

Research on the Current Situation and Countermeasures of Integrated Development of Cultural Tourism Industry—Taking Taizhou, Jiangsu Province as an Example

Zhanhui Wang, Jiaxian Jin, Yanyu Wu, Xinyi Zhang, Yi Gao, Fuyu Xue, Yuanyuan Shen, Bin He^{a,*}

Taizhou University, Taizhou, China

^a245582995@qq.com

**Corresponding author*

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Abstract: This paper analyzes the integration and development of cultural tourism in Taizhou, Jiangsu Province, revealing the current status of resource integration, industrial convergence, and the revitalization of cultural heritage in Taizhou's cultural tourism industry. It identifies issues such as insufficient depth of resource integration and coexistence of homogenized competition, dual bottlenecks of market and technology in industrial convergence innovation, and the risk of over-commercialization in the revitalization of cultural heritage. Corresponding targeted suggestions are proposed, including: solving the problem of resource integration to achieve distinctive coordinated development; breaking through the dilemma of industrial convergence to create a sustainable profit model; standardizing the revitalization of cultural heritage to protect its core values; and strengthening policy implementation to deepen regional collaborative cooperation. These suggestions aim to provide reference or guidance for the optimized development of the cultural tourism industry.

1. Introduction

As two relatively independent sectors, the cultural industry and tourism each have their own clear development trajectories. The cultural industry focuses on the expression and dissemination of art, meeting people's spiritual needs through various forms of creative content. In contrast, tourism primarily centers on visiting natural and historical landscapes, offering visitors an immersive experience. With global economic development and industrial structure optimization, these two sectors are gradually showing signs of integration, and the rapid development of the cultural-tourism industry has become a new engine driving regional economic growth. The core task of its development lies in deeply exploring the unique charm of cultural resources to enrich the cultural connotations of cultural-tourism products, enhance the tourist experience, promote the active integration of cultural institutions into the market, focus on ideological integration, and

increase tourists' sense of gain^[1]. However, there are many issues in the deep integration of culture and tourism, with prominent problems including insufficient depth of resource integration and coexistence of homogenization, dual bottlenecks of market and technology in industrial innovation, and inadequate policy support for collaborative governance.^[2]

2. Analysis of the Integration Status of Cultural Tourism Industry

Through the study of the integrated development of cultural tourism industry in Taizhou, we summarize its current development into the following four categories: deepening of resource integration and regional tourism pattern, industrial integration and innovation of business forms, revitalization of cultural heritage and brand IP shaping, policy empowerment and regional coordinated development.

2.1 Resource Integration and the Deepening of the Overall Tourism Pattern

Taizhou, with "culture as the soul and ecology as the foundation" at its core, has established a comprehensive tourism framework of "one river, one lake, and one stream." The Fengcheng River Scenic Area, by linking over 20 attractions including the Mei Lanfang Memorial Hall and the Salt Tax Culture Museum, forms a diverse cultural route featuring "plum blossoms, willows, Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, water, salt, and tea." During the National Day holiday in 2024, it had over 402,700 visitors and raised more than 20 million yuan in income for local enterprises; The Xinghua Qian Duo Scenic Area has been adapting traditional agricultural areas into immersive cultural and tourism IP zones by using drone storytelling in the spring rape flower season and organizing a large-scale nighttime live performance, reaching a high of over 80,000 visitors each day. In terms of red tourism, the Naval Vessel Culture Park has created a base for patriotic education through "three ships and one submarine". In the Qingming Festival holiday of 2025, it had an average of 8,000 visitors per day, and the addition of an electric boat tour project enabled visitors to get a 360-degree panoramic view of the ship combat group, thus establishing a new landmark in red tourism in the Yangtze River Delta. Caijia Courtyard in the rural tourism area has reconstructed Ming and Qing dynasty buildings and has integrated the red support history; it has over 500,000 annual visitors and has increased the income of nearby homestays by 45%^[3]. Taizhou City has currently linked all of its scenic areas based on their cultural features to promote all-round development.

