

Research on the Activation, Inheritance, and Innovative Development Paths of Rizhao's Excellent Traditional Culture from the Perspective of the Integration of Culture and Tourism

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Abstract

This research revolves around the paths of revitalization and innovative development of traditional culture under the background of cultural-tourism integration in small and medium-sized coastal cities. It zeroes in on the transformation mechanisms and development strategies of regional cultural resources like Dongyi culture, sun culture, and fishing and salt culture in the tourism industry of Rizhao City. The article constructs a three-circle theoretical model of “dynamic protection—scenario reconstruction—value symbiosis”, making it clear that cultural activation can be realized through the trinity approach of cultural gene digitalization, tourism scenario translation, and industrial value release. The research uses methods such as literature analysis, on - site interviews, questionnaires, and big - data analysis to systematically assess the tourism compatibility of traditional culture in Rizhao City, and puts forward a closed-loop development logic of “cultural gene database construction—immersive experience development—cultural creative product extension—digital platform expansion”.The research found that Rizhao City currently faces issues such as intangible heritage inheritance gap, cultural product homogenization, a low technological empowerment level, and insufficient community participation. To address these problems, it is proposed to establish a cultural protection fund, construct a multi-stakeholder collaborative mechanism, implement the "tidal development strategy", and adopt the brand integration approach. The aim is to promote the coordinated development of cultural heritage and the tourism economy, and enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of cultural resource activation.

Keywords

Cultural-tourism integration; traditional culture revitalization; Rizhao; three-circle theoretical model; digital technology empowerment; intangible cultural heritage inheritance; coastal city development.

1. Introduction

Culture is the soul of tourism, tourism is the carrier of culture. In recent years, with the development of China's economy and society and the improvement of people's living standards, tourism demand has increasingly shown trends of culturalization, characterization, and diversification. The in - depth integration of culture and tourism has been elevated to a national strategy. How small and medium - sized cities can effectively revitalize regional excellent traditional cultural resources, achieve the active inheritance of cultural heritage and the collaborative development of the cultural tourism industry has become an important issue that concerns both the theoretical and practical circles^[1].

Rizhao City is situated at the Eastern Bridgehead of the New Eurasian Land Bridge within the “Belt and Road Initiative”. It is located on the southern part of the Shandong Peninsula and faces

the Yellow Sea. Since ancient times, it has been a crucial node of the Maritime Silk Road. Rizhao boasts a long - standing history and rich cultural heritage. It is endowed with a diverse range of regional cultural resources, including the distinctive Dongyi Culture, Sun Culture, and Fishing and Salt Culture. It stands as an important exemplary city for the cultural exchange and integration in the northern coastal regions^[10].

However, in the implementation of Cultural Tourism Integration in Rizhao City, numerous practical issues and development bottlenecks have emerged. For instance, the Intangible Cultural Heritage Inheritors are getting older, and the younger generation's participation is lacking, causing a disruption in the inheritance of traditional skills. The problem of Homogenization of Cultural Tourism Products is acute, with a lack of characteristic innovation, which results in a sub - par tourist experience and relatively low tourist satisfaction. Moreover, Rizhao City has made insufficient investments in the Digital Transformation of Cultural Resources and its application, failing to effectively apply and integrate emerging technologies. This severely restricts the modern presentation, dissemination, and promotion of traditional culture. In particular, the establishment of the Rural Intangible Cultural Heritage Resources and the Market Linkage Mechanism is still in its infancy^{[11][12]}.

