

An Empirical Research on the Acceptance of Tea Culture Among Gen-Z: A Case Study of Chengdu People's Park

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Abstract: Taking Chengdu People's Park as a primary case, this study investigates the perception of and engagement with traditional tea culture among Generation Z (Gen Z) through a mixed-methods research design. Findings reveal a significant discrepancy in cultural engagement, characterized by "high symbolic recognition but low cognitive depth". Specifically, while 78% of respondents identify with traditional tea cultural symbols, only 28% demonstrate a profound understanding of their philosophical connotations. The analysis indicates that social networking needs and preferences for the "experience economy" are the predominant factors driving Gen-Z's behavior. Consequently, this paper argues for a strategic transformation of traditional tea culture through immersive scene design, incorporating narrative-based experiences and integrated online-to-offline (O2O) communication. These findings offer both theoretical insights and practical pathways for fostering intergenerational cultural transmission and enhancing the cultural identity of Chengdu as a "Park City".

Keywords: Gen-Z; Cultural Acceptance; Chengdu People's Park; Experience Economy; Park City.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Established in 1911, the tea culture of Chengdu People's Park is epitomized by the historic Heming Tea House, which opened its branches recently in Chengdu, featuring with its representativeness in folk cultural heritage of the Bashu region. As a "living specimen" of the traditional slow-paced lifestyle in old Chengdu [1], the tea house has evolved into a complex cultural ecosystem. It integrates socialization, leisure, and the inheritance of customs through intangible cultural practices, such as the art of brewing *Gaiwan* tea and "tea blending" performances. The philosophical connotations embedded in the "Sancai Bowl" (representing Heaven, Earth, and Humanity) and the "Three Nods of the Phoenix" technique not only reflect the ritual aesthetics of traditional Chinese tea ceremonies but also embody the communicative ethics of "harmony in diversity" within market culture, as articulated in Fei Xiaotong's *From the Soil* (1948) [2], sustaining community emotional bonds and local cultural identity through daily tea-drinking activities. This tea-mediated social model has historically shaped Chengdu's unique public sphere and continues to serve as a vital link between traditional heritage and modern urban life.

In the current era, the tea culture of People's Park has been entrusted with a dual mission. First, as a cultural medium supporting Chengdu's development into a "park city" [3], its symbiotic integration of market vitality and ecological elements aligns with the urban planning paradigm shift from "production-oriented space" to "quality-of-life space". Specifically, the tea culture supports the city's green infrastructure and public space optimization, enhancing both ecological and cultural functions. Second, it serves as a critical locus for observing the modern transformation of traditional heritage. However, globalization and digitalization pose structural challenges to this legacy. A 2024 field survey reveals a stark demographic imbalance: 58% of daily visitors to Heming Tea House are over 60 years old, while Gen Z

accounts for only 12%. This disparity reflects a "rupture in the intergenerational transmission of cultural capital" [4]. Furthermore, according to the *2023 China New Tea Drink White Paper*, post-90s consumers visit traditional tea houses at only one-fifth the frequency of modern tea shops. This trend underscores a friction between traditional ritual consumption and the rapid pace of contemporary consumer culture. Meanwhile, the aging of intangible heritage practitioners is critical: only 3 out of 12 recognized tea art inheritors are under the age of 50, according to the 2023 annual report of Chengdu Intangible Cultural Heritage. The 78% turnover rate among young apprentices, illustrating what Giddens (1998) described as the "disembedding of tradition" within modernity [5].

1.2. Characteristics of Gen Z's Cultural Consumption

Generation Z (born between 1995 and 2010), categorized as "digital natives," is profoundly embedded in the logic of technologized media and network-based social structures. Their engagement with tea culture exhibits three distinctive characteristics.

