

A Study on the Path of Enhancing the Brand Competitiveness of Tourism Destinations with Intangible Cultural Heritage Elements under the Background of Cultural and Tourism Integration—Taking Folk Tourism Areas as an Example

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ABSTRACT This study examines folk tourism areas under the background of cultural and tourism integration and analyzes how intangible cultural heritage elements enhance tourism destination brand competitiveness. Based on field research, questionnaire data, the brand management process method, and IPA analysis, a mechanism model is constructed to explain the role of intangible cultural heritage in brand competitiveness improvement. Three typical folk tourism areas, including Danzhai Wanda Town, Chongzuo Taiping Ancient City, and Xinzhou Ancient City, are selected for comparative analysis. The study finds that intangible cultural heritage elements enhance destination brand competitiveness through three pathways: cultural capital transformation, experiential value embedding, and brand personality shaping. Empirical data show that intangible cultural heritage experience projects can extend tourists' stay, increase the proportion of secondary consumption, and strengthen tourists' willingness to recommend the destination brand. Based on these findings, the paper proposes three strategies: branding intangible cultural heritage resources, systematizing experiential products, and constructing a three-dimensional communication matrix. The study provides practical reference for transforming cultural resources into destination brand capital.

INDEX TERMS cultural tourism integration, intangible cultural heritage, destination brand, brand competitiveness, experiential value

I. INTRODUCTION

FOLK tourism areas serve as vital spatial carriers for local social traditions, anchoring a wealth of intangible cultural heritage resources such as ancestral weaving patterns and regional embroidery techniques. However, most folk tourism areas have faced the dilemma of “rich resources but insufficient transformation”, “profound culture but shallow perception” and “diverse products but weak brands” in the current situation of folk tourism. Intangible cultural heritage elements have often stopped at the level of static presentation, not fulfilling their real role in the enhancement of brand recognition, the cultural added value and market competitiveness of tourist destinations. Solving this problem requires an in-depth exploration into the intrinsic mechanisms and pathways in order to transform intangible cultural

heritage from cultural resources into brand capital.

On the basis of three typical folk tourism areas in southeastern Guizhou, Danzhai Wanda Town, Chongzuo Taiping Ancient City, and Xinzhou Ancient City, this paper takes them as research objects. It introduces the method of brand management process and IPA analysis, and wants to contribute in the following aspects: First, in the theoretical level, it breaks through the previous macro narrative of cultural tourism integration, constructing a “non-heritage element - brand competitiveness” mechanism model. This model has shown that there are three fundamental paths of empowerment: cultural capital transformation, experiential value embedding, and brand personality shaping, which can deepen the theoretical understanding of branding process of intangible cultural heritage. Second, at the empirical level,

through large-scale questionnaire surveys and in-depth semi-structured interviews, quantitatively verify the existence of the significant effect of intangible cultural heritage experiences on tourists dwell time, secondary consumption, and brand recommendation willingness, and provide the data support for the effectiveness of intangible cultural heritage empowerment. Finally, at the practical level, it also puts forward improved brand enhancement strategies for different types of intangible cultural heritage resources, which can serve as an operable decision-making reference for folk tourism areas to achieve high-quality development in fierce market competition.

The structure of this paper is as follows: Part One is the introduction, which elaborates on the research background, problem awareness and marginal contribution; Part Two is a literature review and comment, which reviews and comments on relevant literature concerning the integration of cultural tourism and development of intangible cultural heritage; Part Three is the design of the research, data collection process and data analysis methods of multi-case comparison research; Part Four is the distribution of intangible cultural heritage resources and tourist perception characteristics through empirical data, and examination of the impact of Intangible cultural heritage element on brand competitiveness and a deep quality exploration of the three paths of

II. RELATED WORK

Research on cultural and tourism integration has shown a trend of development from macro-level assessment to multiple perspectives. Tang et al. [1] proposed that the development level of cultural and tourism integration in traditional villages needs to be scientifically assessed, and explored the influencing factors and paths behind it. XU et al. [2] sorted out and analyzed the current hot topics in the field of cultural and tourism integration, and combined with the perspective of resource innovation and utilization, constructed a theoretical framework for deep integration of culture and tourism. REN et al. [3] placed cultural and tourism integration in the context of Chinese-style modernization and constructed its theoretical system and research framework. Shang and Xie [4] constructed an indicator system to measure the level of integration of cultural industry and tourism industry, and further analyzed the interaction and influence relationship between the two systems. Naiju and Sai [5] explored the measurement method and internal mechanism of cultural and tourism integration.

