

Video Content Marketing of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Products Based on the SICAS Model

Liwen Liao, Xintong Li, Guansu Wang *

School of Humanities, Zhuhai College of Science and Technology, Zhuhai 519041, China

Abstract: At present, the cultural inheritance and marketization of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) products face challenges such as audience discontinuity and homogenized communication. The rise of short-video platforms has provided new opportunities for revitalizing ICH. Drawing on the SICAS user behavior model (Sense–Interest–Connect–Action–Share), this study employs a questionnaire survey and quantitative analysis. Using SPSS 26.0, sharing behavior data were collected from 300 users who had viewed ICH short videos to explore the mechanisms and optimization paths of short-video content marketing for ICH products. For the first time, this research integrates user behavior data with a communication path model to systematically validate the viral dissemination mechanism of ICH short-video marketing. It proposes a new theoretical framework in which experiential perception drives cultural value transfer, offering a quantitative analytical approach to the digital communication of ICH. The findings show that users' perceptual experiences and interactive behaviors exert significant influence on information-sharing activities. Cultural perception of ICH short videos positively affects sharing behavior; the degree of interest-based interaction generates sustained motivational effects on sharing by fostering emotional resonance and knowledge-seeking incentives. Furthermore, the strength of social connections and the efficiency of action conversion jointly form a dual-core driving model for sharing intention: online community interactions enhance a sense of belonging that reinforces willingness to disseminate, while offline practical engagement strengthens proactive dissemination through behavioral commitment. This study provides a theoretical framework for ICH digital communication and offers data-driven strategic support for content marketing practices.

Keywords: SICAS model; Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) products; Short-video marketing; User behavior analysis.

1. Introduction

In the current wave of digital transformation, the inheritance and development of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) face both unprecedented challenges and opportunities. On one hand, globalization and modernization have brought about audience discontinuity, limited dissemination channels, and homogenized content, leading to the gradual contraction of the living space for traditional crafts. On the other hand, the explosive growth of short-video platforms has opened up a new “digital stage” for revitalizing ICH. According to the 2024 China ICH Short Video Development Report, annual views of ICH-related short videos in China have exceeded 50 billion, with users spending an average of more than 30 minutes per day watching such content. Initiatives such as Douyin's “ICH Partners,” Kuaishou's “ICH Encyclopedia,” Bilibili's ICH-themed content creators, and Xiaohongshu's ICH promotional campaigns all illustrate the high level of engagement of younger audiences, confirming that short videos have become one of the primary gateways for younger generations to encounter ICH.

Nevertheless, a common phenomenon in ICH short-video communication is the “disconnection between traffic and value.” For instance, short videos on Su embroidery often focus narrowly on stitching techniques. Although such content may initially gain high viewership, the lack of cultural interpretation soon leads to aesthetic fatigue, declining traffic, and weak cultural identity among younger audiences, which hinders both heritage transmission and market development. A similar issue can be seen in Mongolian long-song short videos, where most clips merely record performances without interactive or cultural explanation. As a result, viewers find it difficult to engage deeply, interest wanes, and younger

generations show limited attention, making it difficult to expand the inheritor base. These cases reflect a broader problem: traffic generated by ICH short videos is often not transformed into cultural value, thereby restricting the long-term sustainability and contemporary vitality of ICH. Thus, building an effective chain that links “cultural communication–emotional resonance–behavioral conversion” has become an urgent challenge.

The SICAS model—Sense, Interest, Connect, Action, and Share—offers a cutting-edge framework for analyzing user behavior in digital environments. It moves beyond the linear logic of traditional marketing models by emphasizing users' active participation and viral dissemination in digital spaces. Applying the SICAS model to ICH short-video marketing not only breaks away from conventional one-way communication perspectives but also precisely depicts the dynamic psychological pathway from “content exposure” to “sharing.” This provides both a new analytical tool for understanding user engagement trajectories and a scientific framework for translating traditional culture into contemporary communication, thereby facilitating a complete chain of “perception–conversion” tailored to ICH dissemination.