First, prioritization of the experience economy. Gen Z prioritizes emotional resonance and interactive engagement over the mere acquisition of material products [6]. In the context of tea culture, this is manifested in a strong preference for immersive scenarios, such as participation in tea art performances, DIY blending sessions, or interacting with Augmented Reality (AR) installations that narrate the historical evolution of *Gaiwan* tea. Second, strategic social capital and "punch-in" participation. Cultural consumption for Gen Z is inherently tied to social media visibility and the pursuit of "punch-in" (check-in) cultural capital [7]. At Heming Tea House, over 60% of young visitors document their *Gaiwan* tea experience through photography for platforms such as Xiaohongshu and Douyin. This practice effectively transforms traditional ritual consumption into a shareable form of social currency. Third, niche identity and "Circle-based" orientation [8]. Gen Z tends to construct

personal identity through curated cultural consumption, showing a marked preference for niche and personalized content. This trend is evident in the emergence of interest-based communities, such as Song Dynasty tea ritual clubs or regional tea-tasting circles, where young consumers deepen their sense of social belonging through specialized cultural practices.

1.3. Intergenerational Rupture in Tea Culture Transmission

Currently, the transmission of traditional tea culture faces a critical structural dilemma characterized by intergenerational disconnection. While middle-aged and elderly groups remain the primary practitioners, sustaining the culture through ritualized ceremonies and "tea blending" performances, Gen Z often exhibits cognitive alienation from these traditional symbols. Influenced by digital lifestyles, younger demographics frequently perceive traditional tea houses through the lens of stereotypes, viewing them as "outdated" or "excessively ceremonial". Survey data underscores this gap: 72% of Gen Z respondents perceive park tea culture as an "obsolete time capsule," while only 28% demonstrate a substantive comprehension of the philosophical values underlying the tea ceremony [9]. This cognitive dissonance highlights an urgent need for communicative strategies that can bridge the aesthetic and conceptual divide between generations.

This disconnect is further exacerbated by a fundamental clash in temporal expectations: traditional rituals, such as the five-minute "Three Nods of the Phoenix" tea presentation, conflict with the shortened attention spans typified by Gen Z's consumption of 15-second viral videos, as is reported in the 2023 Youth Attention White Paper. Moreover, capital-driven "internet celebrity culture" has further divorced such skill from their original context, reducing tea culture to a consumable visual spectacle. At its core, this tension reflects a broader contradiction between the "slow philosophy" inherent in traditional tea ceremony, which emphasizes mindfulness, ritual, and temporal depth, and the "accelerated logic" of modernity, which prioritizes instant gratification and efficiency. Bridging this gap, by integrating profound cultural heritage into the consumption preferences of Gen Z, has thus become a crucial issue for the revitalization of traditional tea culture.

1.4. Implications of the study

This study carries significant theoretical implications. Firstly, it extends the theory of intergenerational transmission of traditional culture by incorporating the perspective of Gen Z, thereby supplementing the micro-level mechanisms of tea culture dissemination and enriching the application contexts of "cultural acceptance" among youth. Secondly, by examining the influence of experiential elements, such as spatial design and interactive formats within the park setting, on cultural identity, this research contributes to refining theories related to the experience economy and cultural consumption.

On a practical level, this research offers valuable insights. Through empirical investigation into the demand pain points of Gen Z, it proposes concrete strategies for enhancing the experiential content and communication approaches of tea culture in People's Park, supporting the revitalization of its cultural offerings. Furthermore, by exploring integrative models such as "tea culture + youth engagement," the study

aids in strengthening the appeal of Chengdu's park city initiative and provides actionable pathways for boosting the city's cultural brand among younger demographics.

1.5. Research Questions

To systematically analyze the current state and future potential of tea culture among the younger generation, this study is structured around three interconnected research objectives. First, the research aims to ascertain the cognitive and behavioral dimensions of Gen Z's engagement with park-based tea culture. This includes an empirical evaluation of their core perceptions, participation intentions, consumption patterns, and social sharing practices, while identifying existing biases and barriers in current cultural dissemination efforts. Second, the study elucidates the key influencing mechanisms that shape Gen Z's cultural acceptance. By examining variables such as cultural identity, price sensitivity, and evolving social needs, the research seeks to uncover the underlying psychological and socio-economic drivers of engagement with traditional tea heritage. Finally, the study explores pathways for enhancing youth cultural identity through contextual innovation. By linking theoretical insights with practical applications, this research formulates communication strategies designed to modernize traditional tea spaces and foster a sustainable cultural identity among Gen Z.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Connotation and Regional Practice of Tea Culture

