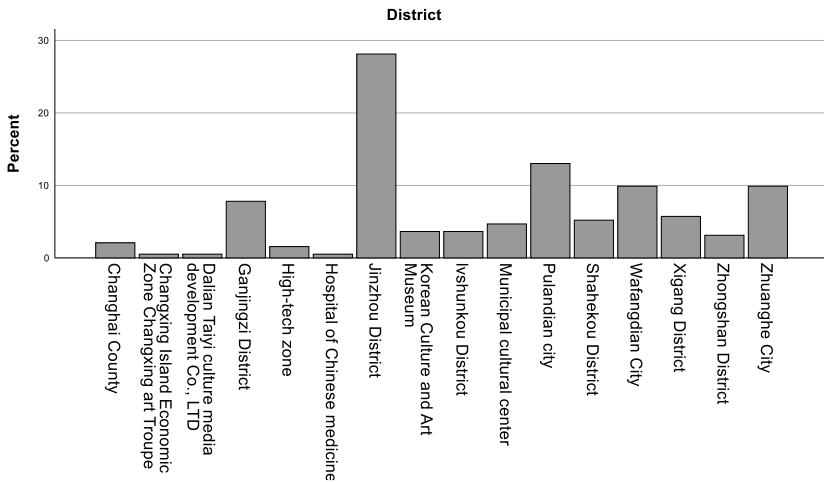


Fig. 1. Spatial Distribution of ICH in Dalian

#### 4.2 Distribution of Item Types

The following “Fig. 2. Type Distribution of ICH in Dalian” demonstrates the similarities and differences between the type of Dalian, Liaoning Province and China. In the distribution of ICH types in Dalian, Traditional skill and Traditional sports, entertainment and acrobatics crafts account for a large proportion, while the proportion of Chinese folk art forms, folklore and traditional theatre is relatively low.

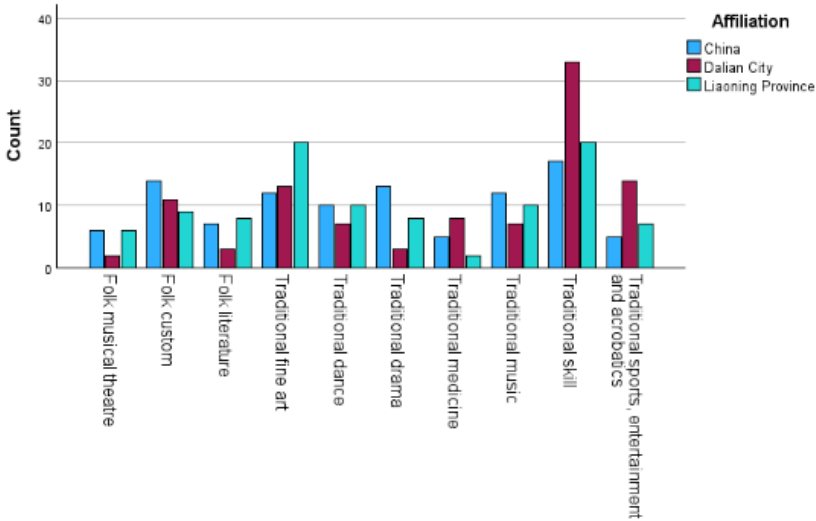


Fig. 2. Type Distribution of ICH in Dalian

### 4.3 Combination of ICH Type and Year

By December 2023, Dalian City had released a total of 8 batches of intangible cultural heritage. The year of this section is the year when the project was listed as a municipal level intangible cultural heritage site, with some projects slightly different from the years listed in the provincial and national level lists.

In terms of the temporal distribution of the number of ICH, the number of ICH accounted for 21.4% in 2020 and 17.7% in 2009, two small peaks, which differ from the number of ICH released in other batches. From the distribution of the type of ICH programs, the largest proportion is the traditional skills, accounting for 31.3%, the type in 2015, 2017 and 2020 the proportion of the year are more than 40%. The types Folk musical theater, Folk literature and Traditional drama each account for less than 3%, and the distribution of the types of ICH items shows an unbalanced state. One of the more prominent proportions in the joint list is 60%, which is the proportion of the number in Traditional medicine in 2020, indicating that the excavation of ICH item types also has a concentrated nature.

## 5 Discussion

From the statistical analysis of the data, it can be seen that Dalian's ICH items are characterized by concentrated spatial distribution and uneven distribution of types. In terms of spatial distribution, Jinzhou District, Pulandian City, Wafangdian City and Zhuanghe City show the phenomenon of gathering of ICH items, and items above the provincial level are also mainly concentrated in these four areas. In terms of the administrative division of Dalian City, it is generally considered that Zhongshan District,

Xigang District, Shahekou District and Ganjingzi District (the high-tech zone administratively belongs to Ganjingzi District) belong to the city center area. Statistically, the areas where ICH are concentrated are far away from the city center. From the perspective of cultural development, central areas are easily influenced by other cultures, while remote areas do a better job in protecting and inheriting traditions. The spatial distribution of Dalian's ICH also confirms this cultural law.

In terms of categories, Traditional skill and Traditional sports, entertainment and acrobatics crafts have a high ratio. Especially The Traditional skill category also has higher proportion of all ICH programs in Dalian than any other type. The items of traditional skill in Dalian related to food and drink accounted for 45% of the total, while others included the skills of making costumes, production tools and decorations, and performing arts. According to the website of the Dalian Municipal Government, Dalian already had a "county" administrative structure during the Western Han Dynasty. Despite its long history, Dalian has not been in the center of Chinese civilization and has no advantage in culture and art compared to cities with a long history in China, where a large proportion of ICH items originate from daily life. But the proportion of folk literature, Chinese opera and traditional drama is relatively low, especially when comparing with the proportion of items at Liaoning province and national level. However, as a sub-provincial city, relying on the existing local cultural resources and distinctive local cultural characteristics, Dalian actively promotes cultural construction. With the opportunity of being selected as a candidate city for the "East Asian Cultural Capital" in 2024, Dalian has created opportunities for the development and innovation of ICH programs in the areas of cultural preservation, public cultural services and facilities, and the integration of culture and tourism.

## 6 Conclusion

The analysis of the characteristics of Dalian's ICH programs can provide a reference for ICH research with an city perspective. The relationship between local ICH and history, geography and contemporary development is explored on the basis of which strategies for sustainable cultural development can be explored from the perspective of ICH in the future. This paper takes the ICH of a single city as the object of study, which is limited by local objective factors and can only provide reference and comparison, and its results may not be generalized to other cities in China or even around the world. The research methodology is based on macro-analysis, and there is no in-depth exploration of specific representative items, which will be the direction of improvement afterwards.

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