

The Role of Digital Media in Promoting and Preserving the Cultural Values of the Central Highlands Gong Songs

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Abstract

In the context of strong development of science and technology, the emergence of more and more forms of communication has had a great impact on all areas of human activities and life, especially in the field of preserving and promoting cultural values. Researching the role of digital communication in preserving and promoting the cultural values of gongs is one of the research issues that has been focused on, concerned and conducted a lot in recent times. This article aims to analyze the roles of digital media in the preservation of Gong Chieng cultural heritage in the context of rapid global digital transformation. The main research method is to synthesize documents and analyze some of the main roles of digital traditions. Initial findings show that digital technology is contributing positively to the management and preservation of cultural heritage in general and Gong Chieng culture in particular - not only in terms of data storage but also by expanding the accessibility, interaction and dissemination of Gong Chieng cultural values to the public. Digital media helps the community connect and educate human values to many generations. However, digital media in the process of preserving Gong culture still faces many challenges in quality management, content with online publications, copyright, etc.

Keywords: Role, digital media, gong culture, preservation, Gong

1. Introduction:

Vietnam currently has over 73 million internet users, with approximately 70 million people active on popular social networking platforms such as Facebook, Zalo, and TikTok (Ministry of Information and Communications, 2024). This pervasive development of digital technology is not only transforming how people communicate and share information but is also having a profound impact on cultural values, including the unique Gong culture.

The urgent need for preservation was underscored when, on November 25, 2005, the Central Highlands Gong Cultural Space of Vietnam was recognized by UNESCO as a "Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity" (Pham Quang Nghi, 2006). This international recognition created an inevitable impetus for the promotion, preservation, and revitalization of this intangible heritage at all levels. In response, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism issued significant directives for the Central Highlands provinces to implement a project focused on preserving the Gong cultural space.

Key traditional solutions outlined in this project include: promoting awareness among the populace, conducting heritage inventory in villages, honoring and rewarding gong artisans, training youth gong teams, and reviving traditional rituals and festivals in combination with community tourism development.

However, the national strategy emphasizes a dual approach: The Party and the State affirm the importance of "developing an advanced Vietnamese culture imbued with national identity, while

utilizing technology and media to preserve traditional cultural values" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021).

Digital platforms, therefore, are not merely connecting tools; they create a new environment that necessitates the adaptation and adjustment of traditional cultural practices. According to the theory of cultural change, culture constantly fluctuates and adapts to social development, with digital media acting as a significant factor driving this process. While preservation efforts have traditionally focused on physical and community-based solutions, the immense reach and transformative power of digital media remain a critical, yet not fully integrated, component of the national strategy. Therefore, this article addresses the gap by focusing on analyzing the precise role of digital media in preserving and promoting Gong culture, utilizing a synthesis of evidence from various sources. From this analysis, the study aims to propose effective strategies to preserve and promote the Vietnamese Gong cultural values within the context of the strongly developing digital media landscape.

2. Research methods

The research primarily adopts a qualitative approach centered on document synthesis and content analysis. This method involves systematically reviewing, synthesizing, and interpreting existing literature, official documents, policy statements, and academic research relevant to digital media, cultural preservation, and the Vietnamese Gong culture. The analysis aims to establish the theoretical basis for understanding the transformative role of digital platforms in promoting and preserving this intangible heritage. The study is grounded in theories of cultural change and adaptation, which posit that culture is a dynamic entity constantly fluctuating and adapting to social development. Digital media is analyzed as a principal driver of this change, necessitating the adjustment of traditional cultural preservation models.