The construction of Chinese tea culture is structurally organized around three interconnected and synergistic dimensions: the material, the institutional, and the spiritual. At the material level, physical artifacts such as the *gaiwan* serve as more than mere utility; its "three talents" structure (representing Heaven, Earth, and Humanity) acts as a cosmological symbol reflecting the ecological wisdom embedded in traditional processing techniques. The institutional dimension is manifested through codified rituals and social norms—ranging from the formal Tang Dynasty court tea banquets to the meticulous etiquette of Chaoshan Gongfu tea, which historically transformed tea houses into "micro-public spheres"[10]. These spaces facilitated vital information exchange and communal bonding, establishing a framework for interpersonal communication. Finally, the spiritual dimension centers on the virtues of harmony, integrity, and authenticity, elevating tea consumption into a meditative practice aimed at achieving the "unity of humanity and nature"[11].

The functions of tea culture have undergone a significant evolutionary trajectory across historical periods. While initially valued for medicinal and edible purposes, it transitioned into a medium for social stratification and communication during the Tang and Song dynasties, eventually becoming a primary vehicle for literati aesthetic expression in the Ming and Qing eras. In the contemporary era, tea culture has emerged as a critical symbol of cultural soft power, conveying the concept of "harmony in diversity" through global "tea diplomacy" while driving a burgeoning consumer market through "new tea beverages" and digital heritage innovations. This functional evolution demonstrates the adaptive and enduring nature of tea culture, forming a "super-stable structure" that provides the theoretical

foundation for understanding modern regional practices.

Building upon this general framework, Chengdu's tea culture, particularly within the context of People's Park, exemplifies a practical model of 'fusion of old and new' in action. Chengdu's tea culture is centered on "leisure", and Heming Tea House, as a landmark space in People's Park, "blends the old and the new". It is embodied in the symbiosis of traditional market texture and modern leisure needs, the collision of intangible cultural heritage skills and emerging consumption forms, and the two-way empowerment of offline scenes and digital media: in terms of space, it not only retains authentic traditional elements such as green tile wooden beams, bamboo chairs and square tables, and tea crates mixed with tea, but also implants modern functional facilities such as charging ports and cultural and creative leisure areas; In terms of experience content, there are not only living intangible cultural heritage displays such as "Eighteen Styles of Dragon Walking" performances and *Gaiwan* tea etiquette, but also young projects such as tea DIY, Hanfu tea experience, and tea-flavored cultural and creative products. On the communication path, through short video check-in and scene co-creation, it not only improves the awareness of Gen Z on tea culture symbols but also enhances the willingness to participate through interactive experience, but at the same time, there are challenges such as shallow cultural connotation and intergenerational aesthetic conflicts. It provides a practical sample of "symbiosis of inheritance and innovation" for the revitalization of traditional market culture in the park city. This "symbiosis between the old and the new" model not only continues the originality of Bashu tea culture but also adapts to the needs of consumption upgrading.

Gaiwan Tea: Symbolic Heritage and Digital Transformation

The *Gaiwan* tea set serves as a material embodiment of the "unity of heaven and man" in traditional Chinese philosophy. Its tripartite structure, lid (Heaven), bowl (Humanity), and saucer (Earth), symbolizes a harmonious cosmic order. Beyond philosophy, it is a primary carrier of Bashu folk culture and a recognized intangible heritage of Chengdu, preserving unique brewing techniques and the historical essence of traditional market life. At Heming Tea House, this heritage is further elevated by the "Dragon Walking Eighteen Styles" performance, which merges martial arts with tea aesthetics. Utilizing long-spout copper kettles, practitioners execute precise, rhythmic movements like "Su Qin's Back Sword," transforming technical brewing into a ritualized aesthetic symbol. This "silver volley" of tea pouring showcases regional craftsmanship and offers visitors a profound cultural experience.