In recent years, a series of policy documents have been successively issued at both the national and local levels, offering Policy Support and development directions for the activation of excellent traditional cultural resources. In the "14th Five-Year Plan for the Development of Culture and Tourism" released by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2021, it is explicitly stated that efforts should be made to promote the Creative Transformation and Innovative Development of Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture. In 2022, Shandong Province issued the "Implementation Plan for the Construction of the Marine Cultural Tourism Belt", emphasizing that Coastal Cities, including Rizhao, should deeply explore characteristic Marine Cultural Resources and establish a Cultural Tourism Development System with Regional Characteristics. In the "Opinions on Promoting High-Quality Development of Tourism Industry" promulgated by the State Council in 2023, it is further suggested to actively develop Smart Tourism, cultivate Key Villages and Towns for Rural Tourism, highlight Cultural Elements and Regional Characteristics, and improve the attractiveness and competitiveness of Cultural Tourism Products^{[18][19][20]}. The introduction of these policy documents has provided clear paths and action guidelines for Rizhao City to promote in-depth integration of culture and tourism and innovate the ways to activate traditional cultural resources.

However, currently, most domestic academic research related to cultural heritage tourism development focuses on economically developed regions and well - known tourist cities like Beijing, Shanghai, and Hangzhou. In contrast, research on small and medium - sized coastal cities is relatively scarce.

Statistics show that in the past five years, papers related to the theme of "coastal cities + culture - tourism integration" in domestic core journals accounted for less than 8%. Moreover, most of this research remains at the stage of theoretical discussion and concept definition, lacking in - depth exploration of specific issues in small and medium - sized coastal cities and the design of practical pathways.

In particular, there are weak points in the development mechanism of handicraft intangible cultural heritage projects, cultural and creative product design, heritage community participation, etc. ^{[13][14]}. Therefore, based on the actual situation of Rizhao City, this study will conduct an in-depth exploration of the effective models and paths for the revitalization and inheritance of traditional culture and innovative development from the perspective of culture-tourism integration. This can not only enrich the existing theoretical system of culture-tourism integration, but also provide practical references for the cultural resource protection and industrial upgrading of similar small and medium-sized cities.

2. Literature Review and Research Status

2.1. Research on the Cultural-tourism integration mechanism

The research on the Cultural and tourism integration development mechanism stems from the evolution of the traditional concept of "Culture sets the stage, economy performs the show". In recent years, it has gradually shifted towards the theoretical approach of deeply exploring the Cultural connotation and achieving Deep integration with the tourism industry. Zhang Jijiao and Hou Da (2020), based on the Neoclassical structural-functional theory, analyzed the Structural transformation of Traditional ethnic festivals during the process of Cultural-tourism integration, revealing how culture can undergo Modern transformation through tourism and form a Culture-tourism self-regenerating circular structure^[1]. Ke Jian et al. (2022) utilized Text mining technology and started with the Online travel notes from Shanghai to construct a three-level Cultural tourism consumption system of "Resource-experience-acquisition", highlighting the crucial role of Experience consumption in Cultural resource transformation^[2]. In addition, Tang Chengcai et al. (2023) pointed out that the Cultural-tourism integration development of Traditional villages evolves through three stages: Deep resource integration, Product system cultivation, and Industrial function enhancement, and they proposed a specific Evaluation index system^[3]. However, relevant studies mainly focus on large cities and lack discussions on the special mechanisms of Coastal medium and small cities like Rizhao.

2.2. Revitalization of Traditional Culture Research

The research on the revitalization of traditional culture emphasizes that resources such as Intangible Cultural Heritage Skills, Folk Culture, and Festival Rituals can be rejuvenated through transformation in modern tourism scenarios. Wang Fang et al. (2021) proposed, based on on - the - spot investigations, that the revitalization of Traditional Craftsmanship requires external driving factors such as Tourism Field and Cultural Capital to achieve the Sustainable Utilization of resources^[4]. Gu Yaqi and Zhang Xu (2021), through an analysis of Henan Satellite TV's "Chinese Festival" series of programs, proposed the importance of Code System and Audio - visual Field for the Reproduction of traditional culture, offering a new path for cultural revitalization^[5]. Li Bohua et al. (2023) pointed out, after in - depth interviews with village residents, that the recognition of cultural value is the Intrinsic Driving Force for the effective revitalization of cultural heritage^[6]. However, the above studies focus on theoretical sorting and case description, lacking detailed research on specific operation paths. The adaptability to Coastal Cities still needs further verification.