This study adopts a questionnaire survey and quantitative analysis, using SPSS 26.0 to examine sharing behavior data from 300 users who had watched ICH short videos. It systematically verifies the impact mechanisms of each stage of the SICAS model on user sharing behavior. By doing so, it seeks to provide a three-dimensional solution that combines theoretical modeling, empirical data, and practical pathways, promoting the transformation of ICH from mere “cultural display” to “value co-creation.” Specifically, the study explores the mechanisms of short-video content marketing for ICH products—defined here as goods or services that embody

traditional crafts, cultural meanings, and aesthetic values. These products, which include traditional handicrafts and folk cultural items, encapsulate historical memory, cultural continuity, and artisanal essence, serving as vital carriers of traditional culture in modern society. While their unique cultural and artisanal attributes make them naturally appealing in short-video marketing, they also face the challenge of adapting to new communication contexts and

reaching broader audiences. By situating ICH short-video marketing within the SICAS framework, this research aims to uncover both the mechanisms and optimization paths for enhancing the cultural transmission and commercialization of ICH in the digital age.

2. Literature Review

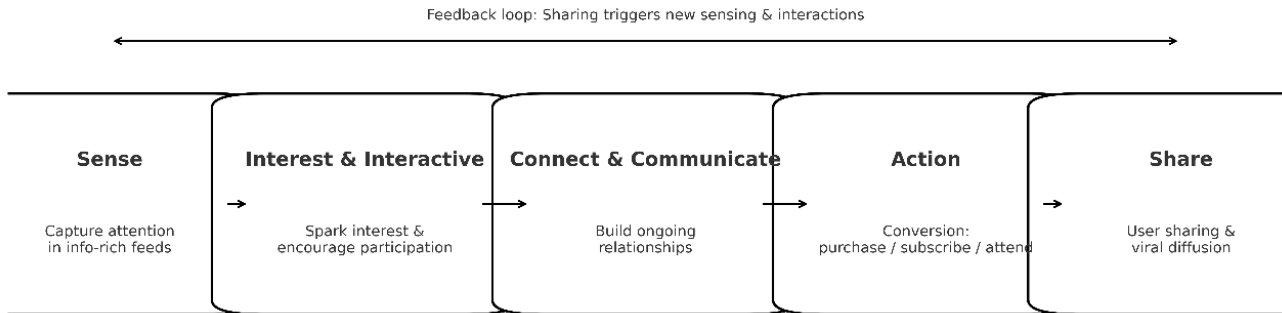


Figure 1. SICAS Model Flowchart

The SICAS model, proposed by the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) in 2011, was developed to explain new patterns of consumer behavior in the digital age. It consists of five sequential stages: Sense, Interest & Interactive, Connect & Communicate, Action, and Share. As a core framework for analyzing user behavior in digital environments, the SICAS model surpasses the limitations of the traditional AIDMA model (Attention–Interest–Desire–Memory–Action) formulated by American advertising scholar E. S. Lewis in 1898. Unlike AIDMA’s one-way communication logic, SICAS emphasizes users’ active participation, interactivity, and viral sharing in the Internet era. In this model, “Sense” highlights the ability to capture users’ attention amidst an information-saturated environment; “Interest & Interactive” transforms passive reception into active engagement; “Connect & Communicate” fosters long-term relationships between brands and users; “Action” facilitates behavioral conversion such as purchasing or participation; and “Share” encourages viral dissemination. These stages are interlinked, forming a dynamic and cyclical chain of user behavior. Applying this model to ICH short-video communication makes it possible to examine the pathway from cultural content exposure to value transformation.