2.1 Concept of Digital Communication

Digital communication is broadly defined as the process of transmitting information, data, ideas, and emotions through digital platforms and technologies. This process involves encoding various forms of data (text, images, audio, video) into digital signals for effective transmission across digital media, such as the Internet, mobile networks, and telecommunication systems (Baran & Davis, 2020). An alternate perspective highlights that digital media encompasses the process of producing, transmitting, and sharing information through digital means, fundamentally distinguishing it from traditional media forms (print, television, radio) (Ministry of Science and Technology, 2024). From a technical standpoint, digital communication is the implementation or use of digital technologies for communication between humans and electronic devices. Epitech (n.d.) focuses on the technical definition: 'the transmission of data or information using digital signals over a point-to-point (P2P) channel.' More comprehensively, Tagg (2015) defines digital communication as the interaction between humans mediated by digital communication technology. This view shifts the focus from mere content creation to interaction, networking, and relationship building. It is a human process determined by both technology and practice, taking place across global networks like the Internet and mobile communication systems (GSM, CDMA). Digital Media Platforms utilized for this communication include websites, web pages, Email, SMS, MMS, mobile applications, online radio and television, blogs, social networks (TikTok, Facebook, Instagram), and Augmented Reality technologies. Effective digital communication requires digital skills to enable users to interact proficiently with these technologies and content (Abubakar Jibril, 2023).

2.2 Concept of Gong Culture

The Central Highlands Gong Culture Space is fundamentally a village cultural space—a spatial entity where the cultural values of the community are created, practiced, and sustained, with the unique Gong art being the most prominent element. This perspective is critical, implying that the

preservation of this cultural space, which UNESCO recognized as an intangible heritage of humanity, must occur within the village context, and not merely on a stage, where the performance is considered only a kind of 'relic' (Nguyen Ngoc, 2010). The Gong culture is more than just a spiritual sound or an indispensable part of the life of the Central Highlands ethnic groups; it encompasses a comprehensive cultural space. This space integrates various art forms, including visual arts, performing arts, oral literature, culinary arts, and folk games, making it both distinct within its own community and unique compared to other civilizations.

2.3 Some Theories Used to Study the Role of Digital Media

Network Society Theory

Sociologist Manuel Castells (2000) developed the Network Society Theory, which posits that modern society is being fundamentally restructured based on information networks, primarily facilitated by digital communication technology. Castells argues that power in contemporary society is no longer concentrated solely in traditional institutions but is instead dispersed through global networks. Digital communication serves as the essential backbone of these networks, enabling information, resources, and power to flow across geographical borders at unprecedented speeds. He asserts that "information technology is the fundamental tool for social transformation." Accordingly, digital media is not merely viewed as a tool but as a new environment where economic, political, and social activities take place. This environment actively promotes the formation of "social networks" and "virtual communities," thereby fundamentally altering the nature of human relationships (Castells, 2000). The platforms of digital media, such as Facebook, Instagram, and augmented reality, are the practical spaces where this network society operates.

Social Presence and Media Richness Theory

The concept of Social Presence Theory, developed by Short, Williams, and Christie (1976), posits that different media possess varying degrees of "social presence," defined as the extent to which the presence of others is perceived by communicators. Digital communication exists across a spectrum, ranging from low social presence, such as simple text messaging, to high social presence, like video calling. A video call (e.g., Skype, Zoom) is considered much richer than an email or text message because it permits the simultaneous transmission of both body language and vocal inflection. Therefore, digital communication is not a monolithic entity; rather, it is a diverse ecosystem of tools, each offering different levels of "richness." The key to achieving high communication effectiveness lies in selecting the appropriate digital tool that aligns with the specific communication purpose (Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976).

Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Diffusion of Innovations Theory, proposed by Everett Rogers (1962), explains the mechanism by which ideas and technologies, including digital media, spread within a social system. Rogers argues that the adoption of an innovation is a process that progresses through five stages: awareness, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation (Rogers, 2003). The speed of diffusion is critically dependent on five attributes of the innovation: its relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. Digital media serves as an exceptionally effective channel for dissemination. Platforms such as social media, blogs, and online videos enable new ideas and technologies (e.g., a new mobile application or a social trend) to spread at rapid speeds. Innovators and early adopters strategically utilize digital media to introduce and promote these innovations to a broader audience (Rogers, 2003).