2.3. Digital Technology Empowerment Research

Digital Technology Empowerment offers new possibilities and implementation approaches for Cultural Revitalization. Lei Wenxuan and Xie Xuefang (2023) suggested that through Digital Intelligence Innovation, traditional culture can be upgraded from Static Protection to Dynamic Transformation^[7]. Liu Qian (2024) proposed constructing Immersive Cultural Tourism Scenarios using Metaverse Technology to enhance tourists' Interactive Perception Experience and drive the in - depth development of the integration of culture and tourism^[8]. Wu Chunli (2025) started with Rural Culture - Tourism Integration and identified the specific mechanisms and practical paths for applying digital technology to rural cultural tourism^[9]. Wei Wei et al. (2024) employed the Configuration Path Model to analyze the strategies for enhancing the integration of culture and tourism in 26 coastal cities in China and offered suggestions for differentiated paths for Coastal Cities, including Rizhao^[10]. However, current research on Digital Technology Empowerment generally focuses on first - tier cities and well - known scenic spots, overlooking the actual situations of small and medium - sized cities. Moreover, most applications are confined to static displays, lacking the complete Closed - loop Construction of "Data Collection - Intelligent Analysis - Optimization Iteration".

2.4. Analysis of the deficiencies in existing research

In summary, there are four obvious deficiencies in the current research: First, there is a serious imbalance in the regional focus of the research, which mainly centers on first - tier cities and fails to adequately explore the characteristics of Small and medium-sized coastal cities. Second, the research predominantly focuses on economic benefit evaluation, overlooking the protection of Cultural authenticity and the exploration of Community participation mechanism. Third, Digital technology empowerment mostly remains at the primary display stage, and a complete Data-driven closed loop has yet to be formed. Finally, there is a lack of in - depth exploration of paths and practical operation plans for the research on Regional characteristic resources such as Marine culture and Fishing and salt culture in the Rizhao area. These deficiencies highlight the importance and urgency of this research on the Development path for cultural-tourism integration in Rizhao City.

3. Theoretical Framework and Research Content

To balance the relationship between cultural protection and industrial development, this paper constructs a Three - Circle Theoretical Model of “Dynamic Protection—Scene Reconstruction—Value Symbiosis” based on an in - depth analysis of relevant domestic and international studies. It also conducts systematic research and Localized Design on the Adaptability Issues of Small and Medium - sized Coastal Cities. This model aims to break the traditional concept of “protection versus development” Binary Opposition. Through a well - structured and Collaborative Evolution mechanism, it enables the dynamic inheritance of Cultural Heritage and the high - quality Coordinated Development of the Cultural Tourism Industry.