For instance, in the Sense stage, attention-grabbing visual or auditory stimuli can help ICH short videos stand out from the flood of digital information. A 4K video showcasing the intricate textures of traditional embroidery or immersive audio reproducing the sound of ancient instruments can immediately draw users’ attention. In the Interest & Interactive stage, users shift from passive viewers to active participants, as when an ICH brand launches a campaign like “Guess the crafting process of this artifact,” encouraging comment-based interaction and knowledge exchange. At the Connect & Communicate stage, brands and users develop long-term relationships through sustained exchanges—for example, by building social media communities that share historical narratives and craft insights while also collecting user feedback. The Action stage translates positive impressions into concrete outcomes such as purchases, subscriptions, or participation in cultural events, aided by mechanisms like one-click purchases or limited-edition activities. Finally, in the Share stage, users voluntarily disseminate their experiences when these exceed expectations,

often motivated by identity expression or social recognition. Incentives such as reward points or exclusive gifts can further amplify sharing behavior, creating a virtuous cycle of “sharing–new sensing–renewed interaction” that drives viral communication.

Compared to AIDMA’s one-way “brand-to-user” flow of information, SICAS emphasizes “user co-creation of content.” For example, on the Douyin account of Yao Jianping, a national-level Su embroidery inheritor, users ask questions via bullet comments, such as “How is the silk thread dyed?” In response, the brand produces a dedicated explanatory video, forming a two-way chain of “user demand–content production–secondary interaction.” This not only enhances user relevance but also transforms users into active “nodes of social dissemination,” rather than mere endpoints of consumption. In the context of short-video platforms, where users encounter over 500 content items per day, SICAS aligns with algorithm-driven distribution: indicators such as viewing duration, comment keywords, and interaction levels signal content quality, boosting visibility within platform traffic pools.

Short-video content marketing for ICH products relies on several key elements: high-quality content creation, interactive user experiences, precise dissemination channels, and data-driven optimization. High-quality content must highlight the cultural stories and unique craftsmanship behind ICH products to capture users’ attention. Interactive features such as comments, likes, and shares enhance participation and activate social diffusion. Precision targeting ensures that content reaches the intended audience by leveraging algorithmic distribution. Data-driven optimization then evaluates outcomes and refines strategies. These components work synergistically, building an ecosystem of short-video marketing that aligns closely with the SICAS framework.

By integrating the SICAS model into the marketing of ICH short videos, cultural dissemination can more effectively adapt to the dynamics of the digital era, strengthen user engagement, and expand cultural influence. This not only facilitates the preservation of cultural essence but also ensures market-oriented transformation, supporting the goal of “living heritage” and innovative development. The model thus offers both a theoretical pathway and a practical mechanism for embedding ICH into the digital ecosystem while balancing cultural continuity and contemporary

relevance.

Based on the theoretical foundations of the SICAS model, this study develops the following hypotheses to guide empirical analysis:

H1: Users' level of perception (Sense) of ICH short videos positively influences their sharing behavior (Share).

H2: Interest and interactive participation positively influence users' motivation to share (Share).

H3: The strength of connection and communication positively influences users' willingness to share (Share).

H4: Action-related behaviors positively influence users' willingness to share (Share).

3. Research Methodology

This study employed a questionnaire survey method. Based on the five stages of the SICAS model—Sense, Interest & Interactive, Connect & Communicate, Action, and Share—variables were designed and operationalized. Questionnaires were distributed through online social media platforms such as WeChat Moments. To ensure validity and reliability, the measurement items were adapted from established domestic and international scales. Adjustments were made to reflect the development of short-video platforms and the characteristics of ICH content marketing. A pilot test was conducted on a small sample, and based on the results, reliability and validity checks were performed. Items failing to meet reliability standards were removed or refined, yielding the final version of the questionnaire.