In the digital era, these traditions have found new vitality on Gen-Z-centric platforms. Between late 2024 and early 2025, #GaiwanTeaPerformance reached over 520 million views on Douyin. While older audiences value the set's philosophical depth, Gen Z interacts with it as a "Guochao" (national trend) symbol. Visual elements like the minimalist tray and the flowing movements of performers have become social currency suitable for digital sharing. As Guo Wenxuan (2025) notes, this fusion of traditional skill and short-video storytelling elevates *Gaiwan* tea from a local custom to a youth-oriented subcultural symbol[12]. By bridging cultural identity with modern social needs, this phenomenon revitalizes youth interest and secures the sustainable transmission of tea culture within Chengdu's urban public space.

2.2. Characteristics of Gen Z Cultural Consumption

The cultural consumption of Generation Z is characterized by a high dependency on social media platforms, such as Xiaohongshu and Douyin, which facilitate a closed loop of "communication-consumption-re-dissemination". This digital ecosystem makes the "influencer attributes" of cultural venues a decisive factor in their selection process. Unlike the "passive acceptance" typical of traditional consumption, Gen Z actively pursues "participation" and "personalization". Within the tea culture scene, this is manifested in a preference for interactive engagement, such as personal tea making and brewing, rather than mere observation. Following Pine and Gilmore's "experience economy" framework, these consumers are more inclined to pay for scene-based emotional immersion and the reconstruction of individual self-narratives through "experience-oriented" rituals.

Furthermore, cultural consumption serves as a vital tool for Gen Z to construct a niche "circle identity". Participating in specialized activities, such as Song Dynasty tea ordering, allows young people to highlight their "cultural taste" and form specific communities via social platforms. While niche belonging is also sought through innovations like cold brew tea or tea-coffee fusions, this stratification may inadvertently exacerbate the intergenerational disconnect in traditional tea arts. This phenomenon reflects both a resistance to mainstream culture and an exposure of the inherent fluidity of individual identity within modernity.

2.3. Extending the Technology Acceptance Model to Cultural Contexts

To systematically analyze these behaviors, this study adapts Davis's (1989) Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)[13], transposing its traditional focus on "perceived usefulness" and "perceived ease of use" into the cultural sphere. The resulting "Tea Culture Acceptance Model" incorporates four dimensions tailored to Gen Z: Perceived Cultural Value, which addresses the cognitive evaluation of aesthetic and historical meanings; Perceived Experiential Convenience, which explains the gap between high symbolic recognition and low physical participation; Subjective Norms, which accounts for the influence of social media trends and peer recommendations; and Behavioral Intention, which is expanded to include sustained participation and cultural diffusion. By utilizing this adapted framework, the study captures the complex interplay between traditional heritage and digital-native consumption patterns. This approach facilitates a nuanced understanding of how youth interact with deeply rooted cultural practices, ultimately identifying strategic pathways for enhancing intergenerational cultural transmission.

3. Research Methods

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, sequentially integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively explore Gen Z's acceptance of tea culture. This dual approach allows for triangulation and a fuller interpretation of complex social behaviors. Quantitative data, primarily collected via survey questionnaires, quantify levels of cognition and participation, while qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews and open-ended survey items, provide narrative depth regarding motivations and emotional perceptions. By capturing both the

"what" and the "why" behind youth engagement, this integrated methodology enhances the overall validity and richness of the findings.

The research utilized a stratified sampling strategy to ensure demographic representation among Gen Z students. The primary sample consisted of students from Chengdu-based universities, supplemented by those from other provinces and students studying abroad. Out of the 300 valid responses collected, the sample profile included 37% male and 63% female respondents; 35% were local Chengdu students, while 65% were non-local. Notably, 86% of the participants reported a monthly expenditure between 1,500 and 3,000 *yuan*. This diverse composition facilitates comparative analyses between local and non-local youth, highlighting potential regional influences on tea culture acceptance.

To validate reported survey data with real-world behavioral patterns, on-site observations were conducted at Chengdu People's Park from October 2024 to May 2025. These observations totaled 50 hours and spanned weekdays, weekends, and holidays to capture a broad spectrum of activity. Key metrics focused on visitor age distribution, specific consumption behaviors, such as ordering *Gaiwan* tea, and social media-related actions, including photography and digital posting. These contextual data points provide a grounded baseline to interpret the motivations and participation barriers identified through the quantitative and qualitative instruments.

