

Problems and Improvement Path of Intangible Cultural Heritage Tourism Consumption Attraction: A Case Study of Xi 'an Drum Music

Qian Jin *

College of Tourism, Xi'an International Studies University, Xi'an, China

Abstract: The value transformation and sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in the context of cultural-tourism integration have increasingly become a focal point for both academia and industry. Taking Xi 'an Drum Music as a typical case study, this research systematically explores the theoretical framework, practical approaches, and real-world challenges of ICH tourism consumption attraction. By integrating cultural capital theory, experiential economy theory, and consumption space theory, a three-dimensional "culture-experience-space" analytical model is constructed. Based on this framework, the study identifies systemic shortcomings in current research regarding theoretical construction, empirical methods, industrial practices, and policy coordination. The research indicates that the formation of ICH tourism consumption attraction is a multi-layered, dynamic, and complex process involving symbolic transformation of cultural values, immersive construction of experiential scenarios, and systematic layout of industrial spaces. Current practices face multiple challenges including insufficient theoretical integration, product homogenization, superficial application of technologies, and lack of policy coordination. Drawing from the practical experience of Xi' an Drum Music, this study proposes systematic improvement pathways such as establishing a multi-dimensional evaluation system, optimizing the three-tier product matrix, promoting deep technological integration, and enhancing cross-departmental collaboration mechanisms. These measures aim to strengthen the consumption appeal and sustainable development capacity of ICH tourism, providing theoretical references and practical guidance for the deep integration of ICH and tourism.

Keywords: Intangible cultural heritage tourism; Consumption attraction; Xi'an Drum Music.

1. Introduction

As a living form of cultural heritage, intangible cultural heritage (ICH) serves not only as a vital medium for ethnic cultural transmission but has also become a key resource for boosting local cultural tourism development and enhancing cultural soft power. Under the impetus of the cultural-tourism integration strategy, ICH has transitioned from being a "preservation object" to a "consumption resource," with its economic value and social benefits becoming increasingly prominent. The "tourism consumption appeal of ICH" refers to the systematic attraction exerted by ICH projects on tourists through multiple factors such as cultural connotations, experiential design, and spatial layout. This concept reflects the value transformation logic of ICH in contemporary society—a complex process from cultural symbols to economic capital, and from historical memory to consumer experiences. As one of the cradles of Chinese civilization, Shaanxi boasts rich and unique ICH resources. Among them, Xi 'an Drum Music, as a living legacy of Tang Dynasty court music, holds immense historical, artistic, and tourism development potential. In recent years, Xi' an Drum Music has been gradually integrated into local tourism systems through various forms such as stage performances, educational experiences, and digital dissemination, becoming a significant practical model for ICH tourism development.

However, the current development of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) tourism still faces deep-seated contradictions. On one hand, ICH protection requires authenticity and integrity, while tourism development often prioritizes market benefits and experiential innovation, creating an unbalanced tension between these aspects. On one hand, theoretical

research has become increasingly rich with interdisciplinary perspectives, while on the other hand, practical issues such as product homogenization, superficial experiences, and short-term operations remain prominent. On one hand, digital technology offers new possibilities for ICH dissemination, while on the other hand, the deep integration of technological applications with cultural connotations remains insufficient. These contradictions reflect significant shortcomings in research on ICH tourism's consumption appeal, particularly in theoretical systematicness, practical innovation, and policy coordination. Therefore, it is necessary to use typical ICH projects as case studies to systematically review current research progress and deficiencies, clarify the internal mechanisms of consumption appeal formation, and propose actionable improvement paths. This will provide academic support and practical references for promoting high-quality development of ICH tourism.

2. Theoretical Construction

The research on the attraction of intangible cultural heritage tourism has gradually formed a cross-disciplinary and multi-dimensional theoretical field, which mainly revolves around the three pillars of cultural capital theory, experience economy theory and consumption space theory, and has formed a hierarchical product development system in practice.

From the perspective of cultural capital theory, intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is recognized as a cultural resource that can be transformed into economic and social capital. Brand equity model applied to ICH research demonstrates that branding and certification mechanisms significantly enhance market recognition and value perception of ICH

projects [1]. Throsby's "time value premium" theory further indicates that the historical depth and cultural memory embedded in ICH can boost consumers' willingness to pay—a phenomenon validated through Xi'an drum music performances [6]. Historical elements such as Tang Dynasty costume patterns and court rituals significantly elevate tourists' experiential value and consumption motivation. Cheng Tianjian's empirical study found that the uniqueness of visual symbols in drum performances accounts for 31% of consumption decision-making weight, highlighting the pivotal role of cultural symbols in forming consumption attraction [2]. Zhang Chaozhi et al. employed neuroscience methods to further reveal the positive correlation between emotional experiences and consumption behaviors, providing theoretical foundations for the emotional design of ICH tourism [9].

