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# STUDY ON THE INTERGENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES AND INNOVATIVE DESIGN STRATEGIES OF NANTONG KITE CULTURAL INHERITANCE

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## ABSTRACT

The Nantong kite craft which comprises of whistles and tractmented craftsmanship qualify the piece as an imperative part of China's intangible cultural heritage. Nevertheless, subsequent swift urbanization, globalization processes, and shifts in the consumers' demands have emerged as critical threats to its applicability. In this paper, based on the typical technique of Nantong kite and the cultural connotation of traditional kite, the author will investigate time-honored skills, innovative ideas, and multicultural backgrounds from the generations' viewpoints. Based on a qualitative research design, including face-to-face interviews with master artisans, younger practitioners, and cultural actors, the never described theme of the kite's symbolic motifs, the choice of materials and utilitarian aspects are revealed. Results stress a global understanding of the kite's cultural roles and the readiness, of both the young and the old generation, to use any possible materials, modern designs, and technology improvements. Analysis of case studies and respondent feedback suggests that it is possible to maintain and enhance the tradition of Nantong kite while contributing creative ideas. The work thus offers a plan in tradition, innovation, and the involvement of the old and the young to guarantee the Nantong kite's cultural continuation and to present it in modernity as a living cultural asset.

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**KEYWORDS:** Nantong Kite, Cultural Heritage, Innovative Design, Sustainability, Tradition.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Nantong kite as an exquisite kite renowned in China as a symbol of remarkable Chinese civilization and cultural heritage. This Nantong kite distinguishes its excellent workmanship in addition to the brightly colored and complex patterns, and the melody of whistle produced by integrated whistles. The fact that Nantong is one of the most famous Chinese forms of kites also witnessed, flexible creativity and mastery, as well as the unbroken historical and cultural heritage of all generations (Anh, 2017).

Even though, the Nantong kite remains a favorite up to this time, it faces a lot of challenges which include those brought about by growth and development, globalization and changing customer trends. The craft, which has been for many thousands of years a respected occupation and widely valued is now fighting for its existence since the young people prefer the new method and things that were produced in large quantities. In this context, experiencing such pressures, it becomes more important than ever to create practical procedures regarding the revitalization and promotion of this cultural value, solution which will not only make sense in the contemporary context (Argan et al., 2015).

This research addresses a genuine need to preserve and reinvigorate the practice of Nantong kite-making, ensuring its sustainability in a modern context. As cultural values evolve over time, adapting to these changes becomes increasingly essential. The study focuses on the intergenerational aspects of the Nantong kite tradition, exploring its connection with different generations. It also examines the potential for using new materials, enhancing functionality through innovations, and introducing modern cultural methods to revitalize the purpose of the kite.

Communication plays a pivotal role in this endeavor, bridging the gap between traditional practices and contemporary audiences (Chung, 2001). By fostering dialogue among practitioners, scholars, and communities, this research seeks to promote awareness and appreciation of the Nantong kite as both an art form and a cultural symbol. Ultimately, the study aims to contribute to the continued relevance of the Nantong kite in modern society, offering a theoretical framework that harmonizes traditional heritage with novel advancements.

### 1.1. Aim

This study's purpose is to generate a set of recommendations to revitalize the Nantong kite tradition based on the integration of its roots in craftsmanship with advanced technologies and the multiple generations that will follow.

#### 1.1.1. Objectives

- Cultural Preservation: Review its craftsmanship, symbols employed and traditional strategies

used in making the Nantong kite, and record its intangible cultural heritage for better preservation.

- Contemporary Adaptation: Emphasize the modern design aspects with new materials, new styling and functional improvements that would make the kite more interesting to cycle in the 21st century while keeping as close as possible to the artistic emblematic ideas of the kites.
- Intergenerational Engagement: Analyse variations in terms of perception, knowledge, and participation across generations and identify strategies for creating interest and skill interest across B2B younger practitioners and consumers.
- Heritage Management: Evaluate the policies, training programs, and mentorship framework currently in support of Nantong kite-making and identify measures for enhancing these mechanisms.
- Sustainable Legacy: Develop a broad concept that will help cultural actors, officials, craftsmen, and teachers define the further evolution of the Nantong kite tradition to enable its relevance to today's society while maintaining its historical integrity.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The traditional Nantong kite is the preferred kite of the countryside areas of Nantong according to Lan et al. (2022). The rural area has large and high principal rooms, which is quite suitable for Nantong kite exhibition because such kite is large in proportion. Hence, the average Nantong kite is actually much bigger than sheer kites – one meter tall – and large kites measure 3-5 meters in height and look quite statuesque. At the present kite form is generated based on the form of the hexagonal and octagonal Nantong kite and based on our study we have found that through connection of the forms it is wide possible to get a various and numerous of different and complicated forms as also shown in the figure 1.