2.2 Industrial Integration and Innovation of Business Forms

Taizhou is leading the way in "low-altitude +" and "healthcare +" to promote cross-sectoral development of the cultural and tourism industry^[4]. Since the launch of the city's Cultural Tourism Group drone performance business in 2023, it has conducted 71 shows and earned close to 5 million yuan in revenue across the western region of Qinghai and other places. A single performance of a drone memorial for martyr Yang Gensi reached over 100,000 viewers^[5]. Low-altitude economy has further developed in the areas of hot air balloon sightseeing and VR immersive experiences. Shuangtao Aviation Equipment Company developed a manned hot air balloon, which was displayed at the Sixth Transport Expo and promoted the "Aerial Taizhou" brand. For health and wellness tourism, Zhenhu Green Oasis Resort has built a traditional Chinese medicine health tourism project and offers visitors activities such as cutting mugwort and making sachets. In 2024, it was selected as a destination for health and elderly care in the Yangtze River Delta area and welcomed over 200,000 wellness tourists each year. The morning tea industry has been standardised through a central kitchen model, and a high-end brand such as "Liu Fang Teahouse" and a mass-market matrix

like "Yin Xiang Xiaochu" have been formed. In 2023, the Nanjing store reached a monthly revenue of over one million yuan, and in 2024, the brand's influence extended to Beijing and Shanghai, with online live-streaming sales exceeding 5 million yuan ^[6]. Through drone performances, the development of low-altitude tourism equipment and the launch of traditional Chinese medicine tourism projects, various industries are being integrated to innovate traditional business models and promote the progress of Taizhou's cultural and tourism industry.

2.3 Cultural Heritage Revitalization and Brand IP Formation

Taizhou integrates the protection of intangible cultural heritage with modern consumption to create the "Taizhou Impression" cultural brand. As a national-level intangible cultural heritage item, the Zhen Tong Boat Festival has expanded its core rituals of the orphan sacrifice and boat racing, and has also added AR interactive installations and night tours of Lake Zhen. The length of the event will be increased from one day to 15 days, and it is hoped that the local catering economy will expand by 45% in 2025. Taizhou Morning Tea Group built the first morning tea museum in the country, drew more than a million visitors each year, and released creative sweet snacks such as "Fengcheng Crisp" and "Liu Fang · Wang Hai". They have also worked with the Xuezheng Examination Institute to create scenery-themed bookmarks and formed a "cuisine + culture" industry chain. Wanghai Tower Scenic Area has installed a large-scale 3D light show of historical scenes in Taizhou at night for opera culture. The special Yuanxiao Opera programme in 2024 was distributed by CCTV and reached more than 100 million viewers. Taizhou City Color Culture Media has also developed products such as the "Chai Xu Man Jiang Hong" creative wine and selenium-rich water from Meilang's hometown; these have been exhibited at the Yunnan Expo for the past six years to promote the application of traditional culture in modern life. Through new combinations of local cultural heritage and modern consumption, Taizhou is doing both the preservation of cultural relics and economic development.

2.4 Policy Empowerment and Coordinated Regional Development

Taizhou is enhancing the support for the cultural and tourism industry through high-level design and cross-regional cooperation. The "Three-Year Action Plan for Deep Integration of Culture and Tourism to Promote High-Quality Development (2024-2026)" lists six main tasks, including "resource integration and linkage" and "cross-sector integrated development", and in 2023, 12 new inter-county tourism routes were added to cover the entire area within a 30-minute drive of the main scenic spots. Taizhou has signed a strategic cooperation agreement with Wuxi and Changzhou to build the "Lixiahe Golden Tourism Alliance" and issue cross-city tourism annual passes. Visitors from alliance cities will receive a discount of 20% - 50% and have conducted more than 300,000 joint visits in 2024. In the digital infrastructure sector, the country's first 5G + cultural and tourism digital station, "Meilan Pavilion", integrates digital reading and intangible cultural heritage display functions and has received more than 500,000 visitors each year. Fengao Industrial Tourism Area has introduced naked-eye 3D technology to create an immersive bee-themed experience and is now a popular site for health-conscious visitors. Under the support of the government, in 2023, Taizhou welcomed 35.6254 million domestic tourists and recorded total tourism income of 37.81 billion yuan; these amounts had risen year-on-year by 117% and 109%, respectively ^[7]. Policies were rolled out by Taizhou in cooperation with neighbouring cities, and in light of this, comprehensive support for digital construction and strategic promotion of coordinating development in the region have been implemented.

3. Problems of Cultural Tourism Industry Integration

Based on the analysis of the current situation in the development of the cultural and tourism industry integration in Taizhou City, several problems have been identified: first, there is a lack of depth in resource integration and it remains homogenized; second, the innovation of industrial integration faces dual bottlenecks at both the market and technology levels; third, there is a risk of over-commercialization in the revitalization of cultural heritage; and finally, there is a gap between policy implementation and regional coordination. The following will list the problems.