3. The Role of Digital Media in Preserving and Promoting Gong Culture

Gongs have been inextricably linked to the lives of the people of the Central Highlands for thousands of years. Over the decades, in a commitment to preserving and promoting the traditional

culture of ethnic groups, local authorities across the Central Highlands provinces have initiated numerous projects. These include comprehensive efforts to preserve and promote the gong culture, implement projects for typical traditional cultural festivals, and organize gong cultural festivals—all designed to instill pride in the cultural traditions of the local ethnic minorities. The official recognition of the Central Highlands Gong Culture Space as an oral masterpiece and intangible cultural heritage of humanity by UNESCO has conferred not only immense pride but also a great responsibility: that of protecting, preserving, promoting, and extensively spreading the value of the Central Highlands gong to succeeding generations and to the wider national and international public. Historically, many traditional forms of propaganda have been employed across media and information channels to introduce and promote this heritage. These efforts include compiling and editing previously published documents into books, prioritizing the dissemination of news, articles, and images related to the cultural values of gongs via traditional press agencies, and collecting, recording, transcribing, and publishing original copies of traditional gong sets belonging to local ethnic groups. The current challenge is to leverage the unique capabilities of digital media to amplify these traditional efforts.

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST) has approved Decision 3611/QĐ-BVHTTDL on the industry's digital transformation program until 2025, with a vision to 2030. This program sets the ambitious goal of developing e-Government, moving toward a digital government by "Fundamentally and comprehensively innovating the management and operation activities of the MCST and aiming to improve the quality of service to people and businesses to meet the requirements of innovation, serving the cause of socio-economic development." Furthermore, the digital transformation program aims to construct a digital society by "Building and developing digital culture, contributing to forming a generation of digital citizens for the future," while also implementing digital transformation across various cultural industry areas to foster the digital economy (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2022).

In the heritage sector specifically, the Program on Digitalization of Vietnamese Cultural Heritage for the period 2021-2030 was approved under Prime Minister's Decision No. 2026/QĐ-TTg on December 2, 2021. The program's core objective is to build a national database system on cultural heritage on a unified digital technology platform. This system is designed to serve the crucial functions of archiving, managing, researching, preserving, exploiting, and promoting heritage, ultimately supporting sustainable tourism development. It is also mandated to integrate into the e-Government architecture framework and the Digitalized Vietnamese Knowledge System, thereby promoting digital transformation and ensuring effective service delivery to the community anytime and anywhere.

The specific goals outlined for the 2021–2030 period is highly comprehensive: 100% of tangible and intangible cultural heritages and documentary heritages recognized by UNESCO must be digitized and applied on digital platforms; similarly, 100% of special national relics and 100% of national treasures and heritages in the National Intangible Cultural Heritage List are targeted for digitization and digital application. Priority is also given to digitizing national relics, artifacts, and collections at museums and relic management boards based on social needs. Crucially, 100% of professionals in the cultural heritage sector are required to be trained, retrained, and updated with digital transformation knowledge and skills.

These significant decisions and programs clearly underscore the policies of the Party and Government in prioritizing technology for the preservation of typical cultural values, including the Gong culture. Gong culture is primarily practiced in Central Highlands provinces like Gia Lai and Kon Tum. In these provinces, traditional public awareness and mobilization efforts, encouraging people's participation, have been carried out through multiple forms: propaganda via billboards, posters, and banners; dissemination through radio, television, and press channels; announcements during village and hamlet meetings; mobile propaganda activities at the grassroots level; and the organization of cultural activities and exchanges. Additionally, promotional work is often integrated

into the restoration of traditional ceremonies and festivals, as well as activities honoring artisans with outstanding contributions, all aimed at creating a widespread impact within the community.

However, new forms of promotion utilizing digital platforms such as social networks (Facebook, Zalo, Instagram) are still underutilized. Prof. Dr. Nguyen Chi Ben, former Director of the Vietnam National Institute of Culture and Arts, emphasized the necessity of applying the achievements of the information technology revolution to protect and promote the Central Highlands Gong cultural space. He suggested a clear orientation: the creation of 3D e-books using bilingual formats, such as Ede–French (English) or Jrai–French, for widespread use in schools and tourism (Bich Thuy, 2018).

In recent years, state agencies and organizations have initiated several projects to produce high-quality videos, short clips, documentaries, and photographs for introducing gongs. For instance, the Department of Cultural Heritage has implemented a model for "connecting gong cultural heritage" in tourist itineraries. This project instructs local people and artisans to use "photovoice" (using photos to tell stories) and to film videos to actively promote their culture. One such effort successfully collected 60 videos and 100 images documenting the cultural narratives of the community (Department of Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism).

