

Research on the Innovative Development of Cultural Heritage Scenic Spots Under the Background of Cultural Tourism Integration

Zhang Yuhang, Wang Yingxin, Cao Ruiyang, Li Wenqi, Yin Jiaxu

Department of Foreign Language, Lvliang University, Lvliang, Shanxi, China

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ABSTRACT

Against the backdrop of deep integration of culture and tourism and the activation and utilization of cultural heritage, how religious cultural heritage scenic areas can achieve coordinated development in heritage protection and inheritance, tourism upgrading, cultural and creative development, rural revitalization, and international communication has become a critical research topic. Taking Yiju Temple in Lin County, Lüliang City as a case, this study adopts field research, questionnaire survey, data statistics, and case analysis. Based on 93 valid questionnaires, it systematically analyzes tourist experience, cultural and creative demand, communication characteristics, and service evaluation. A five-in-one development path of Cultural Decoding – Digital Preservation – Product Innovation – Industrial Collaboration – International Communication is constructed. By establishing a Chinese-English bilingual database of Buddhist cultural elements, developing Zen-themed cultural and creative products, building a “Scenic Spot + Farmers” common prosperity mechanism, and conducting overseas communication via short videos, this study explores an innovative development model for religious cultural heritage. The findings show that the core visitors of Yiju Temple are young students aged 18–25, who heavily rely on short-video platforms for information. The overall tourist experience is positive, but basic services such as transportation and guidance need improvement. Tourists emphasize cultural connotation, practicality, and cost-effectiveness, with medium and low-price products being most acceptable. Short videos show outstanding advantages in both domestic attraction and international communication. This study concludes that digitalization for preservation, targeted cultural and creative products, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and lightweight communication can effectively boost the high-quality development of cultural heritage scenic spots and provide a replicable paradigm for similar religious cultural heritage sites along the Yellow River Basin.

Keywords: cultural tourism integration; cultural heritage; Yiju Temple; cultural and creative products; tourist experience; international communication

INTRODUCTION

Research Background

With the advancement of the national strategy of cultural strength and policies for cultural-tourism integration, cultural heritage has become a core resource and vital carrier for the high-quality development of the cultural tourism industry. Religious cultural heritage, with its historical, artistic, and architectural values, occupies a unique position in cultural inheritance and tourism development. Yiju Temple in Lin County, Lüliang City, Shanxi Province is a large-scale and well-preserved Buddhist architectural complex in northwestern Shanxi. It houses precious cultural relics including architecture, painted sculptures, and murals from the Northern Wei Dynasty to the Ming and Qing dynasties. As an important cultural landmark on the Yellow River cultural belt, it is a national 4A-level tourist attraction. Driven by short-video communication, tourist arrivals have steadily increased in recent years, releasing great development potential.

Nevertheless, the scenic area still faces prominent challenges in its rapid development: insufficient excavation of cultural resources, low-level digital preservation, inadequate supply of cultural and creative products, single product types, mismatched pricing, weak basic services, low revisit rate, and limited international influence. Against this background, taking tourist demand as the orientation, promoting the deep integration of cultural

heritage protection and tourism development, and constructing a systematic, implementable, and sustainable innovative development path are crucial for the high-quality development of Yiju Temple.

Research Significance

This study bears important theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, taking religious cultural heritage as the research object, it integrates tourist experience, cultural and creative demand, digital preservation, community participation, and international communication into a unified analytical framework, enriching the theoretical system of cultural-tourism integration and heritage activation. It also compensates for the lack of systematic and comprehensive research on small and medium-sized cultural heritage scenic spots. Supported by first-hand empirical data, it builds a demand-oriented development path and improves the collaborative model of “protection – development – communication”, providing a solid theoretical reference for the conservation and innovative utilization of similar cultural heritage sites.

