

Research on Activation Path of Intangible Cultural Heritage Tourism in Qingshen County Based on RMP Analysis

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Abstract: Taking Qingshen County, Meishan City as the research object, this paper adopts the RMP analysis model to conduct a systematic analysis of the tourism development of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in Qingshen County from three dimensions: Resource (R), Market (M) and Product (P). The research finds that Qingshen County is rich in ICH resources, boasting 40 national, provincial, municipal and county-level ICH projects including Qingshen Bamboo Weaving, as well as 67 inheritors. It integrates diverse cultures such as Cancong Culture and Dongpo Culture, and has a sound ecological foundation. However, there exist several problems, such as the limited influence of ICH tourism, a single source of tourists, and insufficient depth of product experience. Based on the resource evaluation of "scarcity-inheritance-experience" and the consumption preference data of target customer groups, this paper constructs an activation path for the precise matching of "resources-markets-products", aiming to promote the inheritance of ICH and the sustainable development of tourism in Qingshen County.

Keywords: intangible cultural heritage tourism; tourism development; RMP analysis; Qingshen County; resource evaluation; customer group matching

1. Introduction

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) constitutes a vital component of cultural capital, encompassing unique traditions, skills, and practices that hold both cultural and economic significance. These heritage items serve not only as carriers of local history and identity but also as potential drivers of tourism and regional development. Despite their value, many ICH projects face challenges in effective preservation and transmission, leading to risks of cultural loss or underutilization. Intangible cultural heritage tourism (ICH tourism) has emerged as an effective strategy to integrate cultural resources with the tourism industry, promoting both the activation of ICH and the enhancement of local tourism vitality. By providing visitors with immersive cultural experiences, ICH tourism can strengthen public awareness of traditional practices, stimulate local economic development, and create sustainable models for heritage preservation [1].

Qingshen County, often referred to as the "hometown of Cancong" and recognized for its long-standing tradition in Chinese bamboo weaving, hosts a total of 40 officially recorded ICH projects along with 67 recognized inheritors who continue to maintain these cultural practices. However, the current development of ICH tourism in the county still faces several notable challenges. Key issues include insufficient depth in cultural exploration, a limited diversity of tourism products, and underdeveloped experiential offerings, which together constrain the ability of ICH tourism to attract and engage visitors effectively [2]. Many existing tourism initiatives focus primarily on superficial presentations of heritage rather than providing comprehensive, interactive, and educational experiences that convey the historical and cultural significance of the local ICH.

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To address these challenges, this study employs the RMP analysis model, which systematically evaluates three core dimensions: resources, market, and products. Through this framework, the paper aims to identify the strengths and weaknesses of Qingshen County's current ICH tourism development and to propose targeted strategies for improvement. By analyzing resource availability, understanding market demand, and assessing the suitability of existing tourism products, this approach seeks to provide a structured and practical pathway for enhancing ICH tourism. The findings aim to support local cultural preservation while simultaneously promoting sustainable tourism growth, thereby ensuring that the county's rich heritage is effectively activated and appreciated by both residents and visitors [3].

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Foundation

Research on intangible cultural heritage (ICH) tourism has expanded considerably in recent years, encompassing studies on the integration of cultural and tourism industries, heritage protection strategies, and the role of ICH in promoting rural economic development. Scholars have highlighted that effective ICH tourism not only supports cultural preservation but also serves as a catalyst for regional economic vitality by attracting visitors, creating employment opportunities, and fostering local entrepreneurship [4].

Among the theoretical frameworks employed in ICH tourism research, the RMP analysis model, proposed by Wu Bihu, has gained attention for its structured approach to evaluating tourism development. The RMP framework emphasizes the interconnection among three core dimensions: resources, market, and products. It provides a systematic method for assessing the availability and quality of cultural resources, understanding market demand, and evaluating the effectiveness and attractiveness of tourism products. This model has been successfully applied in regional tourism studies to guide sustainable development strategies and to optimize the utilization of local heritage resources [5].

