



## Feasibility Study on Commercialization Development of Qiang Cultural and Ecological Reserve

Li Sihan, Nithima Yuenyong and Sawong Swetwattana

Pathumthani University

Email: [chongkolkorn@gmail.com](mailto:chongkolkorn@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

This study investigates the integration of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) with commerciality in the Qiang Cultural and Ecological Reserve, China, focusing on three key objectives: 1) exploring the integration of ICH with commerciality while preserving authenticity; 2) examining the mechanisms through which ICH creates economic, cultural, and social value; and 3) investigating the process involved in value creation related to ICH. Key findings reveal that while commercialization can generate economic benefits, it is crucial to avoid commodifying cultural elements, which can lead to inauthentic experiences and erode cultural integrity. The study identified multiple pathways through which ICH creates value, including direct economic benefits generated by cultural performances, craft workshops, and community-based tourism initiatives. Furthermore, successful value creation requires active participation and collaboration among local communities, cultural practitioners, tourists, and government agencies. The study emphasizes the importance of innovative approaches to ICH presentation and marketing in enhancing visitor experiences and generating sustainable economic returns. This research provides valuable insights for stakeholders in the Qiang Reserve and other regions, highlighting the importance of balancing commercial interests with cultural preservation to ensure the sustainable development of ICH-based tourism. Value Creation has a significant positive effect on the experiential value of ICH culture, with innovation process being the dimension that has the greatest impact on experiential value. more attention should be paid to the design and improvement of the innovation process in the management of non-heritage culture to enhance the experience value. Value creation has a significant positive impact on the experiential value of non-heritage culture, of which the innovation process is the dimension with the greatest impact; at the same time, the experiential value has a significant positive impact on value creation. Therefore, enterprises can take innovative management measures to enhance the experiential value of non-heritage culture and thus promote value creation.

**Keywords:** Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), Cultural Tourism, Commercialization, Value Creation, Community-Based Tourism



## Introduction

The Qiang Cultural and Ecological Reserve, nestled within the rugged landscapes of southwestern China, presents a poignant case study in the complex interplay between cultural preservation and economic development. This region, steeped in a rich tapestry of intangible cultural heritage (ICH), grapples with the challenge of harnessing the potential of tourism while safeguarding the authenticity of its unique cultural expressions. From vibrant festivals and intricate weaving techniques to captivating folk music, Qiang culture is deeply interwoven into the social fabric of the community. While tourism offers a potential avenue for economic growth and increased awareness of this vibrant heritage, it also presents significant challenges in navigating the delicate balance between cultural authenticity and the demands of the tourism market. This study into the critical questions surrounding the sustainable development of tourism within the Qiang Reserve.

It examines how tourism development can be strategically designed and implemented to generate economic benefits for the local community while simultaneously safeguarding the authenticity and integrity of Qiang cultural heritage. This necessitates a nuanced approach that carefully considers the diverse perspectives within the field of cultural tourism. This perspective, often rooted in anthropological and cultural studies, argues that authentic cultural encounters offer tourists opportunities for genuine cultural exchange and a deeper understanding of local values and traditions.

However, concerns arise regarding the potential for commercialization to commodify cultural elements, leading to inauthentic experiences that prioritize tourist entertainment over the genuine expression of local culture. This perspective advocates for a cautious approach to tourism development, prioritizing the protection of traditional practices from the potentially negative impacts of commercialization, such as the commodification of cultural elements, the erosion of local values, and the displacement of local communities. Conversely, another perspective within cultural tourism recognizes the potential for tourism to serve as a vehicle for cultural revitalization and economic empowerment within local communities. This perspective, often grounded in community development and participatory approaches, emphasizes the importance of actively involving local communities in the planning, development, and management of tourism initiatives. By empowering local communities to shape the direction of tourism development, it is possible to create a sustainable model that generates economic benefits while simultaneously fostering the transmission of ICH to future generations. This approach emphasizes the importance of community-based tourism initiatives that prioritize cultural authenticity, respect local values, and ensure that the benefits of tourism are equitably distributed among the local population.