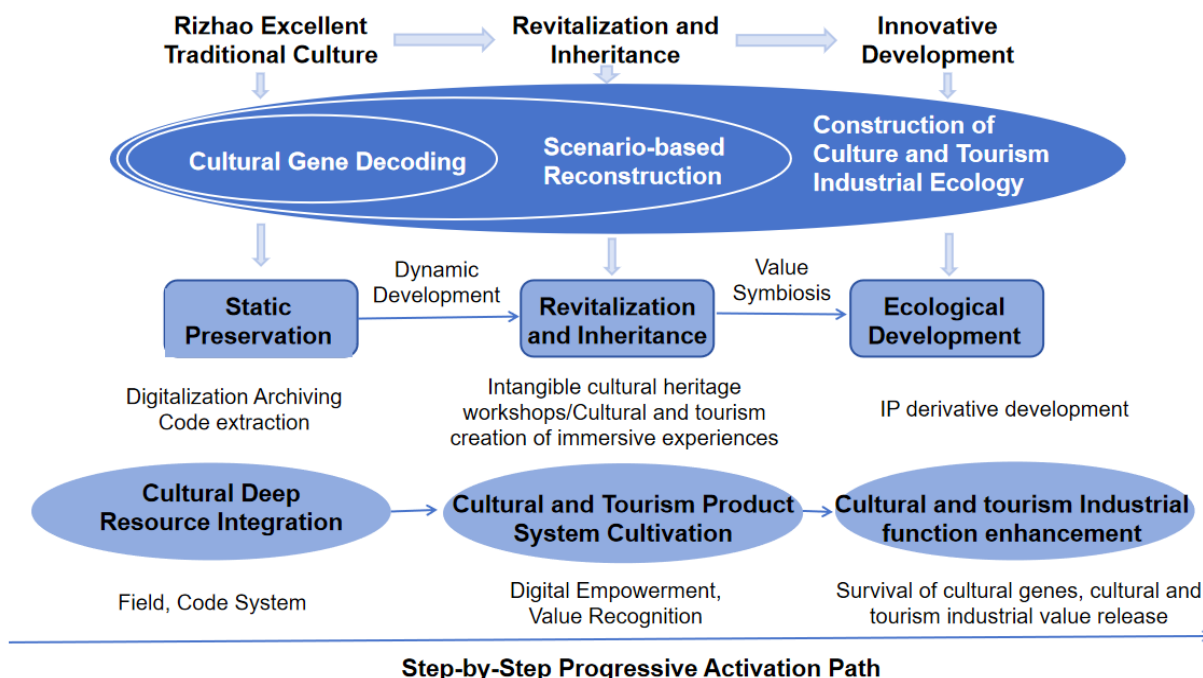


Figure 1. Three-layer Theory Model

Three-layer Theory Model comprises the Core Layer (Cultural Gene Decoding), the Middle Layer (Scenario-based Reconstruction), and the Peripheral Layer (Cultural Tourism Industry Ecosystem Construction). The Core Layer aims to conduct in - depth exploration and Digital Solidification of the Regional Excellent Traditional Culture, extract Cultural Symbols and

Spiritual Core, and establish a Digital Cultural Gene Database to ensure the long - term preservation of Cultural Memory and lay a foundation for its regeneration.

The Middle Layer emphasizes the translation and Experiential Presentation of these cultural genes in modern tourism scenarios. By leveraging digital technology and creative design, it enables the Lifestyle Expression of Cultural Symbols in the contemporary context.

The Peripheral Layer transforms the outcomes of the first two layers into a culturally competitive tourism industry chain. Through various means such as IP Product Development, Cultural Performance, Study Tours, and Digital Collectibles, it unlocks economic value and creates a sustainable industrial ecosystem.

In this model, Dynamic Protection is the prerequisite for achieving Cultural Revitalization. Through means like Digital Scanning, High-definition Imaging, and 3D Modeling, Systematic Documentation is conducted on Intangible Cultural Heritage Elements such as White Pottery Making, Fishing and Salt-making Techniques, and Solar Culture Rituals, laying a solid foundation for subsequent Revitalization and Transformation.

Scene Reconstruction is a crucial part of Cultural Value Reproduction, emphasizing the incorporation of Cultural Narrative and Interactive Experience into tourism products and services. For instance, an Intangible Heritage Workshop Experience Center is established in Dongyi Town, enabling tourists to take part in Black Pottery Throwing, learn to sing Fishermen's Work Chants, or recreate the scenes of the Dongyi Solar Worship Ceremony and Traditional Salt-drying through AR/VR Technology, creating an Immersive Cultural Experience.

Value Symbiosis is the end - point of cultural protection and economic development. Through Industrial Chain Extension and Business Model Innovation, a Progressive Transition of Cultural Heritage from Static Preservation to Dynamic Inheritance and then to Ecological Development is realized.

To effectively implement the three -layer theory, this paper attaches particular importance to the systematic enabling role of digital technologies. It does not merely stay at the display level but also proposes a complete closed - loop path of "Cultural Gene Decoding - modern context translation - immersive experience creation - data collection and intelligent analysis". In actual operations, Rizhao City can build a Digital Cultural Gene Database platform, equipped with lightweight AR/VR toolkits to reduce the transformation costs of small and medium - sized cities. It can extend the sources of cultural and tourism revenues through metaverse exhibition halls and online Digital Collectibles trading platforms. Meanwhile, it can continuously optimize the tourist experience based on big - data analysis to achieve the dynamic matching of supply and demand.

