

## *Original Paper*

# Research on the Evaluation Mechanism of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Educational Tourism in Junior High School English Curriculum

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### ***Abstract***

*In the process of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) preservation, educational practices, particularly educational tourism, have become a significant educational approach. This study aims to explore the relationship between English language proficiency and ICH educational tourism, specifically focusing on the methods used in ICH educational practices that contribute to fostering students' core English language competencies. Using questionnaires and in-depth interviews, as well as statistical software like SPSS and AMOS, a multi-dimensional evaluation model for junior high school English core competencies was constructed. The study analyzes the existing problems in the evaluation mechanism and proposes optimization strategies. The results indicate that ICH educational tourism has a synergistic effect in enhancing junior high school students' core English competencies. Significant positive correlations exist between the dimensions of English language proficiency, with the strongest correlation found between cultural awareness and learning ability. ICH educational tourism practices have significantly enhanced students' language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability. Improving the evaluation mechanism for English core competencies not only contributes to the enhancement of educational tourism quality but also promotes the preservation and transmission of ICH.*

**Keywords**

*intangible cultural heritage, educational tourism, evaluation mechanism, core competencies*

**1. Introduction**

With the increasing emphasis on the protection of global cultural diversity, the preservation and transmission of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) have become more significant (Kurin, 2023; Harrison & Rose, 2022). In recent years, as national policies have supported it, the integration of ICH with educational tourism has gradually emerged. In February 2023, to implement the spirit of the 20th National Congress of the Party and General Secretary's important instructions on ICH protection, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism emphasized the need to “promote the integration of intangible cultural heritage and tourism at broader, deeper, and higher levels,” encouraging “tourism services such as experiences and RBL, allowing visitors to personally experience the unique charm of China's excellent traditional culture” (Xu, 2024; Shen, 2023). The deep integration of ICH and Research-based Learning (RBL) has been placed on the national policy agenda, presenting a major opportunity for their development. ICH educational tourism aims to cultivate innovation and practical abilities, reinforcing moral education, patriotism, and traditional culture education through practical methods that appeal to young learners. It serves as a valuable supplement to classroom education (Xu, 2024). The ICH educational tourism model not only enables youth to study and inherit Chinese traditional culture through hands-on experiences but also leverages the economic and social value of ICH, thereby expanding its space for survival and development, complementing one another. Currently, ICH educational tourism practices are thriving in China, but the evaluation mechanisms remain imperfect, lacking scientific and systematic approaches. Despite the rapid development of educational tourism, issues such as the incomplete industry entry mechanisms, lack of supervision systems, and absence of standardization have led to the “wild growth” of the sector (Wan, 2021). The absence of a process-oriented quality evaluation system, lack of feedback and improvement during implementation, and the lack of systematic design and validation have impacted the effectiveness of RBL courses (Guo, 2023).

However, there is a lack of research integrating core competency evaluation with ICH museum-based educational tourism. Scholars have explored core competencies in English from various evaluation perspectives. The "Curriculum Standards for English in Compulsory Education (2022 Edition)" clearly outlines four key dimensions of core English competencies: language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability. Wang (2018) delves into the theoretical foundation and practical paths for developing core competencies in English, particularly focusing on how to integrate language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability into teaching practices. Cheng (2019) provides a detailed analysis of how to cultivate core competencies in English education, emphasizing how evaluation systems can enhance students' language abilities, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning abilities. Zhang (2023) examines the development paths of core English competencies

from the perspective of evaluation systems, especially how scientific evaluation can enhance students' language abilities, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning capabilities. Zhang (2023) discusses these issues from a multi-dimensional evaluation perspective, while Wang (2023) looks at them through the paths of collaborative learning. Since the concept of core competencies was introduced, scholars have comprehensively explored theoretical foundations, practical methods, evaluation systems, multi-dimensional evaluation, and collaborative learning. These studies provide abundant theoretical support and practical guidance for English teaching, contributing to the reform of Junior high school English education and the improvement of students' comprehensive competencies. The issue of how to improve the evaluation mechanism of core competencies to enhance the quality of ICH educational tourism has become a pressing topic as well as the research contribution. A refined evaluation mechanism for ICH educational tourism can help identify problems and deficiencies in the practices, improving their quality and effectiveness. Through participant feedback and satisfaction assessments, teaching methods and content can be adjusted, thus enhancing learning outcomes and further promoting the protection and transmission of ICH.