Data Collection and Analysis

To ensure the structural integrity of the quantitative phase, the questionnaire design was mapped across specific cognitive and behavioral dimensions (see Table 1). Prior to full-scale distribution, a pilot study was conducted with 30 pre-survey samples to evaluate the scale's reliability and validity. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha yielded coefficients exceeding the academic threshold of 0.6 for all sub-scales: the Cognitive Scale (alpha = 0.78), the Attitude

Scale (alpha = 0.82), and the Behavioral Scale (alpha = 0.75), indicating high internal consistency. Furthermore, construct validity was verified through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), which produced a KMO value of 0.81 (> 0.7) and a significant Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($p < 0.001$). Factor loadings for individual items consistently exceeded 0.6, such as those for items Q9 (0.89) and Q12 (0.85), confirming that the measurement model was suitable for advanced statistical analysis.

The qualitative analysis utilized a rigorous three-stage coding framework to extract meaningful insights from open-ended responses and interview transcripts. Initial open coding involved identifying high-frequency concepts such as "slow life," "check-in" culture, and "DIY experiences". Through axial coding, these initial concepts were categorized into broader themes, namely "Cognitive Symbols," "Experience Needs," and "Improvement Directions". Finally, selective coding refined these themes into core theoretical categories, such as the dominance of symbolic cognition over in-depth experience and the prominence of social-interactive needs. This systematic approach allowed for a direct theoretical connection between the empirical data, Experience Economy theory, and the adapted Cultural Acceptance Model.

Complementing this analysis, in-depth interviews with a subset of 30 respondents, stratified into high-participation and low-participation groups, revealed critical experiential barriers and motivations. Frequent participants expressed a desire for more substantive educational content, such as "tea history mini-classes," to add depth beyond mere photography. Conversely, those with low participation rates often cited a sense of "cultural alienation," perceiving traditional tea houses as spaces dominated by older generations. These interviews underscore the potential of innovative "tea plus" formats, such as combining tea culture with board games, to bridge the intergenerational gap and appeal to the social preferences of Gen Z.

Table 1. Correspondence between Questionnaire Structural Dimensions and Measurement Content

Scale dimensions	Questionnaire items	Measure content
Cognitive Scales	Q6 (Awareness), Q7 (Exposure Channel), Q8 (Frequency of Participation)	The breadth of cognition, information acquisition path, and behavior frequency of tea culture in People's Park
Attitude Scales	Q9 (Characteristic Symbol Identity), Q10 (Willingness to Pay), Q11 (Environmental Preference), Q12 (Social Tendency)	Cultural identity, consumption intention, experience preference, and social attribute needs
Behavioral Scales	Q8 (Frequency of Participation), Q13 (Motivation for Participation), Q14 (Hindrance)	Actual Participation Behavior, Motivational Drives, Barrier Factors
Open qualitative data	Q16 (one-sentence description), Q17 (improvement suggestion)	Keywords of cultural cognition, subjective need for improvement

Insights from Semi-Structured Interviews

To further explore the nuances of youth engagement, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 respondents, stratified into high-participation and low-participation groups. Members of the high-participation group, who engage at least three times monthly, expressed a desire for more meaningful educational content. For instance, one local student suggested that a "tea history mini-class" at Heming Tea House would add value beyond mere photography. Conversely, individuals in the low-participation group often cited a sense of being "out of place" in traditional settings. One non-local student noted that the current environment felt tailored toward older generations, suggesting that innovative social formats, such as combining tea with board games, could lower the barrier to entry and foster a more inclusive atmosphere for younger visitors.

Interviewee 1 (local college student, male): "I deliberately choose to come on weekday afternoons when there are fewer people, so I can stay quietly for a while. It would be great if the tea house could add a 'tea history mini-class'. It doesn't need to be too long, just 10 minutes to talk about the story of Heming Tea House. That would be more meaningful than just taking photos."

Interviewee 2 (Non-local college student, female): "Last time I went to People's Park with my family, I passed by the tea house but didn't go in. It felt like all the people there were uncles and aunts chatting over tea, and we young people would feel 'out of place' if we went in. If there were activities like 'tea + board games', I might want to try."