Multi-stakeholder Collaborative Mechanism serves as the institutional guarantee for the successful implementation of Three-circle Theory. The revitalization of cultural heritage is not merely a one - sided policy task of the government; it also hinges on the market investment from enterprises and the in - depth involvement of communities and inheritors.

This paper devises a four - in - one collaborative framework encompassing Government Guidance, Enterprise Operation, Community Participation, and Skills Transmission by Heritage Bearers. The government takes charge of formulating development plans, establishing cultural protection funds, and leveraging Policy Incentives to attract capital investment. Enterprises are tasked with market - oriented development, product design, and operational management. Communities and Intangible Cultural Heritage Inheritors, as the genuine owners and agents of cultural heritage revitalization, not only contribute cultural content but also share the profits.

To address the long - standing issues such as Benefit Outflow, Cultural Alienation, and Community Benefit Loss, this paper puts forward the "Dual - circulation Benefit Distribution Model". Internally, 8% to 12% of the Cultural Tourism Revenue is earmarked to establish a Special Cultural Protection Fund for Intangible Heritage Talent Cultivation and project support.

Externally, through Cultural Resource Shareholding and dividend payments, community residents can truly become stakeholders in the Cultural Industry Chain.

In terms of research content, first, a systematic survey and digital archiving of the rich regional cultural resources in Rizhao City are required. An evaluation system for tourism compatibility should be established, which encompasses four dimensions: cultural uniqueness, transformability, market potential, and the urgency of protection. Subsequently, the most representative and revitalizable Cultural Elements should be selected, such as black pottery making, Fishermen's Work Chants, Traditional Salt-drying, and the sun sacrifice ceremony.

Secondly, based on the evaluation results, specific products and services should be designed, including intangible cultural heritage experience centers, research and study bases, AR performance scenes, and metaverse Digital Collectibles.

Thirdly, the Industrial Chain Extension and market - oriented development model of cultural IPs should be planned. A diversified income structure can be formed through cultural and creative design, the creation of theme routes, and online platform transactions to achieve a virtuous cycle of protection and development. Finally, taking into account the strong seasonal nature of coastal tourism in Rizhao, the "tidal development strategy" model is proposed. During the peak season, festivals like the Fishing and salt culture Festival and the Sun Culture Carnival are held in a concentrated manner to draw in visitors and media attention. In the off - season, the emphasis shifts to intangible cultural heritage research and learning, digital creation, and community culture development to ensure the regular operation of Cultural Revitalization.

To ensure the scientific rigor and operability of the three - layer theory, the subsequent research in this paper will adopt a comprehensive research design that integrates multiple methods, including literature research, on - site interviews, questionnaire surveys, OTA review mining, big data analysis, SWOT analysis, expert consultation (Delphi method), and A/B experimental research. This design not only ensures theoretical innovation but also focuses on practical applicability. Meanwhile, the research will be divided into stages such as literature review and background research, current situation investigation and stakeholder interviews, model design and expert discussions, pilot testing and effect evaluation, policy recommendations and promotion and application, so as to gradually promote the practical transformation of research results.

In summary, Three-layer Theory Model not only provides systematic theoretical support and operational approaches for the activation, inheritance, and innovative development of Rizhao City Cultural Heritage, but also offers theoretical tools and practical solutions for other Small and Medium-sized Coastal Cities to explore differentiated Cultural-tourism integration development models and achieve the win - win goal of cultural and economic values.