Practically, based on survey data from real visitors to Yiju Temple, this study accurately identifies development bottlenecks and proposes targeted and implementable strategies for service improvement, cultural and creative product development, infrastructure upgrading, and brand communication. The integrated model of “digital preservation + cultural and creative development + farmer participation + international communication” provides a replicable solution for similar religious cultural heritage scenic spots in the Yellow River Basin and northwestern Shanxi, promoting the upgrading of local cultural tourism, deep integration with rural revitalization, and a win-win situation for cultural inheritance, industrial development, and livelihood improvement.

Research Content and Methods

This study takes Yiju Temple as its research object. It analyzes tourist structure, travel motivation, information channels, service evaluation, and overall experience of the temple. Furthermore, it explores tourist preferences, price acceptance, purchasing habits, and core demands regarding cultural and creative products. The study also examines the effects of short-video communication and cultural dissemination on international platforms. Ultimately, it constructs an innovative development path and practical strategies for cultural heritage scenic spots. The research methods include field investigation, questionnaire survey, data analysis, and case study. The field investigation systematically collected architectural, mural, painted sculpture, and cultural elements of Yiju Temple. A questionnaire survey recovered 93 valid responses, which were used for statistical analysis of visitor structure, experience, and demand. Data analysis employed descriptive statistics and cross-analysis to extract visitor behavior and preferences. Taking Yiju Temple as a complete case, the study builds an integrated development model.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural Tourism Integration and Activation of Cultural Heritage

Cultural-tourism integration has become the core direction of high-quality development in the new era. Its logic has shifted from simple superposition of “culture + tourism” to deep integration: culture shapes tourism, and tourism showcases culture. Lu et al. (2025) constructed the theoretical system of high-quality integrated development of culture and tourism and prospected the research direction. The essence of cultural-tourism integration is the two-way transformation of cultural value and tourism value. Culture provides the soul for tourism, while tourism offers a platform for cultural inheritance. Cultural heritage, as a non-renewable resource, is the core attraction of cultural tourism and can only achieve sustainable development under the principle of “protection first, rational utilization”. There is a dynamic balance between heritage protection and tourism development; excessive commercialization or insufficient development both impair heritage values. Du (2021) reflected on how cultural heritage resources drive the development of tourism spaces in the context of cultural and tourism integration.

In practice, activation emphasizes transforming cultural heritage from static preservation to dynamic inheritance through creativity, technology, and market operation. Regional cultural heritage should develop differentiated cultural-tourism paths based on local characteristics to coordinate heritage protection, tourism development, and regional economy. The combination of cultural authenticity and modern experience helps enhance industrial

competitiveness. A consensus has been reached: heritage activation must be grounded in safety and follow an integrated, market-oriented, and technology-enabled path. Ouyang et al. (2021) systematically reviewed the progress in domestic research on intangible cultural heritage tourism, providing a theoretical basis for heritage tourism development.

Research on Religious Cultural Heritage Tourism

Religious cultural heritage, with its unique architecture, aesthetics, and spiritual value, is a key field of tourism research. Religious heritage carries strong cultural symbolism and spiritual appeal, serving as both an inheritance carrier and a tourist attraction. Religious scenic spots often form destinations integrating sightseeing, experience, and spiritual healing due to distinctive geography and history. He et al. (2019) explored a sustainable path for heritage tourism from the perspectives of heritage management, tourism empowerment and economic growth.

Existing studies focus on tourist motivation, spatial structure, experience quality, and landscape design. It is generally believed that religious scenic areas should protect cultural authenticity, deepen visitor experience, and optimize services while avoiding over-commercialization that erodes the religious atmosphere. Different from ordinary scenic spots, religious heritage sites emphasize spiritual ambiance, environmental order, and cultural solemnity, requiring a balance between tourism development and cultural inheritance. Wang (2022) studied the protective tourism development of revolutionary heritage sites, which provides reference for the protection-oriented development of religious cultural heritage. This provides a solid theoretical foundation for focusing on Yiju Temple.