3.1 Insufficient Depth of Resource Integration and Homogeneous Competition Coexist

The integration of cultural and tourism resources in Taizhou has formed a framework of "one river, one lake, and one scenic area," but regional collaboration and differentiated development remain weak. Core attractions such as Fengcheng River and Zhen Lake, which link over 20 cultural sites, exhibit a phenomenon of "all scenes looking the same" — For example, both Zhen-Tong Ancient Town and Xinghua Shagou Ancient Town focus on their water town landscapes without distinct positioning. Some rural tourism projects blindly replicate the "homestay + dining" model; after restoration, ancient villages like Cai Family Courtyard remain primarily static displays, failing to deeply integrate red support history with local life scenes, resulting in visitor stays of less than 3 hours. Moreover, the cross-regional resource linkage mechanism is not yet well-established. For instance, although Xinghua Qian Duo Rapeseed Flowers and Jiangyan Zhen Tong Boat Festival in the Li Xia River region are both agricultural ecological resources, they lack joint marketing and route integration. In 2024, the number of mutual visitors between the two areas was less than 100,000, far below that of other linked scenic areas in the Yangtze River Delta. Therefore, further optimization of integration methods is needed, along with developing unique characteristics and distinct positioning, to improve the cross-regional resource linkage mechanism and avoid homogenized competition.

3.2 Industrial Integration and Innovation are Faced with Dual Bottlenecks of Market and Technology

Although Taizhou has been working very hard on such explorations as "low-altitude +" and "medical care +", the sustainable profit model is not yet in place. While 71 cross-regional drone shows were performed with sales reaching almost 5 million yuan in the 2025 Spring Festival, competition in the drone industry intensified, with the profit of each show falling by —40% compared to 2023, forcing some companies to operate on a subsidy from the government. As for medical tourism, the "traditional Chinese medicine experience" business of Zhonghu Green Oasis Resort has attracted more than 200,000 visitors every year, but due to the lack of professional medical teams and the development of food-medicine integration products, the repurchase rate is only 15%. While the morning tea industry has created a "Liu Fang Teahouse" brand matrix, standardised production using central kitchens has triggered a "taste homogenization" problem in some stores, with complaints at Nanjing stores seeing a 23% increase year-on-year in 2024, reflecting the difficulty of balancing industrialisation with local culture. In the process of industrial integration innovation, in order to be profitable, it is necessary to pay attention to market demand and constantly innovate technology to truly create products that meet market demand.

3.3 Risk of Excessive Commercialisation in the Revitalisation of Cultural Heritage

The integration of protection for intangible cultural heritage and modern consumption faces the

problem of "form over substance". Although the Zhentong Boat Festival has extended its event period to 15 days by adding AR interactions and night tours, some traditional rituals, such as the "sacrifice for orphans", have been shortened, leading to a decline in participation by cultural bearers. Among the flagship stores opened by Taizhou Morning Tea Group across the country, only 30 per cent have designated intangible cultural heritage display areas, and most of the stores are fast-food outlets. In 2023, among the complaints about "Taizhou Morning Tea", 18% mentioned a "lack of cultural experience". Although the Wanghai Tower's naked-eye 3D light show garnered more than 100 million online views for the revitalization of opera culture, only 45% of the offline audience could link it with Mei Lanfang's art; thus, it is necessary to strengthen the connection between cultural symbols and new forms of expression. Some intangible cultural heritage workshops have also added "improved versions" of handicrafts for the market, such as simplifying the Jiangyan Zhentong wooden boat manufacturing technique into a toy assembly, which increases the risk of skill loss. Revitalize cultural heritage and, at the same time, protect its original value from cultural degradation caused by over-commercialisation.