## 2. Literature Review

The development of study tours has a long history, with the United Kingdom, the United States, Japan, and China being the most representative cases. The terminology associated with study tours can be categorized into two groups: those emphasizing educational functions, such as "Experiential Education," "Outdoor Education," and "Field Trip," and those emphasizing travel, such as "Study Tourism," "Educational Tourism," and "Learning Travel." The former mainly includes primary, secondary, and tertiary students as participants, whereas the latter often involves university students, adults, and seniors (Zhou et al., 2022).

The origins of study tours in the United Kingdom can be traced back to the medieval period (Kurin, 2023). Today, many countries incorporate study tours into their educational systems as a means to broaden students' horizons and enhance their cross-cultural understanding (Wang, 2019). By the late 18th and early 19th centuries, study tours had become more accessible to the general public, leading the British government to integrate them into the educational framework. In the United States, study tours have a parallel in camp education, which emphasizes personal growth through adventure. Given its focus on safety, the implementation of camp education involves strict regulations and structured guidelines (Wan, 2021). Japan's "shugaku ryoko" (educational tourism) is a school-organized educational activity designed to expand students' knowledge and perspective by traveling to different regions or countries (Wan, 2021). Both the U.S. camp education model and Japan's study tourism have long-standing traditions, employing diverse evaluation methods that emphasize the development of students' comprehensive competencies. China has a historical tradition of "youxue" (educational tourism), which serves as the origin of modern study tours. The concept of "reading ten thousand books and traveling ten thousand miles" reflects a long-standing educational philosophy that values

experiential learning. Confucius, a pioneer of travel-based learning in the Spring and Autumn period, produced *The Analects*, which remains influential today. In the Ming Dynasty, Xu Xiake's extensive travels culminated in *Xu Xiake's Travel Notes*, a landmark work in Chinese travel literature (Xu, 2024). The Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee emphasized the deep integration of culture and tourism (Liu & Jiao, 2021). In the context of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) protection and transmission, study tours have become an essential educational method, making research on their evaluation mechanisms a significant academic concern.

Scholars emphasize the multidimensionality of study tour evaluation systems. Finn and Fitzpatrick (2021) explored the application of feedback in online study courses, highlighting that immediate and interactive feedback mechanisms significantly enhance student satisfaction and learning outcomes. A systematic participant feedback mechanism aids in identifying strengths and weaknesses in study tour programs, though ensuring comprehensive and representative feedback remains a challenge. Flick (2022) examined the use of qualitative methods in satisfaction assessment, utilizing in-depth interviews and group discussions to collect extensive feedback. While diverse satisfaction assessment methods enhance the comprehensiveness and accuracy of feedback, they require careful design and application. Experiential education in ICH study tours immerses learners in cultural contexts, facilitating deeper understanding and heritage transmission (Hoekstra & Abma, 2021). Siemens and Baker (2022) discussed the role of learning analysis in study tours, using data analysis techniques to extract insights on participant feedback and satisfaction. Technology-assisted assessment methods significantly improve data collection and analysis efficiency. Future research should explore the integration of technological tools in multidimensional evaluation systems to promote the sustainable development of ICH educational tourism.

Research on the evaluation mechanisms of ICH study tours in China primarily focuses on study tour models, practical methods, and evaluation systems. The exploration of study tour models and methods is a prominent research topic both domestically and internationally. As a form of comprehensive practical activity, study tours are characterized by autonomy, openness, inquiry-based learning, and hands-on experience (Wen, 2021). Experiential education is widely recognized as an effective tool for ICH study tours, though it requires well-designed activities and evaluation frameworks. With advancements in technology, digital tools and virtual reality are increasingly applied to ICH study tours, offering new possibilities (Li & Tsai, 2021). The evaluation of ICH study tours mainly focuses on assessing learning outcomes. Sun (2021) and Liu (2021) proposed evaluation models covering various stages of study tours and incorporating multiple stakeholders. The evaluation approaches in study tour cases are classified into three categories: analyzing the alignment of specific theories with study tours, formative assessment, and summative assessment (Wu & Liu, 2023). Current evaluation mechanisms predominantly emphasize formative and summative assessments, but the reliance on single-dimensional indicators limits the comprehensive assessment of study tour effectiveness. Additionally, some scholars argue that the evaluation and regulatory mechanisms for ICH study tours

are inadequate (Xian & Huang, 2023), suggesting that evaluation improvements should be made from the perspective of grassroots governance.