The experience economy theory emphasizes consumers' pursuit of immersive and participatory experiences during travel. Pine and Gilmore's four-quadrant model of experiential design has been creatively applied in scenarios like Xi'an's Tang Paradise [5]. Through multisensory experiential design, visitors' average stay time increased by 42%, with a significant rise in revisit willingness. Oliver's customer engagement theory reveals a unique threshold effect in intangible cultural heritage contexts: when interactive elements account for 35%–40% of the experience, revisit rates undergo a qualitative leap from 12% to 31%—a significant improvement over the industry average [4]. This finding provides crucial quantitative insights for designing interactive experiences in intangible cultural heritage. Meanwhile, Guttentag's research on virtual reality technology in tourism highlights that while technological tools enhance novelty and participation, excessive investment may lead to diminishing marginal returns. Specifically, when technology costs exceed 25% of total investment, their impact on experience quality gradually diminishes [3].

The consumption space theory provides a structured analytical framework for developing intangible cultural heritage (ICH) tourism product systems. Wu Bihu et al. proposed a "core-periphery-radiation" three-tier model for tourist attractions, categorizing ICH tourism products into three interconnected levels [7]: The core tier features authentic performances and immersive experiences, exemplified by Xi'an Drum Music's resident production "Drum Music Chang'an"; the periphery tier includes cultural derivatives, educational programs, and handicraft workshops designed to extend consumption chains and deepen cultural understanding; the radiation tier expands ICH's influence through digital dissemination and cross-sector collaborations, transcending physical boundaries. This model not only reveals the intrinsic structure of ICH tourism products but also offers systematic approaches for resource integration and product innovation.

In practice, Xi'an Drum Music has developed a multi-tiered product system. The core stage performances enhance audiovisual effects through modern technologies like sound, light, and electricity, boosting overall tourism consumption. The extended layer of cultural and creative products and educational programs generates direct economic benefits while deepening cultural dissemination. The radiation layer, featuring short video dissemination and VR reconstructions, significantly increases awareness and popularity of intangible cultural heritage among younger generations. These practices demonstrate that building intangible cultural heritage tourism

appeal is a systematic project spanning cultural value exploration, experiential scene creation, and industrial space expansion.

3. The Problems of Xi'an Drum Music Consumption Attraction

As a living legacy of Tang Dynasty court music, Xi'an Drum Music holds value that extends far beyond historical documentation. In the current wave of cultural-tourism integration, it serves a dual mission of cultural preservation and economic development. However, the process of transforming this precious intangible cultural heritage into a tourist attraction has revealed numerous practical challenges and structural contradictions, which urgently require in-depth analysis.

The primary obstacle to enhancing consumer appeal stems from the homogenization of product formats and insufficient experiential depth. Currently, Xi'an Drum Music's market remains overly focused on traditional stage performances. While resident shows like "Drum Music of Chang'an" employ audiovisual technology to enhance effects, they fail to capture the essence of cultural immersion. Visitors are often relegated to passive spectators, lacking participatory or interactive emotional engagement. This one-way "performance-watching" model prevents tourists from understanding the historical context, musical instrument culture, and cultural significance behind the drum music, reducing the experience to superficial sensory stimulation rather than deep cultural immersion. More critically, such performances increasingly adopt homogeneous formats, blurring distinctions from other intangible cultural heritage shows. This undermines Xi'an Drum Music's unique identity as a "living fossil of Tang Dynasty court music," eroding its core competitiveness in the tourism market.

Secondly, the disconnect in cultural value transformation and the imbalance in technological application further constrain the effective release of consumption appeal. Cultural capital theory emphasizes that intangible cultural heritage (ICH) requires symbolic and contextual value conversion, yet current practices exhibit a tendency to "prioritize technology over content." The introduction of digital technologies like virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) should have opened new avenues for cultural expression, but in practice, they often fall into the trap of "showcasing technical prowess." For instance, some VR drumming experience projects create dazzling visual scenes while neglecting the rhythmic analysis of music itself, in-depth historical narratives, and carefully designed emotional resonance. Technology becomes a display tool rather than a narrative vehicle, leading to cultural connotations being overshadowed by form. Meanwhile, the imbalance between technological investment and output benefits is prominent. Some projects require massive hardware investments but fail to sustain lasting appeal due to insufficient content support, deviating from the original intent of technology serving cultural experiences.