Liguo and Wangfen [6], from a structuralist perspective, aimed to provide a new path for the integrated development of culture and tourism in traditional villages. XIE and SUN [7] analyzed the characteristics of a mediated society and explored how it reshapes the relationship between culture and tourism, in order to explain the internal logic and support system of the integration of culture and tourism in a mediated society. Jialiang and Zhaofeng [8] revealed the spatiotemporal evolution law of the efficiency of cultural and

tourism integration and explored the key factors affecting the efficiency. Li [9] analyzed the current situation and existing problems in the field of cultural tourism dance performance in Xian and explored its integration and innovation path and strategy. Shao [10] analyzed the current situation of the development of red cultural tourism in Gao County and diagnosed the specific problems in resource development, product design and talent training. Existing research has not explored how “intangible cultural heritage elements” as core cultural assets can be systematically transformed into the “brand competitiveness” of tourist destinations. Especially in the context of deep integration of culture and tourism, the unique cultural genes inherent in intangible cultural heritage, through specific empowerment pathways, are still lacking systematic theoretical construction and empirical testing regarding their internal mechanisms and implementation paths for reshaping the brand image of tourist destinations, enhancing their market recognition and cultural added value. This study takes a folk tourism area as an example to explore the practical logic and mechanism of intangible cultural heritage’s transformation from cultural resources to brand capital.

III. METHODS

A. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study uses combination between case study comparison and questionnaire survey. For the purpose of selection of case, three folk tourism areas in Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture: Danzhai Wanda Town, Chongzuo Taiping Ancient City, and Xinzhou Ancient City, were selected as the research subjects.

The selection criteria are as follows: First, three case sites take intangible cultural heritage as the core attraction which has abundant and diverse intangible cultural heritage resources; second, three sites have developed relatively mature models for cultural tourism integration which provide a comparable foundation for research; and third, the three sites have geographical distribution difference, resource types, and development paths, which provides the possibility of comparative analysis. However, it is acknowledged that these regions (Guizhou, Guangxi, and Shanxi) possess distinct economic development levels and varying degrees of local government policy support for “cultural and tourism integration.” These macro-environmental factors may influence the efficiency of resource transformation. Therefore, the mechanism model constructed in this study should be viewed as a theoretical framework whose specific parameters may require calibration when applied to regions with different socio-economic infrastructures.

The survey was conducted in three phases, that is, the first phase was the preliminary survey in Danzhai Wanda town to complete the initial questionnaire test and revision, the second phase was the formal survey conducted simultaneously in the three place, and the third phase was the supplementary interview to handle the typical issue found in data analysis. To minimize recall bias in the “Before” vs. “After” compari-

son (Table 3), the “Before” data regarding intended stay time and behavioral expectations were collected from tourists at the entry points of the scenic areas, while the “After” data were collected from the same cohort at the exits following their ICH participation. This longitudinal tracking of the same visitor group ensures the validity of the reported +2.8 hour stay increase and secondary consumption growth.

B. DATA ACQUISITION

The questionnaire design is based on brand personality theory, experience economy theory, and cultural capital theory, referencing existing mature scales and making adaptive adjustments to suit the research objectives. The questionnaire comprises four parts: Part One is basic information about the respondents, including critical control variables such as “previous visit frequency” and “cultural proximity” (measured by the geographic and ethnic distance between the respondents hometown and the destination). This allows the model to account for the fact that a local tourists perception of authenticity may differ from that of a first-time foreign visitor. Part Two is the perception of intangible cultural heritage elements of intangible cultural heritage elements, covering four dimensions: richness, authenticity, experiential aspects, and innovation; Part Three is the evaluation of brand competitiveness, including four dimensions: brand awareness, brand reputation, brand loyalty, and brand association; and Part Four is behavioral intentions, including revisit intentions, recommendation intentions, and consumption intentions.

The survey adopted a combination of offline interception and online questionnaire. The offline survey was mainly conducted at the exit of the scenic area, and the face-to-face interview method was adopted to ensure the quality of the questionnaire [11]. The online survey was pushed through the official WeChat account of the scenic area, with small red envelope incentives. A total of 2,150 questionnaires were collected, of which 1,863 were valid, with an effective recovery rate of 86.7%. The sample composition is as follows: males accounted for 47.2%, females accounted for 52.8%; 18-35 years old accounted for 58.6%, 36-50 years old accounted for 31.2%, and over 50 years old accounted for 10.2%; local tourists accounted for 23.5%, tourists from within the province accounted for 41.8%, and tourists from outside the province accounted for 34.7%.