A five-point Likert scale was adopted, where 1 represented “strongly disagree” and 5 represented “strongly agree,” with higher values indicating stronger agreement. The questionnaire was targeted at audiences of ICH short videos and distributed via social media platforms such as WeChat Moments. A total of 312 questionnaires were distributed, of which 300 valid responses were returned, resulting in an effective response rate of 96.15%. Descriptive statistics for the sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Category	Sample Size	Percentage
Gender	Male	107	35.70%
	Female	193	64.30%
Age	Under 18	28	9.30%
	18-25	169	56.30%
	26-35	43	14.30%
	36-45	34	11.30%
	46 and above	26	8.70%
Weekly Viewing Frequency	≤ 1 time	74	24.70%
	2–3 times	109	36.30%
	4-5 times	45	15.00%
	≥ 6 times	72	24.00%

Descriptive analysis shows that among the 300 respondents, 107 were male (35.7%) and 193 were female (64.3%), indicating a higher female representation in the sample. In terms of age distribution, the largest group was respondents aged 18–25 years (56.3%), followed by 26–35 years (14.3%) and 36–45 years (11.3%). Those under 18 accounted for 9.3%, while respondents aged 46 and above accounted for 8.7%. This indicates that the majority of participants were

concentrated in the 18–25 age group, which represents the primary audience for ICH short videos on Douyin.

Regarding viewing frequency, 36.3% of respondents reported watching ICH-related short videos 2–3 times per week, followed by 24.7% who watched less than once per week, 24.0% who watched more than six times per week, and 15.0% who watched 4–5 times per week. These statistics suggest that the majority of respondents engage with ICH short-video content on Douyin on a weekly basis, with relatively high levels of viewing frequency among young audiences.

4. Analysis and Results

(1) Reliability Analysis

SPSS 26.0 software was used to conduct a reliability test on the collected data. As shown in Table 2, the overall Cronbach's α of the questionnaire was 0.904, and the Cronbach's α values of all variables were greater than 0.7. This indicates that the latent variables of the questionnaire demonstrated good internal consistency reliability.

Table 2. Cronbach's α Coefficients

Variable	Items	Cronbach's α
Sense	6	0.881
Interest & Interactive	6	0.864
Connect & Communicate	6	0.836
Action	6	0.879
Share	6	0.713

(2) Validity Testing

To test validity, this study employed a combination of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to comprehensively evaluate the structural validity of the scale.

The results of the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity are shown in Table 3. The KMO value was 0.909 (> 0.8), and Bartlett's test produced an approximate chi-square of 4166.000 ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), indicating that the data were suitable for factor analysis. Principal component analysis with varimax rotation was conducted, and five factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were extracted, with a cumulative variance explanation rate of 72.3%, suggesting strong explanatory power of the factor structure.

The rotated component matrix (see Table 4) shows that all items loaded strongly (> 0.6) on their intended factors, with no significant cross-loadings (all cross-loadings < 0.4). This demonstrates good discriminant validity. For instance, Sense (SP1–SP6) loaded between 0.657 and 0.786 on Factor 3, while Interest & Interactive (IP1–IP6) loaded between 0.620 and 0.778 on Factor 4, consistent with the theoretical framework of the five-stage SICAS model.

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Test	Value
KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.909
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. $\chi^2 = 4166.000$, $df = 435$, $p = 0.000$

Table 4. Rotated Component Matrix

Variable	Item	Components				
		1	2	3	4	5
Action	AP1	0.797				
	AP2	0.783				
	AP3	0.747				
	AP4	0.666				
	AP5	0.721				
	AP6	0.659				
Share	SHP1		0.634			
	SHP2		0.632			
	SHP3		0.643			
	SHP4		0.707			
	SHP5		0.591			
	SHP6		0.638			
Sense	SP1			0.657		
	SP2			0.741		
	SP3			0.768		
	SP4			0.786		
	SP5			0.727		
	SP6			0.748		
Interest & Interactive	IP1				0.735	
	IP2				0.645	
	IP3				0.62	
	IP4				0.683	
	IP5				0.778	
	IP6				0.715	
Connect & Communicate	CP1					0.634
	CP2					0.633
	CP3					0.593
	CP4					0.708
	CP5					0.616
	CP6					0.647