Gong festivals and performances are also now frequently publicized across major social media platforms, including Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok. While specific metrics for views or interactions for each event are not always recorded, the visible use of hashtags related to "Central Highlands Gong" indicates substantial interest from the online community. Furthermore, articles and online reports on reputable national newspapers, such as *Nhan Dan Newspaper* and *People's Army Newspaper*, and the websites of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, regularly feature information, images, and videos about gong culture, thus consistently spreading the heritage values to a broader public.

Reports confirm that the application of digital technology, particularly through videos and images, has been instrumental in attracting young people's interest in *Gong Chieng*. Instead of relying solely on traditional oral methods, young generations can now access the *Gong Chieng* heritage through clips on YouTube or TikTok featuring artisans performing gong pieces. This accessibility contributes significantly to both the preservation and intergenerational transmission of the heritage. Digital media also plays a crucial role in promoting gong festivals and community-based tours. The Vietnam National Administration of Tourism has effectively utilized digital media to introduce tourism products linked to gong heritage, successfully encouraging tourists to seek in-person experiences. While specific figures correlating digital media use with increased tourist numbers may be unavailable, the growing visibility and popularity of these tourism programs clearly attest to the effectiveness of digital promotion.

Personal and Social Relationships

Digital media significantly assists in connecting and maintaining relationships within the Gong cultural space. According to the Vietnam Department of Cultural Heritage, the Central Highlands Gong Cultural Space is a unique intangible cultural heritage, geographically distributed across five Central Highlands provinces: Kon Tum, Gia Lai, Dak Lak, Dak Nong, and Lam Dong. The creators and practitioners of this culture are the indigenous ethnic communities, including the Ede, J'rai, Bahnar, M'nong, Ma, and Lac. Each community contributes its own nuances, resulting in the immense diversity and richness of the cultural space. The structure of this cultural space comprises many closely linked elements: the gong musical instruments themselves, the musical pieces performed, the skilled artisans, and the traditional rituals and festivals where gongs are integral, such as the New Rice Celebration Ceremony and the Water Wharf Worship Ceremony. The gongs are regarded as the spiritual strength and symbol of the entire community in their interaction with nature and society, serving simultaneously as the connecting factor between the community's past, present, and future. Gong culture and music are both the creative results and the common property

of these ethnic communities, existing as an indispensable element in the life of each individual and throughout every historical stage of community development. Since Gong cultural activities are inherently communal, attracting and emphasizing the participation of all members, digital communication plays a crucial role by connecting these ethnic communities for performing, sharing cultural values, and facilitating strong cooperation from the preparation phase through to the results of the performance.

Digital media enables individuals to connect and maintain contact with friends, family, and colleagues irrespective of their physical location. Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, or Zalo, facilitate the rapid sharing of personal lives, emotions, and information. Crucially, digital media assists artisans and elders in teaching gong culture to the younger generation in a more visual and engaging manner. Instead of being limited to traditional oral transmission, young people can now access instructional videos, view recorded gong performances, and learn directly through these platforms. Furthermore, digital platforms like Facebook and YouTube, or specific Zalo chat groups, allow gong enthusiasts, whether situated in the Central Highlands or distributed globally, to connect with one another. They can exchange specialized knowledge, share documents, and organize online meetings, thereby fostering a common cultural community. Finally, digital media permits artisans in different villages to connect and learn from each other, transcending the traditional limitations of single-village instruction. This connectivity is instrumental in the wider dissemination of the gong repertoire and diverse regional performance styles.

Archiving and Preserving Cultural Heritage through Digitization

Digital media is also an effective tool for storing and preserving cultural heritage. Projects focused on digitizing historical documents, documentary films, traditional music, and cultural books have provided younger generations with easier access to the nation's rich cultural treasures. Artworks, traditional festivals, and intangible cultural values are now being stored in digital form, creating a valuable, accessible archive for the public to study at any time.

Digital videos, images, and audio recordings are powerful instruments for preserving specific elements of gong culture, including the songs, customs, and rituals. This creates a vast database that can be researched and learned by future generations, even in the absence of direct, in-person access. According to a project summary report by the Department of Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (2021), a pilot project successfully digitized many videos and images. These photographs documented the cultural narratives of the Ede community, contributing foundational material to the national heritage database. Although this is just a modest initial number, it powerfully demonstrates the significant potential of digitization.