In all, current research on ICH study tour evaluation mechanisms mainly focuses on three aspects: the multidimensionality of evaluation systems, study tour models and methods, and evaluation mechanisms and systems. However, this study finds that the evaluation mechanism for study tours remains underdeveloped, particularly in terms of a multidimensional evaluation framework based on core competencies. Core competencies—comprising language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability—are critical educational evaluation standards. ICH study tours offer unique advantages in enhancing students' core competencies, yet existing evaluation frameworks fail to fully reflect these dimensions, necessitating urgent improvements. Therefore, this study aims to develop a multidimensional evaluation framework for core competencies in junior high school English education to contribute to the sustainable development of ICH study tours.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### *3.1 Research Methods*

This study employs a mixed-methods approach that combines survey questionnaires and interviews. The aim is to comprehensively examine the interrelationships among core competencies in the English subject in junior high school and to identify which methods employed in ICH educational tours effectively cultivate students' core English competencies. The survey questionnaire was developed with reference to instruments used by Lin (2016). To ensure comprehensive and reliable data collection, between October 2024 and February 2025, the researcher randomly sampled junior high school students from various schools in Shandong Province who participated in ICH study tour at the Jinan Cultural Center (Jinan Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center). A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed, yielding 280 valid responses. The questionnaire content was structured four dimensions of core English competencies. (1) Language ability. Encompassing the four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, along with vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and the practical application of these language skills. (2) Cultural awareness. Covering students' learning, understanding, respect for, and application of cultural knowledge, including cultural cognition, respect, and identification. (3) Thinking quality. Including both critical and creative thinking abilities. (4) Learning ability: Encompassing autonomous, cooperative, and inquiry-based learning strategies. To gain deeper and more comprehensive insights and to lay a solid foundation for subsequent research, 20 students were selected for in-depth interviews. The interview guide was designed to cover the same four dimensions: language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability.

#### *3.2 Data Collection*

Data were gathered through both questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Before the formal data collection phase, a pilot survey and preliminary interviews were conducted. Following consultations with educational tourism experts, revisions were made to both the questionnaire and the interview

guide to ensure clarity and relevance. The final version of the questionnaire demonstrated acceptable levels of reliability and validity. A five-point Likert scale was used to assess junior high school students' English core competencies during ICH study tours.

In-depth interviews with the junior high school students were also conducted to gain a nuanced understanding of the issues and challenges encountered during ICH study tour. The research team first obtained consent from the study tour team leader, the participants, and their guardians. After the completion of the study tour program, the questionnaires were distributed. To ensure that students fully understood each item on the questionnaire, detailed explanations were provided beforehand, and any questions raised by the students were thoroughly addressed. Only after the participants confirmed their complete understanding of each item did they proceed to complete the questionnaire, which was collected immediately upon completion.

### *3.3 Data Analysis*

Quantitative analyses were conducted using SPSS and AMOS software to ensure the scientific rigor and reliability of the study's conclusions. In addition, thematic analysis was employed to organize and synthesize the interview data. Specifically, SPSS 26.0 was used to perform reliability and validity tests on the valid questionnaire data. The survey demonstrated high internal consistency, and the results were deemed reliable. Bartlett's test of sphericity yielded significance levels below 0.05, indicating good construct validity. Drawing upon an understanding of junior high school English core competencies and incorporating elements from the questionnaires developed by Lin (2016), the adapted junior high school English core competencies questionnaire was tested and found to have a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value of 0.93, with all subscale coefficients exceeding 0.7, thus confirming high reliability and excellent internal consistency. Bartlett's test further affirmed the validity of the questionnaire. For the interview data, quantitative analysis was performed using AMOS software, and a thematic analysis approach was adopted to systematically organize and summarize the findings.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

This study employed both survey questionnaires and interviews to assess the performance of junior high school students from Shandong participating in ICH study tour activities at the Jinan Cultural Center. The investigation focused on four dimensions of English core competencies: language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability. The findings indicate that ICH study tour play a significant role in enhancing students' core competencies in the English subject. Through such experiential learning, students not only improve their language skills and cultural awareness but also develop their thinking quality and learning abilities. Consequently, establishing and refining a multidimensional evaluation framework for English core competencies is essential for promoting the development of ICH education and for further enhancing students' overall proficiency.