4. Pathway Design for Revitalization and Inheritance of Excellent Traditional Culture in Rizhao City

When further implementing the above Pathway Design, it is also necessary to fully take into account the support conditions and implementation details in multiple aspects, including policies, technology, the market, and Community Participation. At the policy level, it is recommended that Rizhao City include a dedicated chapter in the Cultural Tourism Development Plan of the 14th Five-Year Plan to define the overall objectives, key tasks, and assessment indicators for the revitalization and inheritance of traditional culture. For instance, quantifiable phased outcomes such as the "Digitalization Rate of Intangible Cultural Heritage Projects", "Tourist Cultural Experience Satisfaction", and the proportion of "Intangible Cultural Heritage Inheritors aged under 35" should be established. A Cross-departmental Coordination Mechanism should be set up, with departments of culture, tourism, finance, education, and

technology jointly participating in the planning and implementation to facilitate the overall integration of resources such as funds, technology, talent, and venues.

At the technical level, it is necessary to actively introduce emerging technologies such as Digitalization, Intelligentization, and immersive technologies to reduce transformation costs and enhance communication efficiency. For example, considering the limited financial capacity of small and medium-sized cities, develop reusable and modular Lightweight AR/VR Interactive Content to lower the unit price of Digitalization transformation for each Cultural Intellectual Property. Encourage the R & D of the "Digital Cultural Tourism Toolkit". Package functions like 3D Modeling, Immersive Display, and Interactive Experience into Standardized Solutions for different scenic spots and projects to choose from flexibly according to their needs. In addition, it is recommended to establish the "Rizhao Cultural Big Data Center" to integrate multi-dimensional information such as Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection, tourist behavior, and market demand, so as to achieve scientific decision-making and dynamic optimization.

At the market level, we should adhere to the principle of "Cultural Leadership}}, Market-driven Approach" and promote the multi - level and differentiated supply of Excellent Traditional Culture products. Tourism enterprises and cultural and creative companies can develop a series of Cultural Tourism Products with Regional Distinctiveness centered around three themes: Dongyi Culture, solar culture, and Fishing and Salt Culture. These products include Black Pottery Handcraft Experience, Dongyi Sacrificial AR Performance, Sea Salt Making Study Camp, and Sun Bird Cultural Creative Gift Box.

Meanwhile, they can collaborate with Online Travel Agency Platforms and e - commerce platforms to set up the "Rizhao Intangible Cultural Heritage Creative Flagship Store" to promote specialty products such as Black Pottery Stationery, Sun Culture Accessories, and Fishing Village Food Souvenirs. This will form an Online-Offline Integration sales network to expand consumption scenarios and reach a wider audience. Community Participation is the fundamental guarantee for the sustainable development of Revitalization and Inheritance. It is recommended to enhance the say and participation of community residents and Inheritors in project design, development, and Profit Distribution. Through the "Cultural Cooperative" model, community residents can be organized to jointly operate projects such as Intangible Heritage Experience Center, Cultural Creative Shops, and Study and Research Base, ensuring the secondary distribution within the community of the earnings from the Cultural Protection Fund, ticket revenues, and profits from the sales of cultural and creative products. Promote "Villagers' Cultural Resource Shareholding", quantify resources such as the skills of Inheritors, Traditional Settings, and Folk Festivals as shares to enjoy dividend earnings, and boost Cultural Consciousness and the enthusiasm for protection.

In addition, a long - term mechanism for Intangible Heritage Talent Cultivation should be established. It is recommended to set up a "Star Rating System for Intangible Cultural Heritage Inheritors in Rizhao", which links inheritance achievements with economic benefits, title assessment, and social reputation to enhance the social status and professional appeal of inheritors.

Collaborate with vocational colleges and universities to develop a course on "Intangible Heritage Inheritance and Digital Cultural and Creative Industries". Incorporate black pottery, fishing and salt production, Dongyi sacrifices, etc., into the research and learning content and talent cultivation plans, and encourage more young people to engage in the study and innovation of intangible cultural heritage.

Through institutional designs such as the "Youth Research and Learning Points System" and the "Master - Apprentice System for Inheritors", address the current issues of the relatively high average age of Rizhao City Intangible Cultural Heritage Inheritors and the shortage of young successors. It is worth noting that the "tidal development strategy model" holds significant

value in addressing the seasonal fluctuations in tourism in Coastal Cities. During the peak season, festivals, performing arts shows, cultural and creative markets, and other forms are employed to attract tourists in a concentrated way, enhancing the intensity of cultural experiences and boosting the per - capita consumption of tourists. In the off - season, the focus shifts to study tours, digital content production, and community cultural construction to strike a balance between attracting tourists and local employment.