Despite its practical relevance, there is relatively limited systematic research applying the RMP framework to the specific context of Qingshen County's ICH tourism. Existing studies often focus on either individual dimensions, such as resource management or product development, without integrating a comprehensive view of the county's tourism ecosystem. To address this gap, the present study applies the RMP model in combination with quantitative evaluation methods to provide a holistic assessment of Qingshen County's ICH tourism. This approach allows for the identification of key strengths and weaknesses across resources, market positioning, and product offerings, ultimately offering actionable insights for the targeted activation and sustainable development of local heritage tourism [6].

3. RMP Analysis of ICH Tourism Development in Qingshen County

3.1. Resource (R) Analysis

3.1.1. Quantitative Evaluation of Core ICH Resources

Qingshen County possesses a rich portfolio of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) resources, which form the foundation for the development of heritage tourism. At present, the county has 40 officially recognized ICH projects, including one at the national level, two at the provincial level, six at the municipal level, and 31 at the county level. These projects span a variety of traditional practices, craftsmanship, and performing arts, reflecting the cultural diversity and historical depth of the region [7].

In addition to the projects themselves, Qingshen County is home to 67 registered ICH inheritors who are actively engaged in maintaining and transmitting these cultural practices. Among these inheritors, one has been recognized at the national level, two at the provincial level, six at the municipal level, and 58 at the county level. These individuals play a crucial role in safeguarding traditional skills and knowledge, and their active participation ensures that ICH resources remain dynamic rather than static relics.

A quantitative evaluation of these resources reveals both strengths and areas for development. While the county demonstrates a relatively high number of ICH projects and a dedicated group of inheritors, the distribution is heavily concentrated at the county level. This concentration indicates potential limitations in the exposure and influence of nationally and provincially recognized heritage items, which could impact the appeal of ICH tourism to visitors from broader regions. Understanding these resource characteristics provides a critical basis for designing targeted tourism products and for prioritizing efforts to enhance both preservation and visitor engagement [8].

As shown in Table 1, Qingshen Bamboo Weaving and the Ruiyuan Dragon Boat Festival achieve the highest comprehensive scores among the county's ICH resources, establishing them as core assets for tourism development. Qingshen Bamboo Weaving, recognized as a national-level ICH item and with a long history of continuous transmission, provides a solid foundation for the creation of high-end cultural tourism products. However, its current offerings are limited in terms of interactive and immersive experiences, which constrains its potential for market transformation and broader audience engagement. Enhancing visitor participation through hands-on workshops, demonstration sessions, or themed exhibitions could help unlock its tourism value and attract a wider range of tourists [9].

Table 1. Three-dimensional evaluation table of core ICH projects in Qingshen County.

Project Name	Level	Scarcity	Inheritance	Experience	Total Score
Qingshen Bamboo Weaving	National	9	8	4	21
Ruiyuan Dragon Boat Festival	Provincial	7	7	6	20
Qingshen Twisted Stick Painting	Provincial	7	6	3	16
Hanyang Bangbang Chicken	Municipal	5	5	5	15
Qingshen Traditional Steelyard	Municipal	5	4	3	12

The Ruiyuan Dragon Boat Festival demonstrates strong advantages in experiential engagement, making it particularly suitable for the development of family-oriented, parent-child, and team-based interactive tourism products. By leveraging its festival atmosphere, local traditions, and community involvement, the event can be transformed into a more structured tourism experience that encourages repeated participation and deeper cultural appreciation.

Additionally, municipal-level ICH projects, such as the production techniques of Hanyang Bangbang Chicken, offer supplementary value by diversifying the range of tourism products. Incorporating these projects into broader tourism packages or cultural routes can enrich the overall experience, providing visitors with multiple touchpoints to engage with Qingshen County's heritage. This combination of core and supplementary resources creates a layered and dynamic tourism offering, balancing high-profile attractions with niche cultural experiences to enhance both market appeal and cultural preservation [10].

