

Performance Appraisal Of Opera Intangible Cultural Heritage

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Abstract

Under the effect of cultural homogenization, local specific differences are emphasized to induce people's emphasis on cultural heritage and local specialties. Intangible cultural heritage performance is seldom appraised, and the cultural preservation performance is distinct from the non-market value definition of natural resources. Cultural activities as operas need consumers' participation for inheritance to maintain the non-use value. In this case, consumers when participating in opera activities would acquire use value and maintain non-use value.

The indicators in this study are established, according to Delphi Method, and Data Envelopment Analysis is used for evaluating efficiency. Beijing, China, is selected as the research object. The research results reveal that 1.1 DMU presents strong-form efficiency on opera intangible cultural heritage performance, 4 DMUs shows the opera intangible cultural heritage performance between 0.9 and 1, and 11 DMUs appears the opera intangible cultural heritage performance lower than 0.9, 2.1 district shows

constant return to scale, with the opera intangible cultural heritage efficiency achieving the optimum, and 3. units with excess inputs in projects are reduced inputs and units with short inputs in projects are increased inputs so that the districts could achieve efficient opera intangible cultural heritage. According to the results to propose suggestions, it is expected to provide reference for protecting and inheriting the cultural heritage, opera.

Keywords: opera, intangible culture, cultural heritage, performance appraisal.

Introduction

The rapid changes in modern social culture results in various social difficulties. When traditional lifestyles, morality, religious beliefs, and daily lifestyles collapse, but definitely new value is not formed to replace the space, people would appear anxiety. The reaction-globalization of cultural globalization starts booming, and local intellectuals perceive the importance of the culture. Under the effect of cultural homogenization, local specific differences are emphasized to induce people's emphasis on cultural heritage and local specialties.

Non-market goods do not present market transaction price; the value, including use value and non-use value, are estimated the value with non-market goods evaluations. Common non-market goods appraisal contains travel cost method and contingent valuation method. Travel cost method, as revealed preference estimation, evaluates the value being paid in the recreation area with the travel cost a visitor spending on tourism activities in the recreation area, and the recreation performance is evaluated with consumer's surplus. Contingent valuation method, as stated preference estimation, is the direct investigation on visitors to understand visitors' willingness to pay or selection of goods quantity (Huong et al., 2020). In regard to natural resources, contingent valuation method could appraise use and non-use value as well as distinct performance of natural resources. Travel cost method, on

the other hand, could not evaluate non-use value of natural resources, and merely the use value corresponding to recreation could be appraised (Zhao et al., 2021). Intangible cultural heritage performance is seldom appraised, and the cultural preservation performance is different from the definition of non-market value natural resources. In other words, opera such cultural activity, different from general natural resources, requires the participation of consumers for the inheritance to maintain the non-use value of cultural activity. In this case, consumers, when participating in opera activities, do not simply acquire use value, but also maintain non-use value. This study therefore discusses the performance appraisal of opera intangible cultural heritage, expecting to provide reference for protecting and inheriting such a cultural heritage.

Literature review

I. Intangible cultural heritage

The idea of intangible cultural heritage was originated from the concept of cultural heritage preservation. It was generally considered that people started concerning about cultural heritage after the end of “World War II”, when economy and reform waves largely changed people’s living world and, in a sense, induced people’s emphasis on cultural heritage, the witness of the world (Grey & Kuokkanen, 2020). According to a series of files in United Nations Educationnel, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the idea of intangible cultural heritage was evolved from traditional folk culture and oral literature and integrated with “intangible cultural property” in Japan. In Proposal on the Protection of Traditional Culture and Folk Culture, “traditional folk culture” was defined as all creations from a cultural community being based on tradition, expressed by a group or an individual, and considered to match community expectation to be the expression of the cultural and social characteristics; and, the principles and value were imitated or inherited orally (Sandra Fatorić & Robbert Biesbroek, 2020). It contained the forms of languages, literature, music, dance, games,

myth, etiquette, habits, handicrafts, architecture, and other arts (Sandra Fatorić & Robbert Biesbroek, 2020).