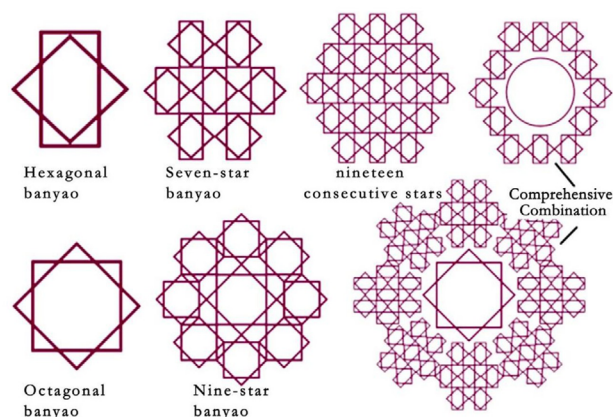


Figure 1: The Basic Shapes and Combined Changes of the Nantong Kite.

The process of making the Nantong kite is a meticulous art form comprised of several critical

steps: building the architectural models, applying color to the surfaces of the kite and fabricating the whistles carved on the kites. Conventional types of the framework are made of bamboo that has been easier to manage than any other material due to flexibility; selection of bamboo is done to a strict set of requirements. But, the technological improvement has made it possible to introduce high-performance carbon fiber tubes, making the kite stronger and more stable during its flight (Liu, 2015). This integration of modern material shows how innovation can easily adopt tradition and combine it with new functionalist aspirations. Decoratively, Nantong kites are often brightly colored and uses paintings that are painted in folk style and images of fairy tales and mythical creatures. Design patterns include heroic figures like the Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea or Seven Fairies and adjoining patterns including dragons, phoenixes, flowers, birds, insects and fish which reflect dynastic artistic flair of the region. In recent years, with the participation of the successive generations, popular trends associated with Chinese fashion and animated movies, etc have been incorporated into the kites (Pan & Liu, 2022). This brand new artistic implications are contributed by the new generation that maintains the intergeneration continuity, so that it could be still shouted by the contemporary viewer, which in turn enhanced the cultural sense of this traditional kites.

The whistle kite from Nantong district is an exemplar for presenting a unique shape and an integrated whistle that defines the function of this kite. In appreciation of its cultural and artistic significance

The techniques of making Nantong kites were culturally listed in the first group of National-Level Intangible Cultural Heritage under the State Council in 2006 (Ziku, 2020). This official recognition underscores the critical role of today's practitioners in preserving and transmitting these intangible cultural assets to future generations.

Currently, a robust traditional kite-making system exists to sustain the legacy of Nantong kites. This network includes esteemed national-level inheritors such as Guo Chengyi, provincial inheritors like Wang Zhiqing, Lu Baoru, Wang Zejun, and Zhang Wenzhi, as well as municipal-level successors (Liu & Han, 2024). These experts not only receive acknowledgment and support but also play a pivotal role in performing and teaching traditional kite-making practices. Through their efforts, the essential transfer of knowledge and skills is ensured, positively influencing future custodians of the craft (Poleć & Murawska, 2022).

To enhance the preservation and outreach of Nantong kite-making, communication platforms and multimedia tools can serve as vital channels. Platforms such as social media, online video tutorials, digital archives, and virtual workshops can bridge the gap

between inheritors and wider audiences, making the craft more accessible and engaging. These tools allow inheritors to share their expertise, showcase the cultural significance of the kites, and interact directly with learners and enthusiasts worldwide.

Furthermore, interactive platforms can be developed to document and disseminate the stories, techniques, and symbolic meanings behind the Nantong kites. This not only aids in cultural preservation but also ensures that younger generations, who are more attuned to digital mediums, find the craft relatable and inspiring. The integration of multimedia ensures the dual purpose of safeguarding the heritage while adapting it to the demands of a digital and interconnected age.