3.1.2. Excellent Ecological Base and Distinctive Tourism Features

Qingshen County benefits from a rich cultural and ecological foundation, which provides a strong basis for developing ICH tourism. The county is home to five major cultural traditions—Cancong Culture, Dongpo Culture, Buddhist Culture, Bamboo Weaving Culture, and Red Culture—each offering unique heritage elements and experiences. These cultural resources have been organized into four thematic tourism routes, including the Minjiang River water tour and a bamboo art-focused route, allowing visitors to explore both natural landscapes and cultural practices in an integrated manner.

In terms of scenic resources, Qingshen County boasts two national AAAA-level scenic spots, namely the International Bamboo Art City and Jiangwan Shenmu Garden, alongside three AAA-level scenic spots: Hanyang Lake Scenic Area, Zhongyan Scenic Area, and Orange Grove Sea. Furthermore, the county contains two national key cultural relic protection units, Zhongyan Cliff Carvings and Ruifeng Cliff Tombs, providing additional heritage value and educational opportunities for visitors.

The county's advantageous location further supports its tourism potential. Situated in the core area of Chengdu-Deyang-Meishan-Ziyang integration, it is well-connected by major transportation routes, including the Chengdu-Mianyang-Leshan High-speed Railway and the Chengdu-Leshan Expressway. Future infrastructure improvements, such as the addition of three interchanges along the Tianfu-Meishan-Leshan Expressway and the completion of the Hanyang and Huduxi hydropower stations enabling water transport to Leshan, will strengthen Qingshen's position as a key node in the Greater Emei Mountain tourism loop [11].

Ecologically, the county maintains a forest coverage rate of 49.24%, and features natural resources such as the 80-li Minjiang River and the 300-li Bamboo Corridor. These ecological assets complement the local ICH, providing a harmonious blend of nature and culture. Together, they support a "one belt leading, six areas connected" pattern of cultural tourism integration, in which ecological landscapes and intangible heritage interact to create distinctive and immersive visitor experiences. This combination of cultural richness, scenic diversity, and ecological advantages positions Qingshen County as a promising destination for sustainable heritage tourism development.

3.2. Market (M) Analysis

3.2.1. Macro Market Location Analysis

Located in the Chengdu-Chongqing economic circle, Qingshen attracts mostly day-trip tourists (70%) from nearby cities. Survey data (300 valid questionnaires, 2025) reveal three main customer types: Youth (18-35, 42%, seeking social media interaction, VR/DIY), Family (36-45, 31%, preferring parent-child study tours), and Middle-aged & Elderly (46+, 27%, interested in nostalgia and wellness). With transportation improvements, 40% expressed willingness for longer stays [12].

3.2.2. Micro Tourist Market Analysis

Based on 300 questionnaire surveys conducted from March to May 2025 (with a valid response rate of 92%), customer characteristics and consumption preferences are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Customer consumption preference table for ICH tourism in Qingshen County.

Customer Type	Proportion	Core Needs	Budget	Preferred Experience
Youth (18-35)	42%	Social media, interaction	50-200 CNY	VR, DIY workshop
Family (36-45)	31%	Parent-child education	100-300 CNY	Study tour, handmade
Middle-aged & Elderly (46+)	27%	Nostalgia, wellness	50-150 CNY	Slow tour, folk customs

3.3. Product (P) Analysis

Tourism revenue in Qingshen County has been increasing year by year. The 2024 firefly season drove tourism revenue exceeding 80 million yuan, and the total cultural and tourism consumption in 2023 reached 1.6 billion yuan. Existing cultural and tourism

products mainly include bamboo weaving cultural and creative products, scenic spot sightseeing, and festival activities. However, there are three major shortcomings:

Insufficient matching between products and resources: The scarcity advantage of Qingshen Bamboo Weaving has not been fully utilized. High-end products are only targeted at craft collectors, while mass-market products suffer from serious homogenization. The experience advantage of Ruifeng Dragon Boat Festival is limited to the Dragon Boat Festival period, with insufficient year-round operation.