Analysis of the responses from 280 students yielded notable results through SPSS correlation analysis illustrated in Table 1. Specifically, the correlation coefficient between language ability and cultural

awareness was 0.65, indicating a moderate positive relationship. This finding suggests that cultural learning can effectively promote the acquisition of language knowledge; after all, culture serves as both the carrier and unique expression of language (Zhang, 2025). Instructors should, therefore, integrate cultural content into study tour activities to gradually foster students' cultural awareness. Likewise, the correlation coefficient between language proficiency and thinking quality was 0.60, while that between language ability and learning ability was 0.70, indicating a strong positive association. Furthermore, cultural awareness correlated with thinking quality at 0.70 and with learning ability at 0.75—the strongest among all dimensions—while thinking quality and learning ability were moderately correlated ( $r = 0.65$ ). These results suggest that ICH study tours have a synergistic effect on enhancing students' core competencies, with cultural awareness playing a particularly pivotal role in promoting learning ability. These findings provide important insights for designing and optimizing ICH study tour programs.

Based on the survey results, the four dimensions of junior high school English core competencies were enhanced to varying degrees by ICH study tour activities. Each dimension is analyzed below.

**Table 1. Correlation Analysis of Core Competences**

	Language Ability Enhancement	Cultural Awareness Enhancement	Thinking Quality Enhancement	Learning Ability Enhancement
Language Ability Enhancement	1	0.65	0.6	0.7
Cultural Awareness Enhancement	0.65	1	0.75	0.65
Thinking Quality Enhancement	0.6	0.7	1	0.65
Learning Ability Enhancement	0.7	0.75	0.65	1

#### 4.1 Language Ability

Language ability refers to the ability to understand and express meanings, intentions, and emotional attitudes in social contexts using listening, speaking, reading, writing, and related skills. As the foundation of core competencies in English, language ability supports the development of cultural

awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability (McCauley & Christiansen, 2019). Surveys revealed that students exhibited significant improvements in language abilities; 85% of participants reported better comprehension and use of ICH-related English terminology. SPSS analysis showed that the improvement in language ability before and after the study tour was statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Although the mean score for language proficiency (3.88) was slightly lower than those of the other dimensions—reflecting the fact that language improvement requires a longer-term accumulation—the standard deviation (0.70) was similar to those for thinking quality and learning ability, indicating comparable individual differences. A  $t$ -value of 4.52 ( $p < 0.05$ ; see Table 2) further confirms that the enhancement in language ability is statistically significant and relatively consistent across the sample.

Moreover, the study tour experience improved students' expressive capability. SPSS analysis revealed that through interactions with ICH practitioners, students not only acquired a wealth of specialized terminology but also enhanced the fluency and logical coherence of their language expression. For example, during the Lu embroidery session, students could accurately describe the production process and collaborate effectively with peers. While oral expression and listening/feedback skills showed improvement, only 46.4% of students could express their own views through visits, explanations, or discussions—suggesting that their abilities to articulate ideas on a given topic require further strengthening. Additionally, while 60.4% of students were able to draft short compositions independently (with subsequent teacher revisions), some students exhibited apprehension toward writing, indicating a need for sustained practice in expressive skills.

The survey results indicate that the language abilities of junior high school students in Shandong Province are unevenly developed. First, regarding language knowledge, students have acquired a certain level of phonetic knowledge; however, their grasp of the pragmatic functions of phonetics requires further improvement. For instance, some students are unable to effectively employ their English phonetic knowledge to convey meaning, intentions, opinions, and attitudes when interacting with foreign tourists. Moreover, most students understand vocabulary only at a superficial level without appreciating the contextual functions that lexical items may serve. In addition, the approach to grammar instruction tends to be overly rigid: accurate grammatical forms do not necessarily guarantee effective language use, which also depends on the speaker's intentions and emotional attitudes. While most students display a satisfactory command of macro-level discourse organization, their micro-level comprehension—such as understanding the logical relationships between sentences and the underlying implications—remains insufficient. Furthermore, although the majority of students have mastered basic pragmatic knowledge, their fluency in using both spoken and written forms for communication is lacking. Secondly, in terms of language skills, students generally exhibit strong receptive abilities (listening, reading, and viewing), yet their productive skills (speaking and writing) are relatively weaker. Their capacity to transmit information and viewpoints—effectively expressing opinions, emotions, and attitudes according to different purposes and audiences—needs further enhancement.