When it comes to decoration, Nantong kites often feature vibrant colors and intricate painting techniques inspired by local folklore and cultural motifs. Legendary figures such as the Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea or the Seven Fairies, along with dragons, phoenixes, flowers, birds, insects, and fish, are common design elements that reflect the region's rich cultural tapestry. More recently, younger generations have introduced contemporary trends—such as Chinese fashion aesthetics and animated themes—into kite designs (Lenzerini, 2011). These fresh artistic influences reflect an intergenerational approach that ensures the Nantong kite continues to resonate with present-day audiences, ultimately strengthening the cultural legacy of this time-honored craft.

The whistle kite from Nantong stands out for its distinctive form and the integrated whistle that contributes to its cultural significance. In recognition of its historical and artistic importance, the crafting techniques associated with Nantong kites were formally inscribed in 2006 into the first batch of National-Level Intangible Cultural Heritage items under the State Council's purview (Lu, 2012). This official acknowledgment underscores the responsibility borne by current inheritors to safeguard and transmit these non-material values across generations. At present, a robust legacy system supports the preservation of Nantong kite-making.

The network of Nantong kite-making inheritors includes nationally recognized figures such as Guo Chengyi, along with provincial inheritors like Wang Zhiqing, Lu Baoru, Wang Zejun, and Zhang Wenzhi, as well as municipal-level successors. Beyond receiving acknowledgment and support, these experts shoulder the vital task of demonstrating and teaching intangible cultural assets, thereby ensuring that their knowledge and skills flow seamlessly to future practitioners.

Through their mentorship and guidance, these inheritors serve as vital links between past traditions and future innovations, strengthening the cultural continuum that keeps the Nantong kite tradition alive and resonant in the contemporary era (Figures 2, 3).



*Figure 2: Exhibition of Theme-Derived Application Works of the Nantong Kite.*



*Figure 3: Exhibition Partial. The Specific Contents Include Physical Objects such as Nantong Ban-Yao Kites, Related Cloth Bags, Pillows, Cushions, Postcards, Silk Scarves, Jigsaw Puzzles, Calendars, Stamps, etc.,*

The apprenticeship model is still the only mainstream way of offering such skills with more emphasis towards expansion of those programs in the community and the university. These activities will help in fellowship to involve the other persons in the society with a view of extending from a sample population atleast by putting some cultures or even historical frame of reference by establishment of historical or cultural activities center or even by carrying out certain activities or even training. Organizational inheritors also perform an inalienable role even for the continuation and improvement of the Nantong kite (Lu, 2012). Applauded by them, they lead as they impart surface design of kite and whistle

workmanship in order to produce so many wonderful things. Nevertheless, the Nantong kite market has a clear division: on one hand is the professionally designed and costly conventional kites on the other side are less artistic and cheaper community kites. But to develop and maintain the Nantong as kite, there are some obstacles that have to be overcome. Some enterprises have downsized, or rearranged the related activities to kites in Nantong owing to low sales; whereas smaller studios, or family-owned companies may not always having a large one (Zhao, 2024). In the present generation it is common knowledge that when the society has developed and the people's standards of living have changed then their requirements have

changed too. Because the society today has challenged the aesthetics and use of objects, it is important that the Nantong kite still remains as relevant as it was in the past; for this, new designing approaches have to be put in place. Product development hence means a process of either coming up with new designs that are bad or introducing something new and lively into the culture instead of rejecting the process. Thus, under changed context, it can be more sensitive and make longer term sustainable positive impact in promoting the concept of cultural heritage on the basis of Nantong kite. With reference to the continued cultural products in the current highly competitive market, there is need to increase the appreciation of the Nantong kite by the global community as this may trigger circulation towards the cultural product. It looks that there is a chance to consider the problem of the reviving of the Nantong kite through the approach of the design modification to strengthen the market position and broaden the range of appeals.

## **2.1. Strategies for the Innovative Design of the Nantong Kite**

### **2.1.1. Material Innovation**

From an environmental standpoint, substituting conventional materials like wood and paper with biodegradable polymers can both guarantee the longevity of the kite and minimize ecological harm while also allowing for more frequent upgrades. For example, utilizing novel eco-friendly materials for the surface of the kite enables natural decomposition upon disposal, hence decreasing the environmental impact. Additionally, the kite surface can be fashioned from recycled materials such as old newspapers, posters, and textiles. This not only saves costs but also promotes environmental conservation (Yang & Chsing, 2024). Practical Advancement

Due to the high cost of construction of the Nantong kite and because there are specific conditions for flying of big kites, wind or cyclonic conditions may make it difficult to control the kite or may lead to loss of the kite completely. If (done), the integration of a location device to a kite might make it easier to retrieve lost ones, which is a critical gesture that the enthusiasts of kite flying should embrace to reduce their losses.