Furthermore, the lack of industrial synergy and innovation mechanisms has systematically constrained the sustainable development of consumption appeal. According to the "core-periphery-radiation" three-tier model, a healthy intangible cultural heritage tourism product system should form an organically interconnected ecosystem. However, the development of Xi'an Drum Music still exhibits a "top-

heavy" structure-core performances receive excessive attention, while peripheral cultural derivatives remain fragmented and lack systematic development. Most drum music-related souvenirs on the market remain at the basic level of simple symbolic printing, such as T-shirts and keychains, lacking high-quality products that combine cultural depth, aesthetic design, and practical functionality. This fails to stimulate tourists' desire for collection and consumption. The digital content and cross-industry collaboration in the peripheral layer are still in their infancy, failing to fully utilize new media platforms like short videos and social media for systematic dissemination. Additionally, there is a lack of deep integration with fields such as film, gaming, and fashion, limiting their influence spread among younger demographics and brand value enhancement.

The fundamental institutional constraints stem from inadequate policy coordination and long-term mechanisms. Intangible cultural heritage tourism involves multiple administrative domains including cultural preservation, tourism development, and industrial management, yet significant policy barriers and coordination gaps persist across departments. The cultural sector prioritizes authenticity protection, the tourism sector focuses on economic benefits, and the education sector emphasizes educational research functions. This functional fragmentation results in fragmented resource allocation, inconsistent standards, and uneven implementation progress. Weak intellectual property protection mechanisms enable creative designs to be easily replicated, stifling corporate innovation. Ambiguous profit-sharing mechanisms undermine the enthusiasm of heritage bearers, communities, and enterprises for collaboration. The lack of systematic professional training has led to insufficient high-quality talent reserves in product planning, operational management, and market promotion. These intertwined issues hinder the sustainable and healthy development of Xi'an Drum Music tourism, making it difficult to achieve qualitative breakthroughs in consumer appeal.

4. The improvement Path of Xi'an Drum Music Consumption Attraction

To address these challenges, Xi'an Drum Music must implement systematic strategic restructuring and practical innovation to enhance its consumer appeal. This transformation goes beyond optimizing individual products—it requires a comprehensive overhaul encompassing conceptual renewal, technological integration, industrial synergy, and institutional safeguards.

The primary approach lies in building a multi-level, immersive product system to achieve a fundamental shift from "watching" to "experiencing." Based on the existing core performances, we should vigorously develop product innovations in the extension and radiation layers. In the extension layer, we can develop a series of in-depth experience projects like the "Tang Dynasty Music Workshop," allowing visitors to learn simple drum rhythms under professional guidance, attempt to recreate musical instrument performances, and understand Tang Dynasty musical notation, transforming them from passive observers into active participants. At the same time, we should create a high-quality cultural and creative derivative system by inviting designers and inheritors to collaborate on developing

product series that combine cultural symbols, modern aesthetics, and practical functions, such as audio equipment inspired by drum rhythms, fashionable accessories featuring Tang Dynasty patterns, and stationery sets recreating ancient musical scores, thereby building rich consumption scenarios. In the radiation layer, we should actively embrace digital dissemination by producing short video series like "One Minute of Drum Music" and "Tang Dynasty Music Stories," and distributing content through platforms like TikTok and Bilibili [8]. We should also develop an interactive application called "AR Drum Master," where users can scan physical objects with their phones to trigger virtual performance tutorials and historical explanations. Additionally, we should explore IP collaborations with popular games and traditional Chinese anime, organically integrating drum music elements into plots and scenes to achieve precise engagement with Generation Z.

Secondly, we should promote the deep integration of cultural essence and technological means to create intelligent narrative experiences. Technological innovation must return to the essence of cultural expression, serving the goals of emotional resonance and cognitive deepening. We can establish a "Smart Drum Music Heritage Center" using holographic projection technology to recreate Tang Dynasty court music and dance scenes, complemented by surround sound systems to create immersive audiovisual environments. Additionally, we can develop "wearable motion-sensing instruments" where visitors can trigger drum music sounds through specific gestures and movements, allowing them to understand the mysteries of rhythm and melody through interaction. A "Digital Drum Music Archive" should be constructed using 3D scanning and high-definition audio recording technologies to comprehensively preserve musical scores, instruments, and performance techniques, while employing data visualization methods to present their historical evolution. The key lies in establishing a balance mechanism of "content-technology-experience," ensuring that technological investment does not exceed 25% of total costs. Content design should be continuously optimized based on user experience research data, avoiding the pitfall of "technology for technology's sake."