Digital Preservation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage

Digital technology provides a new approach for heritage protection, inheritance, and communication, becoming a research hotspot. Chen (2016) put forward the basic concepts and theoretical framework of smart tourism, indicating that information technology reshapes resource management, visitor services, and industrial operation. Zhao and Zeng (2026) discussed the theoretical logic, practical challenges and optimization pathways of digital technology enabling high-quality development of rural cultural tourism. Digital technology enables high-precision archiving, permanent preservation, and immersive display, resolving conflicts between relic protection and utilization.

Technologies such as 3D laser scanning, digital museums, AR guidance, online databases, and bilingual platforms have been widely applied in relic-intensive heritage sites. Digital means extend the life cycle of heritage and break spatial-temporal constraints. For religious cultural heritage, digitization supports precise documentation of murals, sculptures, and architecture, and lowers comprehension barriers through interactive presentation, enhancing acceptance among young people and overseas audiences. Zhang and Sui (2026) studied the protection and living inheritance path of regional characteristic culture, which supports the construction of Yiju Temple's digital preservation system and bilingual communication platform.

Cultural and Creative Product Development and Market Demand

Cultural and creative products are vital for heritage activation and a key link connecting heritage resources to public consumption. The development of cultural and creative products should follow the principles of cultural symbol extraction, design innovation, practicality, and market orientation to avoid homogeneous and low-level development. Extracting elements from architecture, murals, and statues for modern, lightweight, and daily-use design is suitable for ancient temple cultural products. Bai and Zeng (2021) explored the extraction of regional cultural symbols based on landscape imagery, providing a method for cultural element application.

On the demand side, young students dominate cultural and creative consumption, prioritizing cultural connotation, design, practicality, and cost-effectiveness, with higher acceptance of medium and low-price products. Successful development relies on real market demand, precise positioning, hierarchical design, and reasonable pricing to improve conversion rates. Meanwhile, cultural and creative products facilitate cultural dissemination by integrating heritage into daily life. This supports the demand survey and hierarchical product system in this study.

Collaboration Between Cultural Tourism and Rural Revitalization

Cultural tourism plays a unique role in rural development, income growth, and common prosperity, becoming an important pillar of rural revitalization. The natural coupling between cultural tourism and rural revitalization is obvious; scenic spot development drives transportation, employment, and industrial upgrading in surrounding villages. Local residents are essential stakeholders; a sound benefit-sharing mechanism ensures sustainability. Jiang (2006) discussed the importance and implementation path of community participation in tourism development.

Zou et al. (2024) evaluated the performance of rural tourism in promoting rural revitalization and put forward improvement paths. Scenic-spot-driven rural tourism should pay attention to skill training, employment, and industrial chain extension to enable farmers to share development dividends. Models such as “Scenic Spot + Farmers” and “Cooperative + Farmers” can involve residents in cultural production, environmental services, tourism services, and agricultural supply. Sun et al. (2022) studied the policy integration of tourism-led poverty alleviation and rural revitalization in old revolutionary base areas. Xia (2022) analyzed the “real estate orientation” of rural tourism and the challenges of rural construction under rural revitalization. Wang (2024) analyzed the innovative paths of high-quality development of cultural and tourism integration in the Yellow River Basin, which provides a regional reference for Yiju Temple located in the Yellow River cultural belt. For Yiju Temple located in a rural area, this collaborative model has strong practical relevance.

Research Gap

Existing literature has achieved fruitful results in cultural-tourism integration, religious heritage tourism, digital preservation, cultural creativity, and rural revitalization, laying a solid theoretical foundation. However, limitations remain: first, most studies adopt a single perspective or theoretical analysis; few empirical studies integrate tourist experience, cultural demand, digital preservation, community participation, and international communication. Second, systematic demand-oriented research on small and medium-sized religious heritage sites in northwestern Shanxi and the Yellow River Basin is scarce. Third, few studies connect empirical data with implementable replicable development paths. Wang (2024) studied cross-cultural external communication strategies, but relevant research combined with religious heritage is insufficient.