In addition to the questionnaire survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 31 people, including heads of cultural and tourism authorities, scenic area operators, intangible cultural heritage inheritors, and business representatives from the three regions, to obtain qualitative data to supplement and verify the questionnaire data.

This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Henan Institute of Technology, and was performed in accordance with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. All eligible participants signed an informed consent form.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. DISTRIBUTION OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF TOURIST PERCEPTION

The types, structure, and development level of intangible cultural heritage resources in the three regions vary, which directly affects the perception and evaluation of tourists. Danzhai Wanda Town has 8 national-level and 23 intangible cultural heritage items at the provincial level which include different types such as traditional craft, folk customs and traditional dance. Among them, Miao batik, Miao silver ornaments and ancient papermaking have formed relatively mature systems of experience products. Chongzuo Taiping Ancient City, with Zhuang culture as the theme, represents the intangible cultural heritage of jewelry as Zhuang brocade weaving and Frost Festival and Zhuang Tianqin art, as well as the intangible culture of other places, as Chaoshan Yingge dance, and will form the “local + imported” combination model. Xinzhou Ancient City based on the local culture of northern Shanxi relies on more than ten intangible cultural heritages at the provincial level and above, including dough figurines, paper cutting, iron flower making, and Beilu Bangzi opera, as well as to integrate them into the scenery of the ancient city.

Table 1 summarizes the difference of the perception and evaluation of the intangible cultural heritage elements in the three locations provided by the tourists. The data shows that Danzhai ranked highest in both the richness and experiential in intangible cultural heritage, which is in close relation to its rich intangible cultural heritage resources and its development strategy with emphasis on experiential transformation. Danzhai has infused intangible cultural heritage value with many formats of “intangible cultural heritage + study tours”, “intangible cultural heritage + cultural and creative industries”, and “intangible cultural heritage + festivals”, which has provided the opportunity to cross intangible cultural heritage from static display to living transmission. It should be noted that “static display” is not inherently negative; in Danzhai, the static preservation of ancient fiber specimens contributes to the “richness” dimension by providing a historical benchmark. The critique of “static levels” in Section 1 refers specifically to passive consumption. By integrating these archival resources into a “living” experience system, the destination achieves a synergy where historical depth (static richness) supports modern engagement (dynamic transmission).

Chongzuo achieved relatively good results in intangible cultural heritage innovation dimension. The Taiping Ancient City operation team through new “cultural IP + technology empowerment + market-oriented operation” model exploration, precise planning of the festival theme, innovation of the form of intangible cultural heritage expression, etc. During the Spring festival of this year, “Intangible Cultural Heritage Celebrates the New Year” series of activity, received a total of 420,000 visits, and 33.6 million yuan of profit. The organic combination of drone performances and intangible cultural heritage exhibitions showed the positive

impact that technology empowerment can bring. However, a critical balance must be maintained to ensure that technological interventions do not overshadow the core ICH elements. In Chongzuo, drones were utilized strictly as a “visual carrier” to illuminate traditional Zhuang embroidery patterns in the night sky, thereby extending the visibility of the artisanal motifs without diluting the underlying cultural narrative or displacing the physical craftsmanship of the heritage inheritors.

Xinzhou Ancient City really scored high in the dimension of the authenticity of intangible cultural heritage. Adhering to the concept of “not creating ‘museum-style’ displays,” the ancient city enables the intangible cultural heritage to take root in the daily life of the city and creates a living ecosystem of “viewable, engaging, and accessible” heritage through intangible cultural heritage workshops, markets and other forms. Projects such as plant dyeing workshops, gourd pyrography, and dough sculpting experiences cross the boundaries of intangible cultural heritage transmission with the visitor experience in a bid to increase the perception of the authenticity of intangible cultural heritage among visitors.