Meanwhile, it's advisable to explore integrating traditional cultural experience content into composite tourism products like "hot spring + culture and tourism" and "health care + culture" in Rizhao City during winter, thereby forming a cultural tourism supply system with no off - season throughout the year.

Finally, brand building is also a key aspect of Pathway Design. It is recommended to adopt "Oriental Sun City" as the overall brand image and carry out unified planning and visual design centered around core IPs such as Sun Culture, Marine culture, and Dongyi Culture. By enhancing the application of brand symbols in municipal public art, airport and high - speed rail hubs, tourist attraction signs, cultural and creative product packaging and other areas, the overall awareness and emotional connection of tourists to "Rizhao culture" can be improved.

The government can encourage design companies and advertising companies to participate in urban brand building through tendering and support policies to ensure the consistency and professional standard of brand promotion. Meanwhile, step up marketing and promotion at domestic and international tourism exhibitions, on social media and short - video platforms to expand the influence of the "Oriental Sun City" brand. In summary, the Pathway Design for the Revitalization and Inheritance of Excellent Traditional Culture in Rizhao is a systematic project that calls for the collaborative efforts of multiple parties, including the government, enterprises, communities, research institutions, and cultural workers. Through the gradual activation path, Digital technology empowerment, Multi - stakeholder Collaborative Mechanism, and the differentiated development strategy featuring coastal characteristics, a win - win situation can be achieved between the protection of Cultural Heritage and industrial development. This will drive the transformation of Rizhao City from a resource - based coastal tourist city into a cultural coastal tourist destination, offering replicable and promotable experiences for the Cultural - tourism integration development of Small and Medium - sized Coastal Cities in Shandong Province and across the country.

5. Conclusion

Against the backdrop of the development of Cultural Tourism Integration in Rizhao City, a typical Small and Medium-sized Coastal Cities, this paper delves deep into the characteristics of its outstanding traditional cultural resources and the major challenges in their current inheritance and preservation. Aligning with the strategic guidance of national and local policies on the in - depth integration of culture and tourism, it systematically summarizes the relevant research progress both at home and abroad regarding Cultural-tourism integration mechanisms, Revitalization of Traditional Culture, Digital technology empowerment, etc. Based on this, it puts forward a highly targeted and practical Revitalization and Inheritance Pathway Design.

The research reveals that the primary challenges Rizhao City currently encounters in the development of Revitalization of Traditional Culture and Cultural-tourism integration are as follows: a severe aging issue among Intangible Cultural Heritage Inheritors and a dearth of successors, Homogenization of Cultural Tourism Products and a lack of experiential elements, as well as insufficient in - depth exploration and modern presentation of regional cultural features such as Dongyi Culture, Sun Culture, and Fishing and Salt Culture. Meanwhile, the application of Digitalization technology is limited, with high investment requirements and a

significant talent shortage. Moreover, a complete closed - loop for Digitalization collection, intelligent analysis, and dynamic optimization has not been established. This issue is particularly prominent in areas such as the digital transformation of rural cultural resources, the construction of virtual experience scenarios, and the development of Immersive cultural and tourism projects^{[11][15]}. In response to the above issues, this paper constructs a Three-layer Theory Model of “Dynamic Protection - Scene Reconstruction - Value Symbiosis” and proposes a step - by - step activation path of “Static Preservation — Dynamic Inheritance — Ecological Development”, offering a new theoretical perspective and practical paradigm for the protection of Cultural Heritage and the development of Cultural-tourism integration in Small and Medium-sized Coastal Cities.