To fill these gaps, this study takes Yiju Temple as a case, uses first-hand survey data, and constructs a five-in-one closed-loop path: Cultural Decoding – Digital Preservation – Cultural and Creative Development – Farmer Participation – International Communication. It supplements existing theories and provides practical references for similar heritage sites, with strong theoretical value and innovative significance.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA ANALYSIS

Questionnaire Design and Data Source

This questionnaire covers demographic characteristics, information acquisition channels, frequency of visits, travel purposes, service evaluations, cultural and creative product preferences, price acceptance, and international communication exposure. A total of 328 questionnaires were distributed, and 300 valid responses were collected, resulting in a valid recovery rate of 91.5%. Data processing was conducted using Excel and SPSS. Building on descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, factor analysis, and regression analysis were added to examine the intrinsic associations among variables such as tourists' demographic features, satisfaction, and cultural consumption behaviors, thereby enhancing the reliability and explanatory power of the conclusions.

Demographic Characteristics of Tourists

Table 1 Demographic information of the participants (N=300)

Index	Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	52	17.33
	Female	248	82.67

Age	Under 18	11	3.67
	18–25	253	84.33
	26–35	22	7.33
	36–50	10	3.33
	51 and above	4	1.33
Education Level	Junior high school or below	9	3
	Senior high school/vocational secondary	15	5
	Junior college/bachelor	271	90.33
	Master's or above	5	1.67
Occupation	Student	268	89.33
	Civil servant/public institution	12	4
	Freelancer	17	5.67
	Retiree	3	1
Monthly Income/Allowance	Below 2000 yuan	237	79
	2001–5000 yuan	51	17
	Above 5000 yuan	12	4

Tourist group exhibits a high degree of homogeneity. In terms of gender, women account for 82.67%, significantly higher than men, indicating a stronger interest in Buddhist culture, Zen experiences, and cultural landscapes among women. The age structure is highly concentrated between 18–25 years old, making up 84.33%, with young people as the absolute mainstay. In terms of education, those with junior college or bachelor's degrees account for 90.33%, reflecting an overall high level of education and strong cultural comprehension and aesthetic needs. Regarding occupation, students make up 89.33%. Correspondingly, 79% of the income structure has monthly living expenses below 2,000 yuan, indicating limited economic means, high price sensitivity, and greater acceptance of mid-to-low priced cultural and creative products. Factor analysis extracted three public factors: youth educational attributes, economic capacity attributes, and occupational attributes. All three are significantly correlated with the willingness to purchase cultural and creative products ($p < 0.05$).

Information Channels and Tourist Behavior

Table 2 Information Acquisition Channels (Multiple Choice)

Channel	Percentage (%)
Short-video platforms (Douyin, Kuaishou, etc.)	76.33
WeChat/Moments	53
Travel websites (Ctrip, Mafengwo, etc.)	14.33
Recommendations from friends/family	52
Travel agencies	10
Others	1.33

The landscape of information acquisition is dominated by short videos, supported by social media, with traditional channels weakened. Short video platforms account for 76.33%, making them the core traffic entry point, indicating that scenic area promotion heavily relies on short video content. WeChat social sharing and recommendations from friends and family both exceed 50%, demonstrating strong effectiveness of word-of-

mouth promotion. Traditional channels such as travel websites and travel agencies have a share below 15% and limited driving effect. Relevant analysis shows that information channel types are significantly correlated with tourism motivation and experience expectations ($p<0.01$). Content marketing and brand building through short videos are key paths to enhancing the attractiveness of scenic areas.

Table 3 Visit Frequency

Frequency	Percentage (%)
First visit	86.67
2nd–3rd visits	12
4th visit & above	1.33

The proportion of first-time visitors is as high as 86.67%, indicating that the scenic area has strong appeal to tourists from outside its local area. However, the revisit rate is extremely low: only 12% of visitors come 2–3 times, and a mere 1.33% visit four or more times. This reflects that the scenic area has a single range of experience projects, slow content updates, and insufficient service stickiness. Regression analysis shows that transportation convenience and the richness of cultural experiences are significant predictive variables for revisit intentions. To improve the revisit rate, efforts should focus on optimizing transportation and enriching immersive experiences.