TABLE 1. Comparison of tourists perception and evaluation of intangible cultural heritage elements in the three regions

Evaluation Dimensions	Danzhai Wanda Town	Chongzuo Taiping Ancient City	Xinzhou Ancient City	F value	Significance
Intangible cultural heritage richness	4.32 ± 0.67	3.98 ± 0.72	4.05 ± 0.69	18.63	0.000
Intangible cultural heritage authenticity	4.08 ± 0.71	3.85 ± 0.74	4.21 ± 0.65	16.27	0.000
Intangible cultural heritage experience	4.41 ± 0.63	3.92 ± 0.70	4.17 ± 0.68	24.85	0.000
Intangible cultural heritage innovation	4.15 ± 0.69	4.23 ± 0.66	4.02 ± 0.73	8.94	0.000

Note: A five-point Likert scale is used, where 1 indicates strongly disagree and 5 indicates strongly agree.

Table 1 illustrates that there are significant differences in the perception of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) elements by tourists across the three locations ($p < 0.001$). Danzhai Wanda Town ranked the highest both in “ICH richness” (4.32) and “ICH experience” (4.41), indicating that based on the abundant ICH resources, the implementation of “ICH + study tour” and other dynamic transformation strategies that Danzhai Wanda Town used made good progress in improving the tourists perception of ICH diversity and participation. Xinzhou Ancient City had strong “ICH authenticity” (4.21) that demonstrated its development philosophy by integrating ICH into daily life and rejecting the “museum-style” displays, which enhanced the identification of tourists with

the authenticity of the culture. Chongzuo Taiping Ancient City was on the forefront of “ICH innovation” (4.23), demonstrating the positive impact of a “cultural IP + technology empowerment” model such as the association of drones and ICH performances, which gives tradition a contemporary feeling. Overall, the varying paths of development of the three places directly influenced the differentiated perceptions of tourists, which provide a clear direction of the optimization of ICH empowerment strategies in different regions.

B. THE IMPACT OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE ELEMENTS ON BRAND COMPETITIVENESS

The impact of intangible cultural heritage elements on brand competitiveness of tourist destinations can be studied from four dimensions: brand awareness, brand reputation, brand loyalty and brand association. Table 2 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis. To address potential endogeneity and the risk of “reverse causality”—where a high pre-existing brand reputation might bias a tourists perception of ICH authenticity—we conducted a Durbin-Wu-Hausman test. The results ($p > 0.05$) suggest that while brand reputation and perception are interconnected, the primary directional influence flows from ICH perception to brand competitiveness in this specific sample, after controlling the demographic variables such as tourist age, income and educational level.

The richness of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is the one with the utmost impact on brand awareness. This result is in line with theoretical expectations - abundant ICH resources are the basis for diversity of tourist destination attractions and this provides greater content material for brand communication. Danzhai based on its resource matrix of “8 national-level and 23 provincial-level ICH items” has formed the brand recognition “hometown of ICH” through media communication. During the 3rd China Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Annual Conference in 2025, its online viewership reached over 7.2 billion, realizing the function of ICH richness in the brand awareness enhancement process.

The authenticity of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is the biggest contributor to the brands repute. The perception of tourists towards the authenticity of ICH directly affects the value judgment that tourists make about a tourist destination. Xinzhou Ancient City through the real presentation of traditional crafts, make tourists feel the charm of “old crafts” such as plant dyeing, gourd pyrography are more popular among young consumers. Such an authentic experiential learning helps create positive brand evaluation. Chongzuo Taiping Ancient City pays special attention to authenticity while displaying Zhuang ethnic culture, and the live presentation of Zhuang brocade weaving and Zhuang wedding performances will help tourists better understand the depth of the brand. The experiential nature of intangible cultural heritage is the one with the highest predictive power in terms of brand loyalty. Experiential elements are an important mediating variable between the perception and behavioural intention of tourists. In Xinzhou Ancient City, the experiential projects, such as plant-dyed T-shirts, fireworks from iron flowers, turn tourist visitors from spectators to participants, which helps them to develop brand loyalty.

The innovativeness of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) has the most significant impact on brand association. Innovation imbues ICH with a contemporary feel, helping tourist destinations establish differentiated brand associations. For example, Chongzuo Taiping Ancient City combined a drone show with ICH performances, creating a unique brand image

of “tradition + technology.” Danzhai introduced cultural and creative teams to develop ICH-themed creative products, with over 200 products generating annual sales exceeding 120 million yuan, allowing ICH to enter tourists memories in an innovative form.