Lacanienta et al. (2020) considered that cultural heritage was composed of material and non-material forms and regarded the relative cultural performance of material and non-material forms as the explicit characteristics of the body to show the difference between tangible cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage. In the cultural performance process, ones being remained with specific objects, such as utensils, buildings, and relics, reflected certain degree of material characteristics, called tangible cultural heritage. Those being expressed, delivered, and continued through human behaviors and continuously changing the contents along with people and time, e.g. religious beliefs, languages, performance art, and handicrafts, were called intangible cultural heritage. However, not all intangible cultural heritage did not contain the existence of physical materials. Alexiou (2020) considered that intangible cultural heritage did not stress on material carriers and presentation, but the skills, thoughts, and spirit in the material.

II. Connotation of traditional opera

Traditional opera is different from purely artistic drama in modern theaters. Traditional opera is an inseparable part of society and is tightly connected with folk culture context. When traditional opera encounters the crisis of disappearance due to social changes, people and governments start to face the importance of preserving traditional culture. Nonetheless, traditional opera would not be permanently inherited when preserving culture without realizing the essence and development context of traditional opera (Mehran & Olya, 2020). Flømsæter et al. (2020) considered that culture basically presented the essence of internal logic integration; attempting to understand culture or expecting to promote various reforms but ignoring the internal structure principle would more or less encounter frustration and success illusion. Rhoden & Kaaristo

(2020) indicated that people participating in preserving intangible cultural heritage should understand the logic and structure of traditional opera to avoid paying attention to the research and records of the artistic level of traditional opera but ignoring the religious and social levels as well as to protect the essence, under the of comprehensive and authentic principles, from being invaded by external force or foreign culture so as to continue traditional opera for generations. Traditional opera did not simply satisfy aesthetic perception and utilitarian value of performers, users, or participants, but also played the communication role of emotional ideal and value in a social and cultural system. It therefore presented the function to preserve and reinforce belief, custom & habit, attitude, and value (Chapman et al., 2021). Lupu et al. (2021) pointed out the contents frequently played in operas, including 1.social constituent entity in the entire bureaucracy, 2.methods for people dealing with desires and demands in real life, 3.individual re-interpretation of figures or events existing in history, and 4.interaction of various thinking and knowledge systems in social and cultural systems. It was also mentioned that some physical bases in social life were subtly but authentically performed in the artistic “playing” process of opera.

III. Classification of non-market property value

Mei (2020) indicated that the total economic value of environmental resources included “use value” and “non-use value”. Use value covered direct use value, indirect use value, and option value; and, non-use value was divided into legacy value and existence value. Christou (2020) contained market and non-market performance in the economic value of cultural heritage; such value could be use value or non-use value; and, non-use value included option value, existence value, and legacy value. Domestic and foreign scholars presented distinct opinions about the classification of use value and non-use value, and the major difference appeared on the classification of option value, as followings (Qian, 2020).

(1) Use value and non-use value

1. Use value contained direct use value and indirect use value; non-use value covered option value, legacy value, and existence value.
2. Use value included direct use value, indirect use value, and option value; non-use value was divided into legacy value and existence value.

(2) Current use value, future use value, and non-use value

1. Current use value covered direct use value and indirect use value.
2. Option value was future use value.
3. Non-use value contained legacy value and existence value.

The value of opera intangible culture in this study is classified into use value and non-use value, and opera intangible culture presents the particularity to maintain non-use value with use value.

Research indicator and object**I. Establishment of research indicator**

According to above indicators for opera intangible cultural heritage, Delphi Method is utilized in this study for drafting the performance appraisal indicators of opera intangible cultural heritage. Delphi Method, also named expert judgment, is a group decision-making method presenting both qualitative and quantitative characteristics. Aiming at issues with short data or under situation in the research process, questionnaire survey with anonymous experts could be repeatedly preceded voting and feedback till the different opinions drop down to the lowest and a commonly accepted answer is acquired.