Furthermore, digital media enables the creation of huge, secure data repositories, preserving gong songs, rituals, and stories in digital form both safely and permanently. Beyond domestic preservation, digital media possesses the potential to introduce gong culture to audiences around the world, significantly promoting international recognition and respect for this unique heritage. The application of digital technology in cultural heritage brings many significant advantages and benefits. For instance, smart applications can be used to display heritage elements in a modern and interactive way; they can digitize and publicize heritage assets; collect crucial data on customs, traditions, architectural works, and sites; raise public awareness; create engaging experiences in the heritage field; and deliver heritage experiences through virtual exhibitions, mobile applications, and social networks.

Digital Heritage and Intersectoral Communication

Digital Heritage essentially provides a platform to facilitate communication across the cultural, academic, and social sectors. This infrastructure allows organizations and professionals in digital technology, archaeology, museology, libraries, history, architecture, and other related fields to

engage in a necessary exchange of ideas. By promoting activities related to research, interpretation, and visualization, this platform encourages the holistic development of digital heritage industries at both local and global levels.

Widely Spreading Cultural Values to Diverse Social and Educational Levels

Prior to the widespread adoption of digital media, access to traditional Vietnamese cultural values was severely constrained by geographical location and the limitations of traditional transmission methods. Today, digital platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok enable content about traditional customs and festivals to spread rapidly, reaching audiences not only domestically but also internationally. Through social networks, traditional customs gain the opportunity to exist sustainably in the collective memory, even when direct, in-person participation is not feasible for everyone.

Digital media plays an especially important role in disseminating the values of Gong culture. It helps to promote this cultural heritage to a vast audience at home and abroad. Short documentaries, music videos (MV) inspired by gongs, or engaging posts on social media have successfully captured the public's attention, particularly among young people, thereby fostering greater awareness and respect for the heritage. Programs like the "Heritage Journey" on VTV, featuring episodes dedicated to gongs, have recorded substantial viewership on online platforms such as YouTube. This success demonstrates the considerable public interest in this topic when it is communicated effectively and professionally via digital channels.

Promoting the Image of Gong Culture Internationally

With the robust development of digital media, the unique cultural features of Vietnamese Gong culture are no longer limited to the domestic market but are being effectively introduced to international audiences. Global platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have been instrumental in promoting this traditional heritage. This global visibility not only raises international awareness of Gong culture but also facilitates broader cultural exchange, significantly contributing to the development of tourism and the local economy of the Central Highlands region.

According to reports from the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, leveraging social networks for cultural promotion has made Vietnam's image more accessible and friendly to international tourists, correlating with an increase in the number of international visitors in recent years. Furthermore, the successful global dissemination of this traditional culture creates a strong foundation for national pride, particularly when young Vietnamese people observe their heritage being acknowledged and accepted by the international community.

Community Building and Community Engagement

Digital media is instrumental in forming and developing online communities based on shared interests, professions, or goals. Online spaces like forums, chat groups, and fan pages serve as venues where people can exchange knowledge, offer mutual support, and cultivate a sense of belonging. A study by the Vietnam National Institute of Culture and Arts found that the strategic use of social media platforms and YouTube has contributed to a 50% increase in interest among students in the Central Highlands provinces toward Gong classes and performances, compared to engagement via traditional forms.

Digital media effectively creates "virtual communities" for Gong enthusiasts across the country and globally. Facebook groups, such as "Love Gong Culture" with tens of thousands of members, are clear evidence of this robust connection. Within these groups, hundreds of videos and images are shared weekly, establishing a space for the continuous exchange of knowledge and experience.

Furthermore, many digital media projects actively encourage ethnic minority communities to participate in content production. This approach not only ensures the authenticity of the content but

also empowers the community, transforming them from being passive objects of preservation into active subjects of heritage. Community members are often trained to use smartphones to record videos and take photographs, generating authentic narratives about their lives and culture. One study (Nguyen Thi Minh An, 2021) indicated that this participatory approach has led to a 30% increase in the number of young artisans involved in performance and teaching activities within community cultural villages.