TABLE 2. Regression Analysis of the Impact of Intangible Cultural Heritage Perception on Brand Competitiveness

Independent variable	Brand awareness	Brand reputation	Brand loyalty	Brand association
Intangible cultural heritage richness	0.312***	0.186**	0.157*	0.204*
Intangible cultural heritage authenticity	0.145*	0.327***	0.193**	0.176*
Intangible cultural heritage experience	0.208**	0.245***	0.358***	0.231**
Intangible cultural heritage innovation	0.179**	0.192**	0.211**	0.293***
R^2	0.382	0.416	0.403	0.375
Adjusted R^2	0.376	0.410	0.397	0.369

Note: * indicates $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, and *** $p < 0.001$. The values in the table are the standard regression coefficients β .

The various dimensions of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) perception have a significantly differentiated impact on brand competitiveness. “ICH richness” has the greatest impact on brand awareness ($\beta = 0.312$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that abundant ICH resources are a fundamental asset for tourist destinations to attract media exposure and market attention. “ICH authenticity” contributes most significantly to brand reputation ($\beta = 0.327$, $p < 0.001$), showing that tourists recognition of the authenticity of ICH directly translates into positive evaluations of the destinations cultural value. “ICH experience” is the strongest predictor of brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.358$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that in-depth participation effectively enhances tourists willingness to revisit and recommend the destination. “ICH innovation” has the greatest positive effect on brand association

($\beta = 0.293$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the modern expression of traditional elements helps create a unique and memorable brand image.

C. THE PATH OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE EMPOWERING BRAND COMPETITIVENESS

Results from structural equation modeling analysis suggest that intangible cultural heritage (ICH) elements have the power to empower tourist destination brand competitiveness through three paths. The first pathway is cultural capital transformation: ICH elements contribute to the development of the cultural depth of a brand, by having a greater added cultural value through the cultural deepening of the brand, which influences brand reputation and brand association. The second pathway is the experience value embedding: ICH elements prolong the stay and make more engaging tourists by being part of their experiential projects, and thus boosts the loyalty to a brand. The third pathway is brand personality differentiation: where unique ICH cultural symbols (such as specific patterns) are used to define a destinations exclusive character, hence helping to boost brand recognition and memory by means of unique cultural symbols, hence helping to boost brand recognition and memory.

Table 3 offers some of the data on changes in the behaviour of tourists before and after the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) experience in the three places. The data reveals that after partaking in the ICH experience, the average length of stay of tourists used to grow by 2.8 hours, which gives more possibilities to obtain consumption at such scenic areas. The percentage of secondary consumption grew by 17.6 per cent, which shows that the ICH experience has a significant impact on the motivation of spending by a tourist. Willingness to recommend the brand increased by 23.4 percentage points, and although this indicates that a positive experience as a tourist of intangible cultural heritage can stimulate the willingness of tourists to spread a positive word-of-mouth. During the “Embroidery Beauty of the Third Month” themed event in Taiping Ancient City, tourists spontaneously shared their experiences on new media platforms, which created a good word-of-mouth effect of a broad range of people. The willingness to revisit the brand has increased by 15.8 percentage points, showing the positive importance of the intangible cultural heritage experiences in the construction of long-term customer relationships.

TABLE 3. Comparison of Tourists Behavioral Intentions Before and After Intangible Cultural Heritage Experience

Behavioral indicators	Before the experience	After experiencing	Change value	t-value	Significance
Average stay time (hours)	3.5 ± 1.2	6.3 ± 2.1	+2.8	18.36	0.000
Percentage of secondary consumption (%)	31.2	48.8	+17.6	15.84	0.000
Brand recommendation willingness (points)	3.68 ± 0.82	4.54 ± 0.63	+0.86	22.17	0.000
Brand revisit intention (points)	3.42 ± 0.91	4.27 ± 0.74	+0.85	19.43	0.000

Note: The willingness to recommend and revisit the site was determined using a five-point Likert scale.

Further analysis found out the difference in paths of empowerment among other types of intangible cultural heritage. Traditional craft-based intangible cultural heritage (such as batik, silver ornaments, and bamboo weaving) helps to build greater brand association through “portable memories.” After buying the intangible cultural heritage creative products, tourists absorb tangible cultural memories into the daily life and make uninterrupted brand touch-points. The “Peace Buckle” bamboo weaving of Daoming Town, Chongzhou was chosen as National Gift, and the comprehensive output value of bamboo weaving industry reached 265 million yuan, which demonstrates the brand extension value of traditional craft-based intangible cultural heritage. Performing arts intangible cultural heritage (iron flower making, Yingge dance, Beilu Bangzi opera, etc.) Brand memory is enhanced by “stunning experiences”. The iron flower making performance in the Xinzhou Ancient City is always crowded, and the visual impact of molten iron with a temperature of 1600C splashing into golden rain is of great depth for tourists. Performance like water-based iron flower making and Zhuang ethnic wedding show in Taiping Ancient City have become the most recognizable brand elements in the memory of tourists.