4. Results

The application of the aforementioned mixed-methods approach yielded several key findings that paint a clear picture of Gen Z's cognitive and behavioral relationship with the tea culture in People's Park. A primary discovery is the coexistence of high visibility with shallow understanding. While a substantial 92% of respondents are aware of the park's tea culture and 78% can specifically identify *Gaiwan* tea, only 45% possess knowledge of the historic Heming Tea House's heritage. This discrepancy is largely attributed to the fragmented nature of their primary information channels; 68% of respondents engage with tea culture through short-video platforms, followed by travel guides at 52% and peer recommendations at 41%. Consequently, although digital natives are frequently exposed to cultural symbols, the information they receive often lacks systematic guidance. This leads to a low behavioral frequency, as only 32% have personally experienced the tea culture at People's Park, with a notable disparity between local Chengdu students (25%) and those from other regions (8%).

Quantitative analysis further highlights the significant role of social orientation and price sensitivity in shaping youth attitudes. While 75% of respondents agree that People's Park tea culture is a characteristic symbol of Chengdu (yielding a mean score of 4.0), cultural identity is markedly higher among local students compared to their non-local counterparts (mean score 3.6). Furthermore, Gen Z demonstrates a strong preference for the "experience economy" and social engagement, with 62% valuing the physical environment and 78% prioritizing social activities (mean score 4.1). However, these preferences are tempered by a high sensitivity to cost; only 20% of respondents are willing to pay more than 50 yuan for a tea experience.

Willingness to pay is closely tied to consumption stratification, as individuals with a monthly expenditure exceeding 3,000 yuan show a significantly higher readiness to spend (mean score 3.5) compared to the general sample (mean score 2.8).

The data also elucidate a profound contradiction between high cultural interest and low participation frequency, driven by specific motivations and barriers. The primary drivers for participation are "checking in at internet celebrity landmarks" (55%) and "relaxation and leisure" (52%), while the pursuit of "experiencing traditional culture" accounts for only 38% of engagement. Conversely, participation is significantly hindered by practical constraints, specifically a "lack of time" (45%) and perceived "excessive consumption" (32%). These obstacles reflect the broader academic pressures and the cost-effectiveness preferences characteristic of Gen Z. By identifying these causes for the "high interest, low frequency" paradox, the study provides a foundation for developing targeted strategies to bridge the gap between symbolic recognition and deep cultural participation.

To further elucidate the mechanisms driving cultural engagement, a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was conducted on the quantitative data (see Table 2), yielding a cumulative variance explanation rate of 72%. Based on these results, four principal components were extracted, aligning with the core dimensions of the extended Tea Culture Acceptance Model. The Perceived Cultural Value Factor (loading 0.89) reflects Gen Z's comprehensive evaluation of tea culture as a distinct symbol of Chengdu, encompassing its historical meaning and aesthetic value. High factor loadings for the Subjective Norm Factor (0.85) confirm that social needs, specifically peer invitations and "influencer" trends, are dominant drivers of participation intention. Additionally, the Perceived Ease of Use Factor (0.78) identifies physical accessibility and process convenience as critical determinants of behavioral frequency. Finally, the Price Sensitivity Factor (0.73) highlights a negative correlation between low willingness to pay and perceptions of "excessive spending," confirming that cost remains a primary constraint for the student demographic.