The body of the Nantong kite is divided into a few parts of its surface. For example, the normally shaped Ban-Yao kite is made of a central pattern surrounded by six triangular parts (Kim et al., 2019). When seven hexagonal kites are combined to make a seven-star kite, large and small pictures are also produced. These places can be used to generate kites that might have educational intention for youngsters. For example, a collection of Nantong kites focusing on popular science may include astronomy and history facts as well as written descriptions associated with them. With

teaching exercise combined with fun in this activity. Prior literature explains that parents as well as children could found the interest of flying kites outside fun.

As for the young adults and the buyers, it is necessary for them to question and look into "the Nantong kite +". An example of creating a kite which can glow in the night sky can be achieved by attaching small electrical parts including lighting compartments on the kite (Jia, 2024). Especially at night time when the visibility is low, the kite will look even better, thus having a dual role of decoration and recreation as well as flying at any time, for any people in various circumstances. Besides, there is the possibility of the use of sensors to have the kite transmitting wind speed and direction to the flyer. This would enable the flyer to understand the change of sound and timing of the whistle depending on the circumstances such that the flying experience is improved. In the ideal world, the kite would have the ability to self-adjust and control the flight angle and altitude with regards to the changes in environments; this would ensure a much smoother as well as steady flying experience.

### **2.2. Innovation in Cultural Integration**

Some of the famous structures that can be found in Nantong are the Bell Tower, Wenfeng Pagoda and Dasheng Dock since it is a city located by the rivers and the seas. Other aspects such as marine life inhabitants; waves; boats; and the finless porpoises can also be incorporated in the design of the Nantong kite known as Bantiao kite to try and capture the geographical and cultural profiles of the city. This fusion does not only reinforce the local culture but also let the outsider, tourists who belong to other regions, have interest in the culture of Nantong (Sheikhneshtin et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the Nantong Bantiao kite can only try to expand this laid down space and integrate with the cultures of other coastal cities like Zhejiang, Shanghai, Guangdong and Fujian among others. Thus, by adding motifs of cultural symbols or Maritime Silk Road into the design of the Bantiao kite, the kite product will become more culturally diversified. These displays are associated with the regions that are geographically and naturally alike to Nantong as, Bantiao kites also reflecting the local themes can become as popular as they are now in Nantong (Gao et al., 2022).

In traditional artistic motifs used on Bantiao kites innovation is carried out by adding some components from Dunhuang Murals, famous Chinese paintings and other traditional arts so as to make the paintings on Bantiao kites more artistic by adding bright colors and other elegant designs. These designs can therefore be adapted to apposite modernity as opposed to the traditional motifs typically used.

From the perspective of the contemporary aesthetic visual culture, the phenomenon of increased representation of Chinese traditional culture including

the Guochao that refers to the Chinese cultural elements currently popular in fashion and designing the kites can be welcomed incorporating Guochao features into the above-mentioned kites. Such an approach details the Bantiao kite with cultural connotations and at the same time modern fashion. As demonstrated by Figure 4, the work integrates the identification elements of Nantong Bell Tower and directly applying waves and cloud patterns derived from the riverside and the seashore, auspicious crane and modern colors with Guochao style to Bantiao kite.



*Figure 4: The Nantong Kite Designed and Made by Shen Jiumei, Lu Yao, and Yao Chunhua.*

### 3. METHODOLOGY

Only one method of data collection was used in this study, semi-structure interviews which framed this qualitative study. This approach aims at uncovering the cultural values, originality, cultural essence, and possibilities for cultural development of the Nantong kite via a dialogue with master artisans of the kite, recognized inheritors, young practitioners, and other subjects with deep knowledge and interest to the subject. Semi structured interviews are appropriate for this study because they offer both the structure needed in the research and a level of flow. The balance ensures that the overall necessary contentious issues concerned with heritage, one generation to the next, and inventiveness in architectural designs is given enough ground to be discussed comprehensively the balance also gives the participants an opportunity to come up with new dimension and new angles on the matter.