3.4 There is a Gap in Policy Implementation and Regional Coordination

Although there are six major tasks in the "Three-Year Action Plan for Deep Integration and High-Quality Development of Culture and Tourism (2024-2026)", there is a phenomenon of "hot at the top and cold at the bottom" in grassroots implementation. In 2023, three of the four newly added county-level tourism routes were closed in the following year due to a lack of visitors, indicating poor market research in advance. There is a problem of uneven distribution of special funds; out of the 9 million yuan for tourism in 2023, 60% was used to promote urban scenic spots and only 15% went to rural tourism infrastructure, leading to insufficient parking capacity at Xinghua Qian Duo Scenic Area and daily congestion exceeding two hours during the rape flower season in 2024. Although Taizhou has formed the "Lixiahe Golden Tourism Alliance" with Wuxi and Changzhou, in terms of regional coordination, the issuance of cross-city tourism annual passes in 2024 was less than 50,000, and the discount levels for admission tickets within the alliance vary greatly; thus, a unified attraction has not been created. There is also a shortage of cultural and tourism talents required for industrial upgrading; only 90% of key positions in Taizhou's Cultural and Tourism Group are filled by this group, and there is a 30% deficit in compound operating talents, which hinders the development of smart scenic areas and digital cultural and tourism projects^[8]. To ensure the consistency of policy implementation with regional coordination, policies need to be driven by market demand to promote continuous and stable economic growth.

4. Countermeasures for the Integration of Taizhou's Cultural Tourism Industry

Given the problems mentioned above, we have put forward the following countermeasures. First, the issue of resource integration needs to be addressed and coordinated development promoted. Second, we need to break through the barrier of industrial integration to build an enduring profit model that can support the standardisation, revitalisation and protection of cultural heritage. Finally, we need to strengthen policy implementation and deepen regional cooperation.

4.1 Solve the Problem of Resource Integration and Achieve Coordinated Development of Characteristics

Taizhou has abundant cultural and tourism resources but lacks deep integration and unique exploration. Therefore, multiple tourism brands based on the specific features of various areas need to be established to address this problem. For example, given the rich opera culture of Fengcheng

River Scenic Area, a "Grand Opera Garden" can be built to gather various opera performance venues and regularly host opera competitions. Thus, visitors will be able to visit the Mei Lanfang Memorial Hall and take part in opera creation and performance, gain a deeper understanding of the allure of opera, and extend their stay to three days. For the water towns, Zhen Tong Ancient Town can utilize the unique boat festival culture to develop a "Boat Festival Village". Inside the village, boat-making techniques and historical records of the boat festival will be exhibited, and visitors can make simple boat models and buy special souvenirs inspired by boats. Xinghua Shagou Ancient Town has opened a "Culinary Classroom" to showcase its water town cuisine and, under the guidance of local chefs, teaches tourists how to prepare Shagou fish balls and Xinghua drunken crabs to taste the real flavours of the water town. In terms of regional cooperation, Xinghua Qian Duo Rapeseed Flower Scenic Area in Li Xiahe should work with Jiangyan Zhen Tong Boat Festival to jointly plan a "Four Seasons Water Town Tour" route that integrates spring flower viewing, summer boat festivals, autumn crab tasting and winter snow appreciation. By joint promotion, more tourists will be attracted to travel across regions, and the aim is to increase the mutual visitor flow between the two areas by 50% in a year. By using resources efficiently, fully exploiting the unique features of each place, and creating distinct local characteristics, coordinated development with distinctiveness can be achieved.

4.2 Breakthrough the Industrial Integration Dilemma and Build a Sustainable Profit Model

Taizhou currently faces challenges in profitability and innovation for the integrated development of the "low-altitude + wellness +" model. For the "low-altitude +" sector, the government can organize industry associations to set market price standards for drone performance and curb a price war. At the same time, it can encourage companies to innovate through the development of low-altitude photography tourism projects, provide professional equipment for tourists to experience low-altitude shooting in safe areas, and thus increase revenue. In the area of wellness tourism, the Zhenhu Oasis Resort can strengthen cooperation with specialized medical institutions to invite traditional Chinese medicine experts for regular consultations. Based on tourists' physical conditions, customise wellness plans and offer not only common treatments such as moxibustion and massage but also develop unique services, such as herbal baths and Five Elements health meals, to improve customer satisfaction and the repeat-purchase rate to 40%. The morning tea industry requires both standardization and personalisation. Central kitchens should uniformly supply high-quality ingredients, and individual stores can adjust dishes according to local tastes. For example, in Shanghai stores, sweet buns and special pickles catering to local tastes can be introduced, and through regular customer taste tests, dishes can be optimised based on feedback to reduce customer complaints to less than 5%. By identifying and resolving problems in industry integration through effective innovation, new revenue channels can be opened, and a sustainable profit model will be established.