The so-called “experts” should present the conditions of

- (1) interests in collaboratively attending Delphi Method survey,
- (2) rich information for sharing, (3) publically approved knowledge and techniques in specific fields, (4) expertise in the field of surveyed topic, including practical experience and theoretical research, and
- (5) agreement in the research results containing the special information possessed. An expert must present knowledge standard, reliability, and accuracy and more deeply understand the industry

than a layman so that the judgment is closer to the fact than general people. The value of Delphi Method is built based on such an answer.

II. Establishment of indicator

The indicators in this study are built according to Delphi Method.

The variables are defined as followings.

(1) Input variables

1. Personnel cost: total number of personnel participating in opera activity.

2. Use cost: cost for opera activity.

(2) Output variables

1. Growth dimension: market growth rate of opera activity.

2. Revenue performance: total revenue of opera activity.

III. Research method and object

Regarding research object, there are various types of operas in China, where the formation of Peking opera in late Qing Dynasty shows extraordinary meanings. Peking opera absorbs, gathers, and casts plenty of local operas and the essence of various arts, presents rich history accumulation and cultural heritage, marks the development of Chinese opera to a brand-new stage, and begins modern opera. Beijing has been an active opera stage before the formation of Peking opera. In addition to Kun and Yi tunes, Huabu tune of Qing opera are active on Beijing opera stages. Representative List of Protection Units of National Intangible Cultural Heritage announced in December 2019 that “musical theater” was qualified for protection. Beijing musical theater was listed in the fifth representative municipal intangible cultural heritage on September 29, 2021. “Delphi Method” and “Data Envelopment Analysis” are utilized in this study; the open annual reports of areas are used as the data for selecting inputs and outputs, and data are analyzed as the reference for improvement. Aiming at the research object, total 16 DMUs are selected.

II. Efficiency evaluation analysis

From the vision of economics, a DMU, with fewer inputs but more

outputs, reveals the better “performance”. Such performance could be evaluated with “efficiency”. According to the comparison between inputs and outputs, efficiency is defined as $\text{efficiency} = \frac{\text{weighted sum of outputs}}{\text{weighted sum of inputs}}$. The function for the maximal output acquired from different input combinations is called “production function”. The maximal output acquired from inputs is generally smaller the output of production function; therefore, production function is the maximal frontier of outputs, called “production frontier”. Efficiency, geometrically, maps inputs and outputs of all decision-making units to space using envelope principle to evaluate the relative efficiency of an organization and find out the efficiency envelope surface which could envelope all observed data to form efficiency frontier. The observed value of individual DMU and the distance of efficiency envelope surface could be calculated the relative efficiency.

Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) is applied in this study to evaluate efficiency. Unlike traditional regression analysis, which simply seeks the mean path through points in a series of data, it envelopes various sample data and attempts to find out the relationship to present the advantage of a good efficiency evaluation model. The method applied linear programming, considers factors which could be used for measuring performance among DMUs, and compares performance of units with similar characteristics.

Empirical analysis of opera intangible cultural heritage performance appraisal

I. Analysis of opera intangible cultural heritage performance appraisal

The DEA efficiency evaluation result could help understand the performance of opera intangible cultural heritage. Efficiency=1 stands for a DMU achieving relative efficiency; on the contrary, efficiency<1 shows a DMU being relatively inefficient. The empirical

results, Table 1, reveal that 1 district is relatively efficient, with the efficiency=1, that the opera intangible cultural heritage in the district reaches the ideal state. The rest districts appear relatively worse opera intangible cultural heritage.

Table 1: Relative efficiency of district

district	overall efficiency	pure technical efficiency	scale efficiency
Dongcheng District	0.92	0.92	0.92
Xicheng District	0.88	0.87	0.89
Chaoyang District	0.97	0.96	0.98
Fengtai District	1.00	1.00	1.00
Shijingshan District	0.84	0.84	0.84
Haidian District	0.86	0.85	0.86
Mentougou District	0.94	0.94	0.93
Fangshan District	0.82	0.82	0.82
Tongzhou District	0.91	0.90	0.91
Shunyi District	0.83	0.82	0.83
Changping District	0.76	0.76	0.76
Daxing District	0.87	0.86	0.87
Huairou District	0.72	0.71	0.72
Pinggu District	0.75	0.75	0.75
Miyun District	0.80	0.80	0.81
Yanqing District	0.85	0.84	0.86

II. Slack variable analysis

In terms of the analysis of return to scale, Table 2, 1 district shows constant return to scale that the opera intangible cultural heritage achieves the optimal efficiency. The rest 15 districts reveal increasing return to scale that the marginal return could be enhanced by expanding the scale to promote the efficiency.

