

Chapter 9

Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Digitalization Process: The Case of Turkey

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ABSTRACT

This chapter will initially introduce the concept of intangible cultural heritage. After establishing the relationship between intangible cultural heritage and tourism, changes in intangible cultural heritage components will be expressed through the digitization and COVID-19 processes. “Digital intangible cultural heritage,” “digital cultural heritage,” “digital safeguarding” concepts will be described because they attracted great attention during this time. Additionally, the other aspect of the research is the use of digital applications to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage. In the final part, the pilot projects concerning the safeguarding and promoting the intangible cultural heritage implemented by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey will be discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Oral traditions and expressions, behaviors relating to nature and the universe, performing arts and crafts traditions are all examples of intangible cultural heritage. A vital role is played by strategies and policies for preserving intangible cultural heritage and transferring it to future generations. The first chapter of the book will explain world heritage and intangible cultural heritage, followed by a discussion of the relationship between intangible cultural heritage and tourism. Other key issues covered in the book chapter include explaining the basic dynamics of the Covid-19 process and the digitalized intangible cultural heritage process, as well as reporting on the role of mobile applications and platforms in the protection of intangible cultural heritage during the digitalization process. The book chapter will conclude with an overview of digital application projects that have been done in Turkey in recent years to protect intangible cultural heritage.

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It has been shown that, as a direct consequence of the digitalization process, interest in intangible cultural heritage has started to wane, and that, as a result of modern people's habits of individualization and urbanization, they have not made sufficient efforts to protect and transfer intangible cultural heritage to future generations. Promotion and transmission of intangible cultural heritage elements guided by a sustainable tourism approach that considers the balance of protection and usage will help to raise awareness of these qualities.

For a period, access to intangible cultural heritage materials was curtailed as part of the Covid 19 process, making concerts, events, folk culture practices, and festivals impossible to organize. Barriers to accessing intangible cultural assets have been attempted to be overcome by digitalization through projects such as online events hosted by UNESCO and other international organizations. As a result, it is important to remember that, thanks to digitalization, intangible cultural material is accessible, albeit limited, during the epidemic.

In terms of protecting intangible cultural heritage elements in Turkey's digitalization process, it's worth noting that, while some digital projects have been completed in terms of storing data on digital platforms and introducing cultural heritage elements, digital transformation has not yet been fully realized. In this context, the book part discussed the types of digital projects that were implemented, as well as the menus and features of online and mobile digital projects.

BACKGROUND

World Heritage and Intangible Cultural Heritage

In the most basic sense, the values that people seek to pass on to future generations are referred to as heritage. Folk dances, oral traditions, monumental structures, archaeological sites, material culture and ideology structure are some of these values. Heritage is a fundamental element that reflects the depth of cultural expressions and creates cultural identity and distinctiveness between generations (Deacon et al., 2004). Heritage encompasses a variety of cultural forms that encapsulate the worth of a community's social, historical, or cultural dimensions (Throsby, 1997). In the Deschambault Declaration adopted in 1982 (ICOMOS Canada (Quebec)), the concept of heritage has been outlined as follows:

All of the natural and human-made things that make up the environment we live in are considered heritage. Heritage refers to the property and transferable wealth of the community that make a contribution to our recognition and participation (Icomos Canada, 1982)

In the historical process, people's interest in heritage items such as objects and relics from the past has continued to grow. Ashworth (1994) emphasizes that commodifying heritage values and turning them into modern consumption products that will satisfy people have been potent in the rise in this interest. In addition, it is asserted that concepts such as marketable product, heritage product, heritage consumer emerged in this context.

On the other hand, cultural heritage means all tangible and intangible assets that have survived from the past and are described as a reflection of people's values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions that are constantly changing without being in a bond of ownership. Cultural heritage refers to all aspects of the

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