4.3 Standardize the Promotion of Cultural Heritage and Protect the Cultural Core

Taizhou has faced problems of over-commercialisation and the loss of cultural essence in the process of revitalising its cultural heritage. To address these issues, the Zhen Tong Boat Festival should strictly preserve core rituals such as "sacrificing for orphans", invite cultural bearers to participate in the preparations and explanations of the festival, and allow visitors to learn more about the historical origins and cultural connotations of the boat festival. In terms of the application of modern technology, AR interactive content should be developed based on boat culture to show the evolution of the boat festival from ancient times to the present and spread cultural knowledge more effectively. To promote cultural inheritance, the Taizhou Morning Tea Group can create a

special area for morning tea culture exhibitions in its stores to show the development history of Taizhou morning tea and traditional tea sets, arrange for staff to demonstrate morning tea etiquette, and offer traditional morning tea-making experience activities for visitors to experience the cultural depth of morning tea. To promote the revitalisation of opera culture, the Wanghai Tower naked-eye 3D light show should incorporate more classic opera sections, work closely with offline opera performances, and offer opera-themed light show tour services to help the audience learn about the elements of opera in light shows and foster their enthusiasm for opera culture. For intangible cultural heritage workshops, strict control must be exercised over product quality and cultural essence, and the traditional manufacturing process of wooden boats in Jiangyan Zhen Tong should be restored, with lessons taught directly by bearers to ensure the authentic transmission of intangible cultural skills. Recalling our origins and moving forward in life, we will achieve the excavation of cultural roots through standardised revitalisation of cultural heritage.

4.4 Strengthen Policy Implementation and Deepen Regional Cooperation

The application of policies for the cultural and tourism industry in Taizhou has problems such as poor implementation and lack of regional coordination. Given the problems listed above, an all-weather evaluation mechanism for tourist route operation has been built. We promptly adjust the route and operating hours based on passenger flow and visitor feedback to ensure that the routes meet tourists' travel needs and increase the utilisation rate of the routes to over 80 per cent. The distribution of tourism funds should be more reasonable, and the proportion of investment in rural tourism infrastructure will be raised to 40%. For example, ecological parking lots and tourist toilets should be built around the Qian Duo Scenic Area in Xinghua to improve the visitor experience. In terms of regional coordination, Taizhou should unify the discount policies for the cross-city tourism annual card with surrounding cities, simplify the usage procedures, and jointly carry out online and offline promotional activities. Tourism promotion events will be held in the major cities of the Yangtze River Delta region to showcase the unique tourism resources of Taizhou and its surrounding areas, attract more tourists to purchase annual cards, and aim to increase the annual card issuance volume to 300,000 in one year. To address the lack of cultural and tourism talents, the Taizhou Cultural and Tourism Group has been cooperating with universities and vocational schools to provide special courses in the cultural and tourism industry for students, offer internships and employment opportunities for students, and build a talent pool to ensure that the coverage rate of key positions reaches more than 95% and lay a strong foundation for the development of the cultural and tourism industry. Based on the problems that have arisen from the integration of local cultural and tourism development in Taizhou, corresponding policies should be formulated and implemented genuinely. In the process of development, more cooperation will be formed with other areas to help build an all-around talent pool for the development of culture and tourism in Taizhou.

5. Conclusions

This paper takes the integrated development of culture and tourism industry in Taizhou, Jiangsu Province as the research object, and systematically reviews the current development of Taizhou in terms of resource integration, industrial integration, cultural heritage revitalization and policy empowerment. It points out that the city has formed a comprehensive tourism pattern of "one river, one creek and one lake", cultivated new business forms such as low-altitude economy, wellness tourism and morning tea industry, promoted the revitalization of intangible cultural heritage and the building of brand IP, and boosted the rapid growth of cultural and tourism industry scale through policy support and regional coordination. Meanwhile, it also reveals the existing prominent problems, including insufficient depth of resource integration, serious homogeneous competition,

industrial integration and innovation restricted by both market and technology, excessive commercialization risks in cultural heritage revitalization, inadequate implementation of policies and regional coordination, and weak talent and capital support. In response to these shortcomings, this paper puts forward countermeasures such as solving the dilemma of resource integration through differentiated development, building a sustainable profit model through business format innovation, regulating heritage revitalization by adhering to the cultural core, and strengthening policy implementation and regional coordination. These measures provide a feasible path for the in-depth integration and high-quality development of culture and tourism in Taizhou, and also offer references for the optimized development of cultural and tourism industry in similar cities.

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