Qualitative research was considered suitable to gain the depth needed to comprehend the systems' environment since quantitative approaches might not reveal all the necessary details. Sharing personal stories

on the Nantong kite deals with symbolism, myths, feelings, mastery, difference generational transfer of skills and emotional connection to the artefact.

#### 3.1. Participant Selection and Sampling

Purposive sampling of 10 participants was used to capture a variety of individuals who have different but related approaches to the Nantong kite tradition. These participants include:

- **Master Artisans and Recognized Inheritors:** Those persons who have received this craft and kept its secrets for decades, real masters and real connoisseurs of traditional techniques, historical imagery and changing cultural associations.
- **Younger Practitioners and Emerging Artisans:** New learners in kite making or those who have learned the craft at a later date and those who seek to change their style of kite making or introduce new material in to their kites. It makes it easier to review intergeneration differences and determine how the current trends should be adopted into culture.
- **Local Community Members and Cultural Stakeholders:** Those people who do not have a direct involvement with kite makers but love and support this tradition. Thus, they demystify the general cultural and marketplace context in which the artifact, Nantong kite, is contextualized.

Such a selection contributes to a comprehensive selection of pieces representing the Nantong kite in that it encompasses views of those who have been deeply ingrained in specific forms of culture and their combination with new trends among those who are likely to adapt the art form to the new cultural and market environments.

#### 3.2. Interview Protocol and Data Collection:

Each semi-structured interview were guided by an interview protocol that includes open-ended questions related to:

- **Cultural Significance and Symbolism:** Appreciation of what kites and their designs signify and symbolize, both to the community of users and with reference to their folklore.
- **Craftsmanship and Techniques:** Describing selection of materials for the construction of the building, traditional and modern construction techniques and methods of painting, approaches, transition from usage of the traditional materials to new ones, the changes caused by the new technologies.
- **Intergenerational Transmission:** Rather, it focuses on how knowledge and skills are transferred or changed across generations, conducive and hindering factors for the accumulation and transmission of actual skills, and specific approaches employed in this way.

Face-to-face interviews were preferred wherever the researcher could engage with artisans during the activity – at workshops, in cultural institutions, or other meeting places like a hall. When face to face interactions were prohibited, technological impressions such as video calls was not used. All of the interviews were conducted with the permission of participants and were audiotaped, transcribed and translated for purposes of analysis.

### 3.3. Data Analysis

The study used thematic analysis to make the topic to look for patterns in the interviews conducted with the participants. Using content analysis, the researcher reanalysed both transcripts, flagging parts of the text that correspond to themes of interest to the research, including the cultural meaning of kites, knowledge production patterns, attitudes towards modernisation and visions of future developments. The parameters of these codes then can be grouped under other more general headings and topics. Minimizing the bias was achieved by cross-sectional question framing (for example, comparing the views of masters and novices).

Thus, the choice of the semi-structured interviews in the contexts of the qualitative paradigm provides the straight view on the real life beliefs, expectations and practices of the people who continue and develop the Nantong kite tradition. Data emanating from such dialogues will be used to devise strategies for the revamp of the craft, although creativity in development will be highly encouraged, due regard will be paid to the traditional aspect of the Nantong kite. However, this approach establishes a robust theoretical scaffold to substantiate a notion of how tradition and innovation could dialectically support the Nantong kite's cultural heritage in the future.

## 4. RESULTS

The findings of this study, derived from in-depth qualitative interviews and thematic analysis, provide insights into the evolving cultural inheritance of the Nantong kite. The analysis is organized into five key themes: (1) Heritage Features of the Nantong Kite, (2) Intergenerational Perspectives on Tradition and Innovation, (3) Perceptions of Cultural Value, (4) Innovation in Design Strategies, and (5) Expanding Market Opportunities. Each theme is illustrated with direct quotations from participants, who are identified with anonymized codes (e.g., P1, P2, etc.).

### Theme 1: Heritage Features of the Nantong Kite

All participants emphasized the significance of key elements that define the Nantong kite, particularly its whistle mechanism, bamboo framework, and hand-painted decorations. These features contribute to the kite's unique identity and its role in local cultural heritage.

"The whistle is the soul of the Nantong kite. Without it, the kite loses its distinctiveness and charm." (P1).