Digital media has instigated a significant transformation in Vietnamese Gong culture, serving as a powerful catalyst for the wide promotion of the culture, the preservation of cultural heritage, and the creation of a robust platform for traditional cultural values to endure and spread. However, the challenges inherent in preserving and promoting cultural identity within this digital context require timely interventions. Coordinated action from families, educational institutions, and cultural organizations is crucial to ensure that traditional culture can successfully adapt and develop in the digital age while maintaining its distinctive identity. The utilization of digital technology in cultural heritage offers numerous benefits: smart applications can introduce heritage in a modern and highly interactive manner; assets can be digitized and widely disseminated; data on customs, traditions, activities, and historical sites can be collected; community awareness can be raised; new heritage experiences can be created; and public access can be facilitated through virtual exhibitions, mobile applications, and social media. The overarching goal of leveraging digital media is to establish a connecting platform, aiding related fields in their efforts to promote and preserve Gong culture. Consequently, organizations and experts across diverse industries can effectively exchange ideas and advance research, analysis, and visual image building activities, thereby contributing to the strong global development of the digital heritage sector.

Challenges of Digital Media in Preserving and Promoting Gong Culture

The current situation of preserving the cultural values of *Gong Chieng* presents several ongoing problems, such as the encroachment upon relics, the "bleeding" of heritage assets, and the risk that some traditional beauty inherent in the *Gong Chieng* culture may be lost. Leveraging the strengths of media to support propaganda, promotion, and the enhancement of *Gong Chieng* cultural heritage values is an effective measure to capture community attention and protect the heritage against the challenges posed by the integration process. However, alongside its positive roles, digital media also introduces significant challenges, which can be broadly categorized into content, technical, and social issues.

Challenges of Content and Quality

When traditional Gong rituals are transmitted on digital platforms, they are at risk of being distorted or significantly shortened. A qualitative study by the Vietnam National Institute of Culture and Arts found that over 70% of gong videos on TikTok and YouTube are less than three minutes long, often focusing narrowly on the performance aspect rather than the entire ritualistic context. This fragmentation can lead to a loss of the originality and core meaning of the heritage.

Furthermore, the lack of content censorship and the high rate of inaccurate information spreading on social networks pose a significant threat. Analysis of some Gong community groups reveals that nearly half of articles and videos contain inaccurate information regarding the origin, meaning, or specific performance techniques of certain gong pieces. Most content generated by the community is currently driven solely by entertainment value. There is a noticeable deficit in videos and articles that appropriately address the historical, cultural, or spiritual aspects of this profound heritage.

Technical and Popularization Challenges

Despite the robust development of the internet in Vietnam, significant infrastructure disparity remains a major barrier. Regional development reports for the Central Highlands provinces estimate

that only about 30% of community cultural villages consistently have access to and use high-speed internet for digital communication activities. This technical constraint severely hinders the effective and widespread dissemination of Gong culture to the entire community. Concurrently, many older artisans and local people face challenges related to digital literacy. A study by Pham Thi Thu Hien (2020) indicated that nearly 60% of interviewed artisans reported feeling unconfident when filming, editing, or posting content about their culture online. Furthermore, digital archiving itself demands a professional database and a specialized maintenance system, requiring substantial technical investment and expertise.

Social and Legal Challenges

As Gong content is widely shared, effective copyright control becomes increasingly difficult. Hundreds of Gong performance videos created by artisans have reportedly been used by various individuals and organizations to market tours or other cultural products without permission. This unauthorized use directly impacts the economic and cultural interests of the originating communities. Additionally, the influence of digital media and the growth of tourism have, in some instances, altered the performance motivations of artisans. Preserving Gong cultural heritage in the digital age, therefore, requires ethical approaches to digitization and distribution. This necessity emphasizes the importance of granting initiative and consensus to the cultural groups themselves, ensuring they are placed at the forefront of all decisions regarding how their traditions are shared and represented. In parallel, the emerging development of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technologies offers new, promising avenues for the preservation and education of Gong culture. Virtual museums, interactive cultural experiences, and digital storytelling platforms can bring traditional activities to global audiences, actively promoting cross-cultural understanding while simultaneously preserving the integrity of the original cultures.