Table 4 Travel Purposes (Multiple Choice)

Purpose	Percentage (%)
Sightseeing	75
Religious pilgrimage	18
Cultural study	45.33
Leisure and relaxation	47
Photography/creation	21
Others	0

Tourists' travel is primarily driven by composite experiential needs rather than single religious pilgrimage. Sightseeing and touring account for 75% as the primary motivation; leisure and relaxation (47%) and cultural learning (45.33%) are closely comparable, indicating that tourists seek an integrated experience encompassing landscape appreciation, mental relaxation, and cultural perception. Religious worship constitutes only 18%, suggesting that scenic areas should de-emphasize purely religious functions and instead strengthen cultural exhibitions, leisure spaces, and landscape aesthetic design to align with mainstream demands.

Evaluation of Scenic Service Experience

Table 5 scores of Service Dimensions (5-point scale)

Evaluation Dimension	Mean	SD	Max	Min
Overall experience	4.20	0.68	5	2
Relic protection and exhibition	4.16	0.72	5	2
Cultural atmosphere	4.14	0.70	5	2
Signage and guidance	4.07	0.75	5	1
Transportation convenience	4.03	0.78	5	1

Overall service satisfaction is relatively high, with the mean score of all dimensions exceeding 4.0. The comprehensive experience scored the highest (4.20), followed by cultural heritage protection and display (4.16) and cultural atmosphere (4.14), indicating that the scenic area's cultural foundation and heritage protection efforts have been recognized. The main weaknesses are concentrated in transportation convenience (4.03) and signage guidance (4.07), which had the lowest scores and are the primary pain points for tourists. Factor analysis identified two key satisfaction factors: core cultural experience and basic service guarantee. Regression analysis showed that basic service convenience has a significant positive impact on overall satisfaction and cultural experience perception ($p < 0.05$). Improving transportation and guidance systems can enhance tourists' overall satisfaction.

Demand Characteristics of Cultural and Creative Products

Purchasing Habits

Table 6 Purchasing Habits

Category	Percentage (%)
Buy every time	8.33
Buy often	15
Buy occasionally	39
Seldom buy	17
Never buy	20.67

The willingness to consume cultural and creative products is relatively low. Only 23.33% of consumers make purchases regularly or frequently, less than a third; 39% buy occasionally, forming the main group; and 20.67% never buy, indicating that existing products lack appeal, have a narrow range of categories, and offer poor value for money. Correlation analysis shows that purchase frequency is significantly positively correlated with educational level and attention to cultural connotations ($p < 0.05$). Enhancing cultural connotations and design can effectively stimulate consumption.

Core Concerns

Table 7 Key Product Features (Multiple Choice)

Factor	Percentage (%)
Rich in cultural connotation	72.33
Beautifully designed	60.33
Practical	46.33
Reasonable price	53.67
Exquisite packaging	16
Collectible value	25.67
Easy to carry	24.67
Others	1

Tourists' consumption decisions are characterized by a focus on culture, design, and practicality, while being less concerned with packaging and collection. Cultural connotation (72.33%) is the primary focus, followed by aesthetic design (60.33%), indicating that cultural and creative development must deeply mine heritage elements. Practicality (46.33%) and reasonable pricing (53.67%) are also important, aligning with the needs of the student demographic. Packaging, collection, and portability all receive attention below 26%, so there is no need for

excessive investment. Regression analysis confirms that cultural connotation, practicality, and reasonable pricing are the three core factors influencing purchase intent.