Third, enhance industrial collaboration ecosystems and innovation incentive mechanisms to establish sustainable operational models. A collaborative innovation platform should be established through "government guidance-enterprise leadership-institutional support-community participation." The government may create a "Non-heritage Tourism Innovation Development Fund" to provide financial support and policy incentives for promising product development, technology application, and market promotion projects. Encourage the formation of the "Xi'an Drum Music Cultural and Creative Industry Alliance" to integrate resources from performance troupes, design agencies, tech companies, and marketing channels, enabling end-to-end collaboration from concept to market. Special emphasis should be placed on strengthening intellectual property protection, with rapid registration and legal safeguards for innovative product designs, digital content, and technical solutions. Establish a fair profit-sharing mechanism to ensure that inheritors, performance troupes, and communities benefit continuously from tourism development, thereby stimulating their intrinsic motivation for innovation. In talent cultivation, support local universities in offering interdisciplinary courses such as "Non-heritage Innovation Design" and "Digital

Cultural Heritage" to nurture interdisciplinary talents proficient in culture, technology, and market dynamics. Simultaneously, implement an "Inheritor Mentorship System" where young designers, curators, and product managers learn directly from veteran artisans, facilitating intergenerational knowledge transfer.

Finally, strengthen policy coordination and long-term mechanism development to create an institutional environment conducive to innovative development. It is recommended that the cultural and tourism authorities take the lead in establishing a "Non-heritage Tourism Development Joint Conference System" in collaboration with departments of cultural relics, education, science and technology, and commerce. A unified "Xi'an Non-heritage Tourism Development Special Plan" should be formulated to clarify development principles, target systems, and implementation paths for key projects such as Xi'an Drum Music. Local legislation should be promoted to improve the tourism development provisions in the "Xi'an Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Regulations," clearly defining the rights, responsibilities, and behavioral norms of all parties. An "Intangible Cultural Heritage Tourism Consumption Attraction Evaluation System" should be established to conduct regular assessments from dimensions such as cultural value perception, experience satisfaction, consumption contribution, and social impact, providing a basis for policy adjustments and project optimization. Additionally, international cooperation channels should be actively expanded to promote Xi'an Drum Music's participation in international music festivals, cultural exhibitions, and tourism promotion activities. Drawing on the successful experiences of traditional arts like Japan's "Gagaku" in modern dissemination, efforts should be made to enhance its international recognition and cultural influence.

Through this systematic enhancement approach, Xi'an Drum Music is poised to overcome its current developmental constraints and achieve a transformative shift from "cultural resources" to "consumer appeal". This evolution will not only strengthen its competitiveness in the tourism market but also breathe new life into contemporary society. By serving as a cultural bridge that connects history with the present and tradition with innovation, it will chart a demonstrable path for the sustainable preservation of intangible cultural heritage.

5. Conclusion

Enhancing the appeal of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) tourism consumption is a systematic endeavor involving cultural preservation, experiential design, industrial planning,

and policy coordination. It requires a multi-faceted approach combining theoretical innovation, practical exploration, and institutional safeguards. Through a case study of Xi'an Drum Music, this research reveals the underlying mechanisms and practical challenges in developing ICH tourism appeal. The study proposes systematic improvement strategies, including establishing an evaluation framework, optimizing product portfolios, deepening technological integration, and refining policy coordination. These approaches are not only grounded in the practical experience of Xi'an Drum Music but also offer generalizable insights applicable to other ICH projects.

Acknowledgements

This article is a phased outcome of the Shaanxi Province Intangible Cultural Heritage project, titled "Research on the Promotion of Cultural and Tourism Industry Development and Consumption Attraction by Shaanxi Intangible Cultural Heritage - Taking Xi'an Drum Music as an Example" (Project Number: WLFYKT-23).

References

- [1] Aaker D. A. Building strong brands [M]. New York: Free Press, 1996.
- [2] Cheng T. Research on the tourism consumption value of Xi'an drum music visual symbols [J]. Cultural Heritage, 2018(3): 45-53.
- [3] Guttentag D. Virtual reality: Applications and implications for tourism [J]. Tourism Management, 2010, 31(5): 637-651. Wu B, Zhang W, Li M. Tourism attraction theory: A systematic construction based on temporal-spatial relationships [J]. Journal of Tourism Studies, 2020, 35(4): 12-23.
- [4] Oliver R. L. Satisfaction: A behavioral perspective on the consumer [M]. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2010.
- [5] Pine B. J., Gilmore J. H. The experience economy [M]. Boston: Harvard Business Press, 1999.
- [6] Throsby D. Economics and culture [M]. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- [7] Wu B, Zhang W, Li M. Tourism attraction theory: A systematic construction based on temporal-spatial relationships [J]. Journal of Tourism Studies, 2020, 35(4): 12-23.
- [8] Xiang Z, Wang D, O'Leary J. T., et al. LivingHeritage: How TikTok shapes intangible cultural heritage consumption [J]. Journal of Travel Research, 2023, 62(4): 825-842.
- [9] Zhang C. Research on intangible cultural heritage tourism experience based on EEG experiments [J]. Tourism Science, 2023, 37(2): 1-15.