Lack of customer adaptation: Technology-oriented and social products for young customers are scarce, and health-preserving and nostalgia products for middle-aged and elderly customers are insufficiently supplied, failing to achieve precise positioning.

Insufficient depth of experience: Existing products are mostly "observation-type" and "purchase-type," with few immersive and participatory experience scenarios. Tourists' understanding of ICH culture remains superficial, making it difficult to enhance cultural identity.

4. Activation Path of ICH Tourism in Qingshen County

To promote sustainable development and enhance visitor engagement, a dual-track activation strategy of "traditional authenticity + modern innovation" is proposed, covering the material, technique, and functional dimensions of ICH.

4.1. Dual-Track Activation Path Based on ICH Materials

4.1.1. Traditional Authenticity Path: Deeply Explore Native Material Value and Restore ICH Life Scenes

Focusing on the native characteristics of traditional materials such as bamboo and local food ingredients, life scenes of intangible cultural heritage are recreated for immersive tourism experiences. In Hanyang Ancient Town and Langou Village, a complete chain of "bamboo weaving workshop – bamboo farm tool usage – bamboo art folklore" is restored. Visitors can participate in the full-process experience of "bamboo shoot picking – bamboo strip processing – traditional bamboo weaving," enabling hands-on engagement with both craft and culture. Similarly, a "cluster of ICH cuisine workshops" allows tourists to take part in the production of traditional foods, including Hanyang Bangbang Chicken and Qingshen cured meat, participating in ingredient selection, marinating, and cooking, and tasting the final products on-site. This approach emphasizes the authenticity of local materials and provides visitors with a deeper understanding of the cultural context behind each craft and food product.

4.1.2. Modern Expansion Path: Expand Material Application Boundaries and Create Cross-Border Tourism Products

Leveraging the 4 billion yuan investment in the "bamboo instead of plastic" green new materials industrial park, a range of bamboo fiber cultural and creative products has been developed, including notebooks, portable tableware, and decorative items. A "New Materials Experience Pavilion" in the International Bamboo Art City allows tourists to visit production lines, observe manufacturing processes, and customize personalized products. Collaborating with young entrepreneurs and the Bamboo Industry College of Chengyi University, cross-disciplinary products combining bamboo with metal and ceramics have been developed, such as bamboo-weaving metal bookmarks and bamboo-wrapped tea sets, expanding material usage beyond traditional applications and attracting a broader audience.

4.2. Layered Activation Path Based on ICH Techniques

4.2.1. Core Authenticity Path: Inherit Technique Authenticity and Strengthen "Master IP + Living Display"

With 67 ICH inheritors at its core, Qingshen County emphasizes "Master IP + Living Display" to preserve and transmit traditional techniques. "ICH Master Workshops" have been established in the International Bamboo Art City, where national-level and provincial-level inheritors demonstrate key processes, such as porcelain-fitted bamboo weaving, including strip splitting, dyeing, and weaving. Tourists can book one-on-one master-apprentice experience sessions, while study tour groups are offered "technique research classes" to explore the cultural significance of traditional patterns such as "Dongpo Bamboo," fostering a deeper appreciation for craftsmanship.

4.2.2. Innovation Empowerment: Strengthen Technology Integration

To overcome the accessibility barriers of traditional experiences, a bamboo weaving VR system has been developed, allowing tourists to simulate the complete weaving process digitally. In addition, 3D design technology enables visitors to create personalized bamboo weaving patterns, participating directly in cultural and creative product development. Digital media, including short video series such as "Dragon Boat Drum Teaching" and "Steelyard Making Techniques," are disseminated via platforms like Douyin and Xiaohongshu, effectively engaging younger audiences and promoting interactive learning experiences.