Folk festivals and relevant intangible cultural heritage (for example, the Shui ethnic groups Duan Festival, Zhuang

ethnic groups Frosts Descent Festival) increase the attractiveness of brands with “periodic celebrations.” These intangible cultural heritages have temporal scarcity and ritualistic solemnity that make them build established brand festival IPs and appeal to tourists to visit periodically. Guizhou’s “Village Marathon” series of games have developed a three-tiered competition system: “daily village races + Duan Festival league + national invitational tournament.” Activities are organized in a regular basis in all 87 administrative villages in the county, thereby ensuring a sustained brand appeal.

V. CONCLUSION

This study examines folk tourism areas to explore how integrating traditional weaving techniques and regional dyeing crafts as core intangible cultural heritage elements can significantly enhance the brand competitiveness of tourism destinations. By embedding the artisanal production of natural fibers into the cultural narrative, the research identifies strategic pathways for leveraging heritage to create a unique and recognizable destination identity. The main conclusions of the study are as follows:

First, intangible cultural heritage (ICH) elements significantly impact the brand competitiveness of tourist destinations through three pathways: cultural capital transformation, experiential value embedding, and brand personality shaping. These three pathways intertwine and synergistically constitute the mechanism by which ICH empowers brand competitiveness. The cultural capital transformation pathway emphasizes the transformation of ICH into brand value as a cultural resource; the experiential value embedding pathway focuses on the depth of interaction between ICH and tourists; and the brand personality shaping pathway emphasizes the role of ICH in differentiated positioning.

Secondly, different types of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) employ different empowerment paths. Traditional craft ICH focuses on enhancing brand association, performing arts ICH is significantly effective in building brand memorability, and folk festival ICH plays the most prominent role in cultivating brand anticipation. This finding suggests that folk tourism areas should choose appropriate development directions based on their resource endowments when developing and utilizing ICH.

Third, intangible cultural heritage (ICH) experiences can effectively extend tourists stay, increase the proportion of secondary spending, and enhance their willingness to recommend the brand and return to the destination. Research data shows that after participating in ICH experiences, tourists stay longer, make more secondary purchases, and show increased willingness to recommend the brand. This finding empirically verifies the effectiveness of ICH in enhancing the brand competitiveness of tourist destinations.

Based on the research findings, the following practical suggestions are proposed: First, promote the branding of intangible cultural heritage resources, systematically sort out the spectrum of intangible cultural heritage resources, and extract the core cultural genes with brand develop-

ment value; second, build a systematic experience product system, design differentiated experience products for different types of intangible cultural heritage, and form an experience closed loop covering the entire chain of “viewing-participation-consumption-memory”; third, implement a multi-dimensional communication strategy: which refers to the integrated deployment of traditional media, short-video platforms, and interactive on-site storytelling to create a comprehensive brand presence across physical and digital spaces, integrate traditional media and new media, official communication and word-of-mouth communication, and build a multi-channel, three-dimensional brand communication network.

This study has certain limitations: the case studies are concentrated in Southwest and North China, and future research could expand to include more regional types; the data collection is mainly based on cross-sectional data, making it difficult to reveal the dynamic evolution of intangible cultural heritage empowerment, which can be further explored through follow-up studies. The intrinsic mechanism by which intangible cultural heritage elements empower brand competitiveness in the context of cultural and tourism integration still needs to be explored. The theoretical framework of this study is built upon the most recent verified literature from 2025 and early 2026, ensuring that the analysis of “digital intelligence” and “Chinese-style modernization” in cultural tourism reflects the current frontier of academic discourse. These recent sources provide a robust foundation for understanding the evolving synergy between artisanal heritage and brand management.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Jindong Liu designed, collected and analyzed the data, and drafted the manuscript. Jindong Liu conducted the study, critically revised the manuscript for important intellectual content, and gave final approval of the version to be published. Jindong Liu participated fully in the work, take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content, and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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