When approached with caution, digital advances can act as a catalyst for mutual understanding, cultural promotion, and the protection of minority cultures, thereby countering the erosion of authenticity or the marginalization of cultural voices. To ensure technology remains a force for positive change, the strategic interaction between Gong Culture and Technology offers a promising path forward. The future of Gong Culture in the digital age hinges on its ability to promote inclusive, culturally sensitive technological practices that enhance communication, knowledge sharing, and human progress while respecting and nurturing diversity.

The development of digital technology has profoundly impacted popular culture, affecting musical content diversity, individual interaction with digital culture, and the implementation of digital tools in education, as shown by various authors (e.g., Chernavin, Barinova). This digital revolution has led to new forms of cultural expression, increased creative capacities, and the emergence of new niche markets (Lazzeretti). The relationship between the evolution of digital traditions and changes in Gong culture is thus diverse, encompassing both positive and negative impacts that shape the cultural landscape. Digital technology has notably altered news consumption patterns, with young people consuming less traditional news, and the digitalization of entertainment has saturated media, influencing lifestyle and redefining the "experience of place" through overwhelming data and images, blurring the lines between reality and fantasy in digital interactions. Overall, digital media plays a critical role in reshaping Gong culture by influencing music content, news consumption, and everyday media experiences.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendations

The integration of digital media into Gong culture has been a powerful force, creating new tourism and economic opportunities by facilitating the development and distribution of digital content and mobilizing large-scale community participation. The rapid evolution of digital technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) is causing revolutionary shifts in how people communicate and disseminate knowledge, impacting traditional industries, and the Gong cultural heritage is certainly

no exception. New technologies provide smart tools to identify, protect, and share heritage, going far beyond traditional preservation methods.

However, these advances require a fundamental change in how we view the use of *Gong Chieng* cultural heritage. This shift poses important considerations regarding the balance between conservation and heritage utilization, the selection of appropriate digital media platforms, the types of technology services that can be applied, and the necessary investment in communication technology. This investment is crucial to meet public needs and effectively preserve and transmit the culture to future generations. Digital media today allows us to significantly increase interest in preserving and promoting *Gong Chieng* cultural heritage through easy access to a large, diverse, and multi-generational public.

Despite the positives, digital media also introduces inherent negative aspects, including information overload, digital media addiction, negative impacts on cognitive development, information distortion, and the potential loss of cultural value. Negative impacts within Gong culture are compounded by the excessive use of digital technology by young people, which can lead to a reduced interest in visiting physical cultural sites like archaeological sites, museums, and galleries due to dependence on digital platforms. Therefore, it is paramount to effectively maintain and maximize the positive potential of digital media while mitigating these negative consequences in preserving Gong culture.

To enhance the effectiveness of digital communication and ensure sustainable preservation, the following solutions are recommended:

1. **Strengthen Government Leadership and Policy:** The leadership and direction of the Party and Government are of utmost importance, demonstrated through the issuance and enforcement of Resolutions and National Strategies on heritage digitization, ensuring necessary funding sources and robust inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms.
2. **Establish Unified Digital Infrastructure and Standards:** The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism must play a leading role in developing unified technical standards for digital archives, building a specialized national digital heritage platform, and integrating Gong content into the national education system and official government information portals.
3. **Prioritize Village-Level Digital Infrastructure:** Authorities of the Central Highlands provinces need to prioritize investment in digital infrastructure in villages. This is a prerequisite for artisans and communities to easily access and independently produce high-quality digital content.
4. **Foster Technology Partnerships:** Organizations and agencies must focus on connecting large technology projects with the community, such as cooperating with major technology companies to develop dedicated mobile applications focused on Gong culture.
5. **Empower Community Storytellers:** Communities and individual artisans need to be placed at the center, encouraging them to become the digital storytellers of their heritage. This promotes a sense of pride and responsibility for conservation within the community itself, enabling digital products to become a sustainable source of income.
6. **Launch Consistent Multi-Platform Campaigns:** Deploy multi-platform communication campaigns with consistent themes and organize online competitions to encourage the public and online community to participate in sharing and creating content related to the heritage.

These solutions will help spread the value of Gong more strongly, foster community connection, and ensure the sustainable development of this vital heritage in the digital age.

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