"Bamboo and paper are not just materials; they carry symbolic value, representing harmony with nature and traditional craftsmanship." (P2). While traditional materials like bamboo and paper remain predominant, there is a growing inclination toward adopting modern alternatives. Some participants acknowledged the benefits of incorporating carbon fiber to enhance durability and flight stability. "Using carbon fiber allows us to maintain the aesthetic while improving the strength and longevity of the kite." (P3)

However, all participants agreed that the fundamental cultural essence of the Nantong kite must be preserved, regardless of material innovations.

### Theme 2: Intergenerational Perspectives on Tradition and Innovation

A recurring discussion point was the generational divide in attitudes toward modernization. Older artisans expressed concerns that excessive innovation could dilute the craft's authenticity.

"We have spent our lives perfecting these techniques, and it is painful to see them altered too much. There is a fine line between adaptation and losing the essence of tradition." (P4)

Younger practitioners, in contrast, viewed innovation as a necessary evolution, arguing that adapting to contemporary aesthetics and technological advancements would help sustain interest among modern consumers.

"We respect tradition, but we must also think about how to make the Nantong kite relevant in today's world. Modern themes, sustainable materials, and functional improvements can attract a new audience." (P5)

A compromise emerged in the discussion, with participants agreeing that innovation should be carefully integrated without compromising the kite's cultural integrity.

"The key is balance. Without tradition, there is no identity; without innovation, there is no future." (P6)

### Theme 3: Perceptions of Cultural Value

Most participants viewed the Nantong kite as a vital part of local and national cultural identity. However, they expressed concerns that awareness and appreciation of this tradition are waning, particularly among younger generations.

"The Nantong kite is a living testament to our heritage, but sadly, many young people see it as an old-fashioned relic rather than an art form." (P7)

Younger respondents admitted that they had limited exposure to the Nantong kite until they encountered it at cultural festivals or educational programs.

"I had never seen a real Nantong kite up close until I attended a cultural festival. Seeing it in action was an eye-opener." (P8)

This suggests that interactive cultural events, exhibitions, and workshops can play a crucial role in reviving interest in the craft.

#### Theme 4: Innovation in Design Strategies

Participants widely acknowledged that innovation plays a crucial role in ensuring the survival of the Nantong kite. Some of the key suggestions included:

- Incorporating eco-friendly materials to reduce environmental impact.
- Designing kites with educational themes to engage children and students.
- Integrating smart technologies such as LED lighting and wind sensors for enhanced functionality.

“Adding educational components, such as astronomy or history facts on kites, could make them more appealing to children and schools.” (P9)

“Modern materials and features, like glow-in-the-dark elements, could make Nantong kites exciting for nighttime festivals and urban audiences.” (P10)

#### Theme 5: Expanding Market Opportunities

Participants also discussed ways to broaden the appeal and commercial viability of the Nantong kite. Some proposed diversifying kite-related products, such as decorative items, souvenirs, and interactive kits.

“Kites don’t have to be just for flying. We could create home decor, puzzles, or even fashion accessories inspired by Nantong kites.” (P11)

Cultural tourism was another avenue highlighted for sustaining the craft. By integrating kite-making workshops into tourism programs, visitors could gain hands-on experience while supporting artisans.

“Workshops where tourists can design and build their own kites would create immersive experiences while generating income for local artisans.” (P12)

These findings illustrate that the Nantong kite tradition is at a crossroads. While traditionalists emphasize the importance of preserving authenticity, younger practitioners advocate for modernization. However, both groups acknowledge the need for a balanced approach that ensures cultural continuity while embracing contemporary innovations. Market expansion, public engagement, and strategic innovation are key factors that can drive the sustainability of Nantong kite-making into the future.

### 5. DISCUSSION

Nantong kite tradition requires tackling a complex of issues related to the role of (passing on) intangible heritage, on the one hand, and innovation and cooperation with young people on the other hand. In the process of thematic analysis, it was found that Nantong kite is still consistent with its cultural characteristics as the whistle structure, the traditional bamboo structure and the hand painted work. Such elements were referred to by flying masters as the very essence of the kite, therefore adding that the work must maintain these traditional airs despite the advanced modernization. Regarding the aesthetics and retro style, carbon fibers are employed in the production process to respond to

a functionality, but the participants stressed that this particular product must be as traditional as possible. Another cultural finding in the study was that there was a clear generation gap in terms of culture towards innovation. The older artisans appear to have qualms about the decline of authenticity because first, the traditional practices serve as a living connection to one’s culture. On the other hand young artisan stressed that modernity should be adopted by incorporating modern designs and technology to embrace with new architecture designs as well as using eco friendly materials. Such an exchange between the generations suggests that while there is room for authoritarian values to prevail as the old-world craft industry is supplemented with modern appropriation attempts. Such collaboration can reduce the gap between generations thereby progressive development of the Nantong kite without necessarily losing its cultural value.