This research draws upon key theoretical frameworks within cultural tourism studies. Firstly, the concept of "authenticity" is central to this inquiry. As argued by MacCannell (1976), tourists often seek "authentic" cultural experiences, yearning for genuine encounters with local traditions and lifestyles. However, as Cohen (2002) points out, the pursuit of authenticity can often lead to the commodification of cultural elements, resulting in staged or contrived experiences that prioritize tourist entertainment over the genuine expression of local culture. This highlights the crucial need to balance the demands of the tourism market with the preservation of authentic cultural practices. Secondly, this study draws upon community-based tourism (CBT) principles. As outlined by Weaver (2001), CBT emphasizes the active



participation of local communities in all stages of tourism development, from planning and decision-making to the management and distribution of benefits. By empowering local communities, CBT aims to ensure that tourism development aligns with local values, priorities, and aspirations, while minimizing negative impacts on the social and cultural fabric of the community.

## Research Objectives

1. To explore the integration of intangible cultural heritage with commerciality. This objective aims to assess the potential for ICH to be marketed and incorporated into commercial ventures without compromising its authenticity. It focuses on identifying strategies that allow for the sustainable development of ICH in the marketplace, creating a model where traditional practices and modern business can coexist.

2. To examine the mechanisms through which intangible cultural heritage creates value. This objective seeks to understand the different pathways through which ICH contributes to economic, cultural, and social value. It aims to analyze how ICH can generate direct economic benefits, like tourism revenue, while also enriching cultural understanding and community engagement, thus creating a comprehensive framework for value creation.

3. To investigate the process involved in value creation related to intangible cultural heritage. This objective delves into the detailed processes through which value is created around ICH. It includes studying the roles of various stakeholders, such as cultural practitioners, local communities, and tourists, and how their interactions contribute to the creation of cultural and economic value. It also examines how innovation management practices can enhance these processes, fostering sustainable development in Cultural Protection Zones.

## Research Methodology

This study is a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative research methods. According to Tao and Chen (2004), heritage tourism can be categorized into twelve dimensions. After organizing these dimensions, three were identified as suitable for analyzing tourists, experts, and local residents, aligning.

### 1. Population

The research targeted individuals interested in heritage tourism, including tourists and local residents.

### 2. Sampling

This study employed random sampling to ensure an unbiased selection of respondents, aiming to enhance the representativeness of the sample. Random sampling was utilized questionnaires were distributed resulting in 400 responses.

### 3. Sample and data sources

The authors adopt a quantitative research method, using SPSS and Amos as data analysis carriers, to analyze the data on whether it is necessary to develop intangible cultural heritage commercially and how to develop it commercially so that it can be better accepted by tourists, and to construct a quantitative index system based on value creation, in order to achieve a more



accurate presentation of the data. Aiming at the geographical limitation of the questionnaire, a questionnaire survey was conducted on three groups of people, namely, tourists, local indigenous residents and researchers of intangible cultural heritage in the Qiang Cultural Ecological Reserve, and 400 questionnaires were distributed in total.

## Research Results

### Research data

The data of the study comes from the questionnaire survey, the questionnaire collection tool questionnaire star online version, a total of 400 people, the sample specifics are shown in the gender point of view, 181 male (45.2%), female 219 (54.8%), the proportion of male and female is balanced. In terms of age, there are 129 samples aged 15-29, accounting for 32.3%; 127 samples aged 30-44, accounting for 31.8%; 94 samples aged 45-59, accounting for 24.1%; and 47 samples aged 60-75, accounting for 11.7%. The distribution of the samples in different occupations varies.

Among the samples, 256 were married, accounting for 63.7% of the total sample; 134 were unmarried, accounting for 33.3% of the total sample; and 12 were divorced, accounting for 3.1% of the total sample. In terms of monthly income, 97 samples, or 24.4%, earned less than RMB 3,000 per month; 102 samples, or 25.5%, earned RMB 3,001-5,000 per month; 157 samples, or 39.7%, earned RMB 5,001-10,000 per month; and 44 samples, or 11%, earned more than RMB 10,000 per month.