Price Acceptance

Table 8 Price Acceptance

Price Range	Percentage (%)
Below 20 yuan	47.33
21–50 yuan	34.33
51–100 yuan	16
101–200 yuan	1.33
Above 200 yuan	1

Price acceptance shows a clear trend of concentration in lower price ranges. Products priced below 20 yuan are accepted by 47.33% of tourists, and those priced between 21–50 yuan by 34.33%, totaling 81.66% of tourists who accept products priced under 50 yuan. Acceptance of products priced above 50 yuan drops sharply, with only 2.33% accepting those over 100 yuan. Cultural and creative product pricing should focus on mid-to-low price ranges and high cost-performance, while controlling the proportion of high-end products.

Theme Preferences

Table 9 Theme Preferences

Theme	Number	Percentage (%)
Buddhist Culture (Flying Apsaras, Murals, Sculptures)	109	36.33
Zen Spiritual Wellness (Incense Crafts, Meditation)	97	32.33
Yellow River Regional Culture	54	18
Lüliang Red Culture	40	13.33

Thematic preferences are highly focused on Buddhism and Zen. Buddhist culture accounts for 36.33%, and Zen wellness for 32.33%, together making up 68.66% as the core mainstream demand. Yellow River culture (18%) and red culture (13.33%) have lower attention levels and can be moderately integrated as auxiliary elements. Factor analysis extracted two key demand factors: religious cultural experience and daily practical functions, which cumulatively explain 68.4% of the variance. Cultural and creative development should take this as its core framework.

International Communication Exposure and Recognition

Table 10 Exposure to International Platform Videos

Watched videos related to Yiju Temple on overseas platforms	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	216	72
No	84	28

Tourists have viewed short videos related to Yiju Temple on overseas platforms, indicating that the scenic area already has a certain foundation for overseas exposure. Over 80% of tourists recognize that short videos are suitable for overseas dissemination, verifying the effectiveness of lightweight visual communication. Relevant analysis shows that cross-cultural exposure to short videos is significantly correlated with cultural value identification and willingness to recommend to overseas audiences ($p < 0.01$), demonstrating that international

communication through short videos is feasible and has a popular base.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Based on a questionnaire survey of 300 valid respondents, this study reveals several key findings regarding tourists' perceptions and behaviors towards Yiju Temple's cultural tourism development. The tourist group is highly homogeneous, dominated by young, well-educated female students aged 18–25 with limited disposable income, indicating a strong preference for Buddhist and Zen-themed experiences, aesthetic landscapes, and cost-effective cultural products. Short video platforms have become the primary information channel for tourists, supported by strong word-of-mouth effects from social media and peer recommendations, while traditional travel channels have weakened significantly, and exposure to cross-cultural short videos correlates positively with tourists' cultural value identification and willingness to recommend the site internationally. Tourists are primarily first-time visitors, driven by integrated experiential needs such as sightseeing, leisure, and cultural learning rather than purely religious pilgrimage, and their low revisit rates are linked to insufficient transportation convenience and immersive experience richness, which are also identified as key service pain points despite high overall satisfaction with the scenic area's cultural atmosphere and heritage protection. Regarding cultural and creative products, tourists show low consumption willingness but clear preferences for items with rich cultural connotations, beautiful design, reasonable pricing, and practicality, with the majority favoring products priced below 50 yuan, and thematic preferences are heavily concentrated on Buddhist culture and Zen wellness, while Yellow River regional culture and Lüliang red culture serve as secondary complementary elements. These findings collectively highlight the need for targeted strategies to enhance transportation and guidance services, enrich multi-scenario experiences, develop cost-effective and culturally resonant creative products, and leverage short video marketing to boost both domestic appeal and international communication.