From the above analysis, public engagement was found to be particularly important as regard to the continuity of the Nantong kite experience. Some respondents agreed that the kite was part of a regional identity but others pointed out that its recognition was waning, especially among youths. Fairs, folk performances, other non-governmental organizations and educating mission were determined to be useful for this purpose. They also pointed out the need to incorporate contemporary approaches including online literature and social media to draw awareness and announce a wider reach of demography. Concerning the increase of market opportunities for the Nantong kite a special attention was paid to the role of innovation. Other related products made from kites with educative materials, ornaments and other accoutrements for use in persons’ daily lives were also pointed out as viable ways of popularizing the craft. Not only creating commercial benefits, but it also acts as cultural envoys to disseminate the story of the Nantong kite where ever it goes. Lastly, the discussion offers that for the redemption of the Nantong kite tradition, a more progressive and a multilateral strategy are require. Intergenerational cooperation, maintaining the priority of retaining traditional attributes of cultural heritage, and at the same time, introducing innovations into the design of products and using stimuli for a modern audience, the craft will become an example of an effective continuation of the tradition as a living cultural asset.

#### 5.1. Innovation in Design and Cultural Integration

Nantong kites’ artfully combined modern and traditional elements—like the “Guochao” trend and local cultural symbols—showcase a successful fusion of the two eras (Chung, 2001).

The results imply that improving the attractiveness of traditional crafts through cultural integration is not only feasible but advantageous. This research also emphasizes, nevertheless, the difficulties in preserving

authenticity while adding contemporary elements—a worry that is reflected in the literature. Argan et al. (2015) for instance, warn that although cultural fusion can boost market appeal, if not handled appropriately, it runs the danger of losing the original core of the trade.

## 5.2. Future Directions and Practical Implications

As such, this research contributes a comprehensive case of the Nantong kite to the extant literature on cultural heritage conservation. The findings underscore the relevance of exploring the balance between the innovative and the conventional and the role of this balance as a current concern of the ongoing international attempts to safeguard cultural heritage. The same can be said for other traditional crafts that are experiencing similar challenges and therefore, other traditional crafts should emulate the Nantong kite in its application of creative techniques. Future research work may analyze the long-term impact of these advancements on sustaining and the economic viability of traditional arts. Also, more research is needed in order to identify the impact that ICT and international cultural interactions can have on ICH in future.

### 5.2.1. In Summary

Finally, based on the above research, it emphasizes that creativity in design work is crucial to sustaining and reviving the Nantong kite. Thus, an attempt can be made to save the character of traditional crafts both in terms of materials, functions and cultural characteristics while, at the same time, adapting to the requirements of the present therefore indicating that, despite significant challenges involved in modernization of traditional crafts are substantial the fact remains that it is possible to adapt to the needs of the new age through

new additions while retaining the core aesthetic and functionality. Comparison with other study shows how this discussion contributes to the understanding of the larger questions of cultural heritage conservation and the need for constant innovations in this discipline.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The revitalization of the Nantong kite tradition rests on a dynamic interplay between heritage preservation, innovative design, and intergenerational cooperation, as highlighted in the themes of this study. Core elements such as the distinctive whistle structures and the traditional bamboo frameworks were consistently recognized by participants as central to the kite's identity, reflecting its cultural and artistic legacy. However, the findings underscore that while these heritage features remain indispensable, the adoption of innovative materials, functional improvements, and contemporary motifs is crucial to sustaining the craft's relevance. Intergenerational perspectives revealed a productive tension between older artisans' emphasis on tradition and younger practitioners' enthusiasm for innovation, suggesting that collaborative efforts can harmonize authenticity with modernity. Government agencies, educational institutions, and recognized inheritors play pivotal roles in these efforts, supporting initiatives that integrate traditional techniques with emerging technologies. By embracing these strategies, the Nantong kite not only strengthens its market appeal through expanded product diversification and cultural tourism but also ensures its cultural significance endures. This balance between preservation and innovation positions the Nantong kite as a living cultural legacy, capable of engaging diverse audiences and sustaining its relevance for generations to come.

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