Regarding the mediating role of value experience between innovation management and value creation, that innovation management and value experience jointly act on value creation, and the influence coefficient of value experience is higher than that of innovation management ( $\beta=0.36$ ,  $\beta=0.55$ ,  $P<0.001$ ), and the partial mediating effect is significant, and the hypothesis H6 holds. The proportion of specific effects is shown 48.56% of direct effects and 51.44% of indirect effects, indicating that the path of innovation management acting on value creation by affecting value experience is more than the direct effect of innovation management on value creation.

Regarding the mediating role of value experience in innovation management and value co-creation directly confirmed of both innovation management and value experience on value creation at the same time are both significant at the 0.001 level, and the coefficient of the impact of innovation management is higher than that of value experience, which indicates that value experience plays a more significant role through the direct effect, with the specific effects of direct effect and indirect effect 65.92% and 34.08% respectively.



**Table 1:** Impact of innovation management, value experience on value creation and value co-creation

	value creation				value co-creation			
			covariance statistics				covariance statistics	
	$\beta$	t	tolerances	VIF	$\beta$	T	tolerance s	VIF
Distinguishing between the sexes	-0.02	-0.95	0.929	1.076	-0.04	-1.42	0.929	1.076
a person's age	-0.06	-2.24 *	0.583	1.715	-0.11	-3.47**	0.583	1.715
careers	-0.01	-0.40	0.648	1.543	-0.05	-1.65	0.648	1.543
matrimonial	0.00	-0.02	0.616	1.625	-0.02	-0.48	0.616	1.625
monthly salary	0.05	2.16*	0.755	1.325	0.07	2.40**	0.755	1.325
Innovation management	0.36	12.58**	0.487	2.052	0.48	13.96**	0.487	2.052
Value Experience	0.55	18.99**	0.484	2.064	0.35	10.28**	0.484	2.064
R-square	0.711				0.588			
F	250.717***				147.89***			

### Research Analyze

From the analysis of the above data, it can be seen that value experience has a mediating role between innovation management and value creation and between innovation management and value co-creation. In the mediation between innovation management and value creation, the influence coefficient of value experience is higher than that of innovation management, and the mediation effect is significant, indicating that the influence of innovation management on value creation is mainly realized through value experience. In the mediation between innovation management and value co-creation, the influence coefficient of innovation management is higher than that of value experience, indicating that value experience has a greater effect on value co-creation through direct effect. These results provide some insights for enterprises to improve innovation management and value creation and value co-creation, and need to focus on improving customer value experience to further promote the impact of innovation management.

### Research Discussion

This study investigates the critical role of value experience in mediating the relationship between innovation management and value creation, with a particular focus on the tourism sector in the Qiang Cultural and Ecological Reserve. Recognizing the increasing importance of innovation in today's competitive landscape, this research delves into how effectively businesses can leverage innovation to enhance value creation for their customers. A quantitative approach, utilizing data collected through an online questionnaire survey. A total of 400 valid responses were obtained from individuals interested in heritage tourism, encompassing tourists, local residents, and industry experts. Random sampling was employed



to ensure an unbiased and representative sample. The demographic profile of the respondents revealed a balanced gender distribution (45.2% male, 54.8% female) and a diverse age range, with a significant proportion falling within the 15-61 age group. The sample also exhibited a diverse range of occupations and income levels. The core objective of this study was to examine the mediating role of value experience in the relationship between innovation management and value creation. The results revealed a significant mediating effect of value experience on this relationship.