**Table 2. Language Ability Enhancement**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-value	P-value
Language Ability Enhancement	3.88	0.7	4.52	<0.05

#### 4.2 Cultural Awareness

Cultural awareness is defined as the understanding of both domestic and international cultures, as well as the recognition and appreciation of exemplary cultural values. In the context of global integration, cultural awareness embodies the values, humanistic qualities, and behavioral orientations that are fundamental to English core competencies (Cheng, 2022; Chen, 2022). The study tour activities significantly enhanced students' recognition of and respect for ICH values. Survey results revealed that 92% of the students reported a deeper understanding of ICH and an increased sense of cultural identification and protective awareness. SPSS analysis yielded a mean cultural awareness score of 4.12 (SD = 0.68;  $t = 5.56$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; see Table 3), underscoring the significant impact of ICH study tours on cultural awareness.

Students engaging in ICH projects contributed to cultural dissemination. For instance, by watching performances of Jinan's shadow puppetry, students not only learned about the historical background of this art form but also experienced the value and meaning of cultural transmission. Although 85% of the students could explain the historical and cultural contexts of ICH items, 15% reported difficulties in understanding some explanations, indicating that improvements in language comprehension are closely linked to one's cultural foundation. Furthermore, only 27.6% of the students felt fully or mostly capable of using English to introduce ICH and its connotations—suggesting that while many are familiar with ICH, their ability and willingness to disseminate Chinese culture in English are still limited. Therefore, educators should devote more effort to designing lessons that create contextualized experiences, thereby fostering genuine appreciation and pride in China's cultural heritage and motivating students to become active cultural ambassadors.

The questionnaire data further demonstrated that students' cultural awareness was quite positive. 90% students reported that visiting the ICH center deepened their understanding of ICH—especially in areas such as shadow puppetry and Lu embroidery—allowing them to recognize the diversity and significance of culture. Moreover, 70% indicated that the study tour activities enhanced their respect for traditional culture, moving beyond superficial understanding to engage with the historical, artistic, and technical aspects of cultural heritage. An additional 30% noted that the activities strengthened their sense of local cultural identity and pride. 92% students expressed an increased willingness to learn about their local cultural heritage after the study tour. This enhanced cultural identification not only

facilitates the transmission of ICH but also serves as a model for improving public awareness of ICH preservation.

**Table 3. Culture Awareness Enhancement**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-value	P-value
Cultural Awareness Enhancement	4.12	0.68	5.56	<0.05

#### 4.3 Thinking Quality

Thinking quality refers to an individual's cognitive characteristics, particularly in terms of critical and creative thinking. It reflects the mental development underlying the core competencies in the English subject (Wang & Ge, 2022). SPSS analysis indicated that ICH study tour practices significantly improved students' thinking quality. Data revealed that following the study tours, the mean score for thinking quality was 4.01 (SD = 0.72;  $t = 5.02$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; see Table 4). Questionnaire results showed that both creative and critical thinking had a mean score of 4.01 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Throughout the learning and experiential process, students demonstrated the ability to creatively formulate, analyze, and solve problems, thus enhancing the openness and creativity of their thinking. Specifically, 50% students exhibited strong critical thinking—primarily through reflections on the current state of ICH preservation, with some even drafting observational reports that identified challenges such as technological discontinuities and insufficient marketization, and proposing targeted improvements. Although the cultivation of innovative thinking was not the primary focus of the study tour, 30% students reported that their creativity was stimulated during practical activities, especially when engaging in hands-on projects and designing their own work.