Regarding slack variable analysis, the improvement for input excess/shortage in districts is shown in Table 2. Reducing inputs in

units with excessive inputs and increasing inputs in units with input shortage to have the districts reach efficient opera intangible cultural heritage.

Table 2: Relative efficiency of district

decision-making unit (DMU)	input can be improved		output can be improved		return to scale
	personnel cost	use cost	growth dimensions	revenue performance	
Dongcheng District	1	1	1	0	IRS
Xicheng District	0	1	2	1	IRS
Chaoyang District	1	2	0	0	IRS
Fengtai District	0	0	0	0	CRS
Shijingshan District	2	1	1	0	IRS
Haidian District	1	3	0	1	IRS
Mentougou District	1	1	0	2	IRS
Fangshan District	2	2	0	1	IRS
Tongzhou District	1	2	1	1	IRS
Shunyi District	2	2	0	0	IRS
Changping District	3	1	2	3	IRS
Daxing District	2	0	0	2	IRS
Huairou District	3	3	2	4	IRS
Pinggu District	2	4	3	2	IRS
Miyun District	2	2	1	0	IRS
Yanqing District	1	1	0	2	IRS

Data source: organized in this study.

Conclusion

According to the efficiency acquired from DEA and the message of variables, Table 1, 1 DMU, about 6% of all DMUs, presents strong-form efficiency on the opera intangible cultural heritage performance, efficiency=1, revealing the better opera intangible cultural heritage performance. 4 DMUs, about 25% of all DMUs, show marginal inefficiency, with the opera intangible cultural

heritage performance in 0.9-1, showing that the districts could more easily promote the opera intangible cultural heritage performance. 11 DMUs, about 69% of all DMUs, appear the opera intangible cultural heritage performance lower than 0.9, as obvious inefficiency, where Huairou District shows the lowest opera intangible cultural heritage performance 0.78. To further develop characteristic culture brands, like red culture and opera culture, 3 characteristic cultural blocks with the history of party, war resistance, and opera as the themes are built in Wanping City, Changxindian, and Xiluo Garden as the trial. By developing “new dynamic” with “micro-transformation”, peoples are provided more activity venue when the block cultural quality is enhanced. The construction of theme-based blocks attracts numerous citizens. “Fengtai presents deep opera culture with concentrated opera resources, galaxy of opera talents, and good basis of crowds.” Based on such advantages, an opera culture protection and heritage demonstration area with opera exhibitions, opera cultural performance, opera travel experience, opera products, and opera cultural festivals is created in Fengtai.

Suggestion

According to the research analysis results, the following suggestions, aiming at opera intangible cultural heritage are proposed in this study.

Talents are the basis of businesses. In the new media time, communication studies professionals should be positively absorbed to lay the foundation of the development of new media business. Professional affairs are done by professionals. Although various major opera theaters in Beijing have their own new media platforms, and even different accounts on various platforms, there is not an industry leader or “the best” in new media. It explains that formal “new” is not enough, while doing real things is the key. Talents are the key to take the step. It is suggested that a theater, under

allowed staffing, could open a new-media communication professional competency department to deeply study the features, methods, and channels of “second theater” and explore new opera brand with the support of new technologies. Opera generated in ancient farming civilization, matching with the production and lifestyles at the time. In the new media time, people’s fast-paced life could not adapt to the slowness and scatter of opera. Fining out the similarities through technologies is the key to make up the gap. One is to integrate opera content and form with modern life. For instance, short videos of singing ancient poetry with xipi and erhuang and wonderful dressing up to have ordinary audience understanding the story behind opera receive numerous fans with their own styles. Such “short videos” are generated from contemporary lifestyles.

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