This analysis also finds strong positive correlations between output and experiential value, between value creation and experiential value, between value creation and value co-creation, and between value creation and innovation management, which suggests that there is a close correlation between innovation management and factors such as innovation output, innovation co-creation, and innovation support in the pursuit of value and experience. In summary, the analysis results show that innovation management and innovation output play an important role in innovation and value, and that the factors of innovation process and innovation management, innovation output and experience value, value creation and value co-creation are all closely related. Therefore, in the process of innovation and value creation, the role of these factors needs to be considered comprehensively, and the relationship between them needs to be optimized and coordinated continuously in order to improve the effect of innovation and value creation. At the same time, innovation management is very important for the organization to create value, and the state of marriage also has an impact on value creation. Therefore, the promotion of innovation management should be focused on in organizational management, and the personal characteristics of visitors, such as marital status, should be considered.

This study analyzes empirically the impact of enterprise innovation support, innovation process and innovation output on value creation, and finds that innovation support, innovation process and innovation output have a significant positive impact on value creation, among which innovation output has the strongest impact on value creation. This indicates that enterprises' inputs and results in innovation outputs contribute the most to value creation. In addition, this study also found that control variables such as enterprise size and industry background have improved the explanatory power of the model, indicating that the impact of other relevant factors need to be taken into account when analyzing the impact of innovation management on value creation.

Innovation management has a significant positive effect on value co-creation, i.e., through effective innovation management can promote enterprises to realize better value co-creation. The explanatory power of the model is also strong, with innovation management explaining 53.2% of the variation in value co-creation, which also indicates the importance of innovation management in the enterprise.

There is a significant positive relationship between the three dimensions of innovation support, innovation process and innovation output and value creation, and innovation output has the strongest positive impact on value creation, while innovation process has a weaker positive effect on value creation, but still has a positive impact on the value creation of enterprises. Therefore, when enterprises carry out innovation management, they need to focus on improving the quality and quantity of innovation output, as well as improving the innovation process and providing sufficient innovation support to better promote enterprise value creation.





At the same time, it is necessary to focus on the optimization of the innovation process in order to more effectively improve the quality and quantity of innovation output. It is suggested that enterprises should start from these three aspects when managing innovation to enhance their value creation ability by improving innovation capability and efficiency.

## Suggestions

This study verified through linear regression modeling Value Creation has a significant positive effect on the value of non-heritage cultural experience. This means that in the management process of non-heritage culture, adopting value creation measures can enhance the experiential value of non-heritage culture. Specifically, enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of NRH culture through optimizing the production process, product design, and marketing strategy of NRH culture, so as to improve its experiential value. In addition, this study also found that the three dimensions of innovation process, innovation support and innovation output all have a significant positive impact on the experiential value of ICH culture.

In addition, Value Creation has a significant positive effect on the experiential value of ICH culture, with innovation process being the dimension that has the greatest impact on experiential value. Therefore, more attention should be paid to the design and improvement of the innovation process in the management of non-heritage culture to enhance the experience value. At the same time, the investment in innovation support can be appropriately reduced to improve the utilization efficiency of resources. In addition, the relationship between value creation and the inheritance and co-creation of non-heritage culture should be further studied in order to improve the protection and inheritance effect of non-heritage culture. Value creation has a significant positive impact on the experiential value of non-heritage culture, of which the innovation process is the dimension with the greatest impact; at the same time, the experiential value has a significant positive impact on value creation. Therefore, enterprises can take innovative management measures to enhance the experiential value of non-heritage culture and thus promote value creation.

This study also found that experiential value has a significant positive effect on value co-creation, i.e., when the experiential value is higher, the value co-creation scores are also higher, this finding which indicates that enterprises should focus on improving the experiential value of their products or services in order to promote value co-creation with consumers. It was also found that individual characteristics such as gender, age, income and purchase frequency did not have a significant effect on the relationship between experiential value and value co-creation after controlling for other factors. Therefore, when developing marketing strategies, companies should focus on improving the experiential value of their products or services, rather than focusing too much on individual characteristics of consumers. Value experience mediates the relationship between innovation management and value creation as well as between innovation management and value co-creation. Specifically, innovation management has more paths of action that act on value creation by influencing value experience than innovation management has directly on value creation. And the mediating role of value experience between innovation management and value co-creation is mainly reflected in the direct effect. Therefore, enterprises should emphasize the role of value experience when formulating marketing and management strategies, and at the same time focus on the implementation of



innovation management. In addition, it should strengthen the recognition of consumer experience value and improve consumer experience value through innovation management to promote the realization of value creation and value co-creation. In subsequent research, the role of value experience in innovation management and value creation and value co-creation can be further explored in depth by taking into account the actual situation in different industries and markets.