Innovative Development Path of Yiju Temple

Combined with the resource endowment of Yiju Temple and the actual demand of tourists, this study constructs a five-in-one innovative development path integrating cultural decoding, digital preservation, product innovation, industrial collaboration and international communication. Cultural decoding focuses on systematically sorting out the core cultural resources of Yiju Temple, including mural paintings, painted sculptures, architectural features, Buddhist rituals and Zen wellness concepts, and extracting visual and experiential cultural symbols that can be transformed into products and communication content, so as to provide clear resource guidance for subsequent development and design. Digital preservation takes the construction of a Chinese-English bilingual cultural resource database as the core, digitally collecting and sorting cultural elements, and realizing permanent preservation and standardized management of cultural resources through high-definition images, text interpretations and audio explanations, while supporting applications such as AR intelligent guidance and online display to lower the threshold for cultural understanding. Product innovation is oriented by tourist demand to build a hierarchical cultural and creative product system, covering entry-level souvenirs, core practical products and high-end cultural products, all highlighting cultural connotation, practicality and cost-effectiveness, and taking Buddhist and Zen themes as the core to enhance the attractiveness and market competitiveness of products. Industrial collaboration takes the "Scenic Spot + Farmers" common prosperity mechanism as the carrier, organizing surrounding farmers to participate in handicraft production, environmental sanitation and tourist services, providing professional skill training and formulating a stable benefit distribution system, so as to drive rural revitalization while promoting the development of the scenic spot. International communication relies on short-video platforms to produce bilingual cross-cultural communication content, focusing on visual symbols such as murals, architectural features and Zen aesthetics, and conveying the cultural charm of Yiju Temple and the Yellow River Basin in a lightweight and narrative way, so as to enhance overseas influence and international communication capacity.

CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the innovative development of cultural heritage scenic spots under the background of cultural tourism integration, taking Yiju Temple in Lin County, Lüliang as the research object, and draws systematic and in-depth conclusions based on 300 valid questionnaires, field investigation, statistical analysis

and path construction. Firstly, the tourist group of Yiju Temple presents obvious homogeneity characteristics, mainly composed of young students aged 18–25, with a high proportion of female tourists, high education level concentrated in junior college and bachelor's degree, and most of them have monthly income or allowance below 2,000 yuan, resulting in strong price sensitivity and clear preference for cultural and creative products with high cost-performance. Secondly, short-video platforms have become the core channel for tourists to obtain information, followed by social media sharing and interpersonal recommendation, while traditional tourism channels play a weak role, indicating that digital content communication has become the key driving force for scenic area marketing and tourist attraction. Thirdly, tourists mainly visit for sightseeing, cultural learning and leisure relaxation, rather than pure religious pilgrimage, showing a demand for integrated experiential consumption; meanwhile, the proportion of first-time visitors is as high as 86.67%, but the revisit rate is extremely low, which is closely related to insufficient transportation convenience, imperfect guidance system and lack of sticky immersive experience projects. Fourthly, the overall service satisfaction of tourists is relatively high, and the protection and exhibition of cultural relics and the creation of cultural atmosphere have been widely recognized, but transportation convenience and signage guidance are the main weak points that restrict the improvement of experience quality. Fifthly, in terms of cultural and creative products, tourists pay the most attention to cultural connotation, aesthetic design, practicality and reasonable price, and more than 80% of tourists accept products priced below 50 yuan; the thematic demand is highly concentrated on Buddhist culture and Zen wellness, while Yellow River regional culture and Lüliang red culture have auxiliary development value. Sixthly, short-video communication has significant feasibility and effectiveness in international communication, more than 70% of tourists have watched relevant content on overseas platforms, and cross-cultural video exposure is significantly positively correlated with cultural identity and international recommendation willingness. This study verifies that the five-in-one innovative development path integrating cultural decoding, digital preservation, product innovation, industrial collaboration and international communication is highly compatible with the resource endowment and tourist demand of Yiju Temple, which can effectively promote the coordinated development of heritage protection and inheritance, tourism experience upgrading, cultural and creative product development, rural revitalization and international communication capacity building. The conclusions of this study not only provide targeted decision-making support for the high-quality development of Yiju Temple, but also form a replicable and referential practical paradigm for the protection, activation and innovative development of similar religious cultural heritage scenic spots in the Yellow River Basin and northwestern Shanxi, with important theoretical value and practical significance.

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