Figure 1. wordcloud

Table 2. PCA Results on Factors Influencing Gen Z's Tea Culture Acceptance

The name of the factor	Typical items	Factor loading	Corresponding questionnaire items	Theoretical Corresponding Construct in Tea Culture Acceptance Model	Factor Interpretation
Perceived Cultural Value Factor	Q9 (Distinctive Symbol Identity)	0.89	Q9	Perceived Cultural Value (covers historical meaning, aesthetic symbols, and identity value of tea culture)	Reflects Gen Z's comprehensive evaluation of tea culture as a characteristic symbol of Chengdu and its intrinsic cultural connotations (such as the philosophical implication of "Sancai Bowl" in 盖碗茶 Gaiwan tea). A higher factor loading indicates that "recognition of tea culture as a city symbol" is the core indicator of this factor.
Subjective Norm (Social Needs) Factor	Q12 (Social Tendency), Q13 (Punch / Social Motivation)	0.85	Q12, Q13	Subjective Norms (influence of social circles on tea culture participation)	Captures the impact of social interaction needs and external recommendations (such as friend invitations and Internet celebrity check-in trends) on participation intention. The high loading of Q12 and Q13 confirms that "social sharing" and "check-in motivation" are the main drivers of this factor.
Perceived Ease of Use (Experience Convenience) Factor	Q8 (Frequency), Q14 (Inaccessibility)	0.78	Q8, Q14	Perceived Ease of Use (physical accessibility, process convenience of participating in tea culture activities)	Measures the convenience of Gen Z's participation in tea culture activities. Q8 (participation frequency) and Q14 (hindrance of "inaccessibility") jointly reflect that "easy access to tea scenes" and "simple participation process" directly affect behavioral frequency.
Price Sensitivity Factor	Q10 (willingness to pay), Q14 (excessive spending)	0.73	Q10, Q14	Perceived Value-Satisfaction Link (supplementary dimension to TAM, reflecting cost-effectiveness perception)	Serves as a supplementary factor to the classic TAM model, reflecting Gen Z's sensitivity to the cost of tea culture consumption. The negative correlation between Q10 (low willingness to pay) and Q14 (perception of "excessive spending") confirms that price is a key constraint for low-consumption groups.

Qualitative data from open-ended survey items further support the conclusion that Gen Z's interest is primarily concentrated on visual symbols rather than cognitive depth. High-frequency demands for improvement include increased interactive DIY activities (35%) and the integration of tea-themed board games or script-based experiences (28%) to modernize traditional scenes. Interestingly, short-video communication acts as a double-edged sword: while it has introduced 35% of respondents to tea culture for the first time, over-entertaining content has led 31% to perceive the culture as "lacking depth" [14]. This suggests that while digital platforms are effective for broad dissemination, they may inadvertently simplify the profound philosophical connotations of tea culture into superficial visual memes (wordcloud in Figure 1).

5. Conclusion

The empirical results of this study delineate a significant paradox in Generation Z's engagement with the tea culture of Chengdu People's Park: high symbolic recognition coexists with low behavioral participation. While digital natives readily identify with tea culture as a hallmark of Chengdu's urban identity, their engagement remains largely superficial, driven by social media-oriented "check-in" motivations rather than deep cultural understanding. This gap is exacerbated by practical barriers, including perceived time constraints and high consumption costs, which prevent high interest from translating into sustained participation. Furthermore, although the "slow-living" temperament of Chengdu fosters an emotional affinity among youth, the current traditional

offerings fail to effectively convert this resonance into a stable cultural identity. Consequently, the intergenerational transmission of tea culture faces a communicative rupture that requires a fundamental paradigm shift from traditional ritualization to modernized, immersive engagement.

To address these pain points, this study proposes a hierarchical experience design aimed at transforming tea houses from mere "consumption scenarios" into spaces of "cultural immersion". For "light experiences," the introduction of low-cost, short-duration DIY workshops can directly mitigate the "insufficient time" barrier identified in the survey. "In-depth experiences" could involve immersive "One-Day Tea Artisan" programs that incorporate eco-friendly practices to align with Gen Z's environmental values. Most notably, "innovative experiences" such as tea-themed script-based games (e.g., *The Mystery of the Tea Merchant*) can bridge the gap between entertainment and education by integrating historical narratives into interactive gameplay. Spatial redesign is equally vital; the installation of interactive digital walls and the launch of "Night Tea Ceremonies" using light-and-shadow technology can reimagine traditional Song Dynasty rituals as visually striking, shareable moments for social media.

Finally, establishing a closed-loop communication model is essential for converting online visibility into offline attendance. This study recommends producing targeted short-video content, such as "The Story of the Gaiwan Teacup," which utilizes peer influence to strengthen cultural relevance. By blending cultural knowledge with digital "check-in" incentives, these strategies can lower the threshold for

participation. Additionally, developing specialized "Tea Culture Day Trip" guides for non-local and international students can broaden the reach of these initiatives. Collectively, these pathways offer a strategic framework for the sustainable revitalization of traditional tea culture within the modern "Park City" paradigm, ensuring its continued vitality among the next generation of practitioners.

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