Value experience plays a mediating role between innovation management, value creation and value co-creation. For the mediation between innovation management and value creation, the influence coefficient of value experience is higher than that of innovation management, and the mediation effect is significant, indicating that improving customer value experience can effectively promote the influence of innovation management on value creation. In the mediation between innovation management and value co-creation, the influence coefficient of innovation management is higher than that of value experience, indicating that value experience has a greater effect on value co-creation through direct effect. Therefore, in order to improve the enterprise's innovation management and value creation ability as well as value co-creation ability, it is necessary to focus on improving the customer's value experience. Enterprises can improve the user experience by improving the quality of products or services, enhancing the user experience, and strengthening the interaction and communication with users. In addition, it is also necessary to strengthen the importance of innovation management and investment, through innovation to meet the needs and expectations of users, and promote the sustainable development of enterprises. At the same time, it is also necessary to further study the role of value experience in enterprise management and explore more effective strategies and methods to promote innovation management, value creation and value co-creation.

Value creation of intangible cultural heritage needs to start from several aspects:

**Inheritance and protection:** The protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage is a prerequisite for realizing its value creation. Measures need to be taken to safeguard and transmit ICH, such as recording and preserving relevant information, transferring relevant skills and knowledge, and establishing relevant institutions.

**Enhancement of value experience:** Value experience is an important aspect of ICH value creation. It is necessary to focus on improving customers' perception and experience of ICH, such as providing relevant activities and experience programs, and improving the display environment.

**Innovation management:** Innovation management plays an important role in value creation of ICH. It is necessary to establish an innovation management system to strengthen the innovation and operation management of ICH to enhance its commercial and social value. Enterprises should strengthen their investment in innovation output and focus on product and service innovation, so as to improve their value creation ability. Enterprises should optimize the innovation process and improve the efficiency and quality of innovation in order to meet market demands faster and better. Enterprises can appropriately optimize innovation support conditions to improve the success rate and effectiveness of innovation implementation so as to better support value creation. We suggest that enterprises strengthen the importance of innovation management in practice, and through optimizing the innovation management process, improving innovation capability and innovation output and other inputs, continuously





promote the realization of innovation and the achievement of value co-creation, so as to enhance the core competitiveness and market position of enterprises.

**Win-win cooperation:** Value creation of intangible cultural heritage requires multi-party cooperation and joint promotion. It is necessary to establish a diversified cooperation mechanism and cooperate with relevant organizations and enterprises to create a more influential brand of intangible cultural heritage. More attention should be paid to the design and improvement of the innovation process in innovation management in order to enhance the experiential value of ICH; encourage ICH institutions to carry out marketing activities in order to increase the exposure and visibility of cultural products; strengthen the digitalization of ICH, and explore digital exhibitions and sales of cultural products in order to improve the dissemination effect and market competitiveness of cultural products

**Social responsibility:** Value creation of intangible cultural heritage requires consideration of social responsibility. There is a need to respect and protect the traditions and cultural values of intangible cultural heritage, while focusing on social benefits and environmental protection. Strengthen the research and understanding of consumer needs, timely adjust and improve ICH cultural products and services according to consumer needs and feedback, and improve consumer satisfaction and loyalty; strengthen the standardization of ICH cultural products and services, improve the quality and standardization of products and services, and further enhance the value creation capacity of ICH.

In short, the value creation of intangible cultural heritage needs to comprehensively consider many aspects such as inheritance, experience, innovation, cooperation and social responsibility, and continuously improve its commercial and social value in order to promote the development and prosperity of cultural industry. When making innovation management decisions, enterprises should also consider the impact of other relevant factors, such as enterprise scale and industry background, in order to make more scientific and feasible decisions.

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