5. Conclusion

This study focused on short-video content marketing of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) products within the framework of the SICAS model, analyzing in depth the mechanisms of ICH communication and marketing on digital platforms. Several important theoretical and practical findings emerged. The results of hypothesis testing confirmed support for H1 through H4: users' perceptual experience, interest and interactive participation, strength of connection and communication, and action-related behaviors all exert significant positive effects on their willingness to share. This validates the applicability of the SICAS model to the dissemination of ICH in digital environments. Its dynamic cyclical mechanism clearly illustrates the transformation pathway from cultural perception to social viral diffusion. In the context of short videos, information dissemination is no longer unidirectional; rather, it is an iterative process of interaction and mutual influence between users and brands, and among users themselves. Deep user engagement and emotional resonance generate social capital through sharing, which becomes the core driving force behind viral dissemination of ICH products. Users' replication of heritage techniques, reinterpretation of cultural symbols, and creative retelling of artisans' stories substantially strengthen the diffusion of ICH products on social media. However, challenges remain: discrepancies between the symbolic

hierarchies of ICH and platform algorithmic logic restrict access to high-quality content, while the visual translation of techniques tends to become homogenized, resulting in aesthetic fatigue and the attenuation of long-tail effects.

To address these limitations, several optimization strategies are proposed. Future studies may incorporate social network analysis to explore the structural dynamics of short-video dissemination and enhance our understanding of ICH communication networks. On the theoretical front, integrating cultural adaptation theory could help construct a "cultural discount compensation model" for digital ICH communication, quantifying the threshold for modern translation of traditional elements and providing stronger theoretical foundations. In terms of technological empowerment, advances in multimodal language models may facilitate the construction of ICH knowledge graphs, enabling more intelligent and adaptive content production and distribution.

In summary, this research provides both theoretical contributions and practical implications. Theoretically, it extends the explanatory scope of the SICAS model into the field of cultural heritage digitalization, enriching communication theory. Practically, it offers ICH institutions a data-driven, context-adaptive, and value co-creation methodology for short-video marketing, helping to bridge the structural gap between cultural dissemination and commercial transformation. This has the potential to promote

the integration of cultural preservation with economic development. Looking ahead, the continued advancement of digital technologies may enable new explorations of value circulation models for ICH digital assets within distributed social networks, fostering a new paradigm of cultural inheritance in the digital era and opening innovative pathways for the protection and sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage.

References

- [1] Liu, L. (2024). Optimization of time-honored brand marketing strategies based on the SICAS model. *Time-honored Brand Marketing*, (3), 3–5. [in Chinese]
- [2] Pan, L., & Lu, H. (2020). From resonance to sharing: A new interpretation of Chinese traditional culture communication on Douyin. *Media*, (3), 88–90. [in Chinese]
- [3] Zhang, C. (2022). Communication strategies of intangible cultural heritage tourism short videos based on the SIPS model: A case study of Douyin. *Hebei Enterprise*, (7), 121–123. [in Chinese]
- [4] Fu, H., & Zhang, X. (2023). Communication characteristics and development strategies of traditional culture short videos on Douyin: A case study of intangible cultural heritage short videos by Peng Chuanming. *Beijing Cultural Creativity*, (1), 79–84. [in Chinese]
- [5] Ma, F. (2023). Research on agricultural product livestreaming marketing strategies based on the SICAS model. *China Business Review*, (19), 39–42. [in Chinese]
- [6] Bao, Y., & Wang, W. (2019). Analysis of the current situation and optimization path of ICH on Douyin. *Film Review*, (14), 110–112. [in Chinese]
- [7] Yang, T. (2023). Digital presentation and communication strategies of Su embroidery intangible cultural heritage. *Screen Printing*, (20), 100–102. [in Chinese]
- [8] Mei, N., & Chen, X. (2019). A study on the modes of intangible cultural heritage dissemination via Douyin short videos. *News Front*, (5), 28–29. [in Chinese]
- [9] Hou, J. (2021). How to enhance brand competitiveness in the era of integrated media. *China Broadcasting*, (3), 51–53. [in Chinese]