4.3. Diversified Path Based on ICH Functions

4.3.1. Scene Revival Path: Restore Traditional Functions of ICH and Activate Cultural Memory

Traditional practical and ceremonial functions of ICH are recreated to enhance visitor engagement. In Hanyang Ancient Town, an "ICH Life Street" has been established, featuring bamboo weaving shops, steelyard workshops, and soy sauce production areas, where tourists can experience the daily applications of traditional crafts. At the "Bamboo Li Haitang" scenic area, a "traditional bamboo tools experience zone" enables visitors to explore the agricultural functions of bamboo implements, complemented by interactive activities such as orange picking. Seasonal events, such as the Spring Festival "ICH Lantern Festival," showcase flower lantern-making techniques and parades, allowing tourists to participate in DIY cultural activities and reinforcing local cultural memory.

4.3.2. Cross-Border Extension Path: Expand Modern Functions of ICH and Cover Diversified Tourism Needs

To align with emerging tourism trends, ICH functions are extended into multiple domains:

- 1) ICH + Study Tours: Utilizing the International Bamboo Art City as a study tour base, layered courses are designed around the "material-technique-culture" framework. Collaborative "ICH Study Tour Direct Buses" with schools in Chengdu and Leshan are expected to accommodate over 150,000 visitors by 2025.
- 2) ICH + Wellness: Homestays at "Bamboo Li Courtyard" offer integrated experiences combining bamboo weaving and yoga. In the Baiguo Ecological Wellness District, "ICH wellness classes" are paired with traditional health meals, such as bamboo fungus chicken soup and seasonal wild vegetables, attracting middle-aged and elderly tourists.
- 3) ICH + Night Economy: Along the Minjiang River, an "ICH Night Life Belt" has been developed, featuring the "Minjiang Night Cruise + Bamboo Weaving Light Show." In Hanyang Ancient Town, "Night ICH Workshops" offer evening craft

experiences, with nighttime tourism revenue projected to account for 30% of total ICH tourism income in 2025.

5. Conclusions and Prospects

The RMP analysis demonstrates that Qingshen County possesses distinct advantages and challenges in developing ICH tourism. First, Qingshen Bamboo Weaving and the Ruifeng Dragon Boat Festival are identified as the county's core resources, holding high cultural value and strong potential for tourism product development. These resources should be prioritized in both planning and promotional strategies to maximize their cultural and economic impact. Second, visitor groups present diverse needs, ranging from cultural learning and hands-on craft experiences to wellness and family-oriented activities, highlighting the necessity for precise alignment between tourism offerings and customer preferences.

The analysis also reveals key constraints: insufficient integration between resources and products, limited adaptation of offerings to different visitor segments, and experiences that remain relatively shallow, particularly in terms of immersive engagement and interactive participation. Addressing these issues requires strengthening the connection between tangible and intangible heritage elements, improving service design, and enhancing visitor involvement throughout the tourism process.

To effectively activate ICH tourism, six strategic paths are proposed: traditional authenticity, modern expansion, core authenticity, innovation empowerment, scene revival, and cross-border extension. Each path leverages unique aspects of materials, techniques, and functions to enhance the cultural richness, interactivity, and commercial appeal of ICH products. By implementing these approaches in a coordinated manner, Qingshen County can not only preserve and showcase its cultural heritage but also stimulate economic growth and attract a wider range of visitors.

Looking forward, the successful development of ICH tourism in Qingshen County requires detailed operational planning, collaborative engagement with stakeholders, and continuous monitoring of visitor feedback. Integrating digital technologies, diversifying experiential formats, and promoting sustainable practices will further strengthen the county's position as a cultural tourism destination. This multi-dimensional approach can serve as a model for similar regions seeking to balance heritage preservation with tourism innovation, ultimately achieving a sustainable and vibrant ICH tourism ecosystem.

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