At the Pathway Design level, the research emphasizes that, first, modern digital technology should be used to systematically archive and extract symbols from intangible cultural heritage projects, and establish the “Rizhao Cultural Gene Bank,” laying a solid foundation for subsequent transformation. Second, forms such as intangible cultural heritage workshops, research-based tourism, and AR/VR Interactive Experience should be leveraged to promote the modern translation and daily integration of cultural content, so as to achieve the “living” inheritance of culture. Third, based on the outcomes of the first two stages, multi-level Cultural Tourism Products such as Cultural Intellectual Property derivative products, Digital Collectibles, and theme tourism routes should be developed to realize the market transformation of cultural value and Industrial Chain Extension.

The research also proposes a “dual-cycle benefit distribution model.” Through mechanisms such as setting up a Cultural Protection Fund by extracting internal revenues and allowing external residents to receive dividends through shareholding, the relationship between commercial development and cultural protection can be balanced, and Community Participation and Cultural Consciousness can be enhanced. Meanwhile, considering the seasonal fluctuation characteristics of coastal tourism, an innovative “tidal differential development” model is proposed. During the peak season, festival activities are enhanced and peak experiences are optimized. In the off - season, the focus shifts to research, production, and community building, which helps improve the annual utilization rate of Cultural Revitalization. This strategy is in line with the research proposals on the Coordinated Development of rural revitalization and Cultural Heritage protection in recent years, emphasizing the linkage mechanism between intangible cultural heritage, community interests, and employment support^{[16][17]}.

The research in this paper makes the following theoretical and practical contributions:

At the theoretical level, it breaks through the traditional research paradigm of “protection and development Binary Opposition”, emphasizes the dynamic balance between the protection of Cultural authenticity and the development of industrial value, and enriches the theoretical system of Cultural-tourism integration in small and medium-sized cities.

At the methodological level, it innovatively adopts the perspective of Digital technology empowerment and integrates the extraction of cultural genes, adaptation to the modern context, creation of immersive experiences, and data-driven optimization into the entire process of Cultural Revitalization.

At the practical level, it proposes a Multi-stakeholder Collaborative Mechanism and a benefit distribution model tailored to the actual situation of Rizhao, offering feasible approaches and specific implementation plans for the government to formulate policies, enterprises to develop products, and communities to participate in operations. However, this paper also has some limitations. Firstly, the research is mainly based on literature reviews and policy analyses. Although a systematic path framework has been designed, large - scale questionnaire surveys, experimental studies, and on - site case verifications are still lacking to support the model's

universality and effectiveness evaluation. Secondly, although the Digital technology empowerment plan has been refined at the theoretical level, more in - depth on - site research is required regarding specific cost budgets, technology selection, and implementation steps. Thirdly, achieving a dynamic balance between cultural protection and development is a long - term and complex process. The mechanism proposed in this paper needs to be continuously adjusted and optimized in future practical operations.

Future research can be carried out in the following directions:

1. Collect primary data through on-site investigations and interviews to conduct research on tourist experiences and the willingness of community residents to participate, offering a scientific basis for the assessment of cultural resource adaptability and product design.
2. Select several representative intangible cultural heritage projects to conduct Digitalization modeling, develop AR/VR scenes, and conduct pilot commercial operations, verifying the feasibility and cost - effectiveness of the Digital technology empowerment path.
3. Carry out institutional design and policy experiments on the multi - subject collaborative governance model, and explore the optimization paths for the benefit distribution mechanism, the Inheritors incentive mechanism, and the Community participation mechanism.

In summary, against the backdrop of the national "14th Five - Year Plan" and the construction of Shandong Province's "Marine Cultural Tourism Belt", Rizhao City is confronted with the dual opportunities and challenges of the revitalization and inheritance of traditional culture and the high - quality development of the Cultural Tourism Industry. Through scientific planning, multi - party collaboration, technological empowerment, and institutional innovation, it is entirely possible to explore a sustainable development path that can both protect Cultural authenticity and realize economic and social values. This will enable the Cultural Intellectual Property of the "Oriental Sun City" to truly come to life, be utilized, and be passed down. It will serve as a typical example and practical model for promoting the Cultural Tourism Integration development of Rizhao City and even all Small and Medium-sized Coastal Cities across the country.

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