**Table 4. Thinking Quality Enhancement**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-value	P-value
Thinking Quality Enhancement	4.01	0.72	5.02	<0.05

#### 4.4 Learning Ability

Learning ability encompasses students' proactive and adaptive use of English learning strategies, the

expansion of learning channels, and the overall effort to improve learning efficiency. As a necessary condition for developing English core competencies (Wang, 2022; Chen, 2022), learning ability was also significantly enhanced by ICH study tour practices. SPSS analysis showed that the mean score for learning ability was 3.96 (SD = 0.76;  $t = 4.89$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; see Table 5), indicating a statistically significant improvement. Survey data revealed that 89% students experienced improvements in autonomous, cooperative, and inquiry-based learning. Approximately 85% of students indicated that the study tour helped them acquire new autonomous learning strategies through observation, note-taking, and group discussions; 70% students reported that practical sessions, particularly those involving traditional handicraft production, enhanced their ability to solve real-world problems collaboratively. These activities further developed their communication and coordination skills; The study tour also fostered inquiry-based learning, as students learned to efficiently search for information, integrate data, and complete tasks independently. For example, during the Lu embroidery session, students independently gathered relevant videos and engaged in self-directed inquiry.

Despite these improvements, 62% students still demonstrated relatively passive learning behaviors and a lack of planning for their study tour experiences. When encountering difficulties in learning, many students exhibited a tendency toward avoidance and lacked effective problem-solving and reflective practices. This indicates that while ICH study tours enhance learning ability, there remains considerable scope for developing proactive learning habits and a deeper understanding of effective language learning strategies.

In summary, the development of English core competencies through ICH study tours among junior high school students is uneven. In terms of language ability, there is a need to strengthen not only the surface-level comprehension but also the ability to grasp underlying intentions and emotional nuances, along with the capacity to express opinions both orally and in writing. With regard to cultural awareness, although many students are familiar with ICH, their ability and willingness to introduce ICH in English remain limited. For thinking quality, while ICH study tours promote critical and creative thinking, both critical and innovative abilities require further enhancement. Finally, regarding learning ability, many students lack proactive planning and self-directed learning strategies, indicating that their capacity to reflect and adjust learning methods still needs improvement.

**Table 5. Learning Ability Enhancement**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-value	P-value
Learning Ability Enhancement	3.96	0.76	4.89	<0.05

## 5. Conclusion

The integration of ICH study tours with the development of English core competencies demonstrates a synergistic effect across multiple dimensions. The statistically significant positive correlations—especially the strong association between cultural awareness and learning ability—indicate that enhancing cultural awareness is particularly instrumental in promoting learning ability. These findings provide valuable guidance for the design and optimization of ICH study tour programs. Although the study tour practices have markedly improved students' core competencies, the evaluation mechanisms still require refinement in four areas. (1) Enhancing language ability. While ICH study tours improve students' language expression—both orally and in writing—and foster listening and feedback skills, there remains considerable room to improve the fluency and logical coherence of language use. (2) Strengthening cultural awareness. The study tours significantly enhance students' recognition and respect for ICH values; however, there is a need to further boost their ability and willingness to disseminate Chinese ICH in English. (3) Developing thinking quality. Although the practices promote critical and creative thinking, further research is needed to deepen the understanding of how to enhance logical reasoning skills. (4) Improving learning ability. While the study tours have enhanced autonomous, cooperative, and inquiry-based learning, additional efforts are required to stimulate students' initiative in learning.

The combination of ICH study tours with the cultivation of English core competencies epitomizes the deep integration of educational reform and cultural heritage preservation. Through participation in ICH study tours, students not only gain firsthand experience of traditional culture but also improve their language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability—thereby enhancing their cross-cultural communication skills. Moreover, a scientifically designed evaluation framework can reliably assess the development of these core competencies and ensure the achievement of educational objectives. This comprehensive experiential approach provides students with a platform to enhance their core competencies while simultaneously promoting cultural preservation and offering innovative perspectives for English teaching reform.

Despite exploring the multidimensional evaluation of junior high school English core competencies from various angles, this study has several limitations. First, the sample was confined to the ICH center in Jinan in Shandong Province, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Future research should expand the sample to include students from diverse regions and backgrounds to verify the universality of the conclusions. Second, the theory of English core competencies is still evolving and remains complex, warranting further in-depth investigation. Given the limitations in the researcher's own understanding and capabilities, this study is necessarily preliminary, and it is hoped that future scholars will build on these findings and offer more constructive implications.

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