

Research on the development of the Wu culture industry: a case study of the Wudianyuan cultural industry project

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Abstract. Beginning with archaeological discoveries related to Wu culture, this paper provides an in-depth interpretation of its connotations and cultural significance. *The Ode to Wudianyuan* written by Dr. Binzi offers a profound exposition of Wu culture and serves as an important reference for understanding its essence. Taking the development of the Wudianyuan cultural industry as a case study, this paper examines the prospects for Wu culture industrialization from four perspectives: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Furthermore, it presents a detailed discussion of the initial vision for the Wudianyuan project and analyzes its current development dynamics and future prospects.

Keywords: Wu culture, Wudianyuan, industry, development

1. Introduction

Ancient Wu culture represents one of the earliest sources of Chinese civilization. Disciplines such as medicine, art, numerology, and other branches of knowledge can all trace aspects of their origins to this cultural tradition. Research on Wu culture—including its phenomena, origins, developmental trajectory, cultural connotations, functions, and characteristics—is of great significance for preserving and promoting Chinese cultural heritage. On the basis of safeguarding Wu cultural relics and traditions, exploring effective approaches to the development of the Wu culture industry possesses considerable academic and practical value.

Archaeological discoveries related to Wu culture are of great importance for understanding ancient societies, cultures, and religious beliefs. These findings not only provide valuable historical materials but also help reconstruct a more comprehensive and vivid picture of ancient social life. At the same time, they offer crucial physical evidence for studying the origins, development, and evolution of Wu culture.

As noted by scholars, ancient Chinese Wu culture embodied the concepts of the "unity of heaven and humanity" and the "integration of deities and humans". It promoted harmonious relations among individuals as well as among tribes and states, thereby fostering social development through a distinctive cultural form and mode of thinking. Practices such as ancestral worship, reverence for both heaven and humanity, and various sacrificial rituals and customs were later recorded in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas (Shan Hai Jing)*. The early emergence of religious and philosophical thought was subsequently integrated into *The Book of Changes (Yi Jing)* and the theories of Yin-Yang and the Eight Trigrams, eventually being appropriated and utilized by

ruling classes in later stratified societies. Its early ideological foundations—including social consciousness, awareness of life, and the harmonious Yin-Yang concept embodied in Taiji philosophy—became integrated with mainstream culture and were continuously accommodated by successive dynasties throughout China's class-based historical periods. The essence of Wu culture developed along the enduring thread of national consciousness and cultural identity. Consequently, Chinese culture has consistently retained the radiance of prehistoric traditions embedded within its heritage and has perpetuated the fundamental wisdom of ancient cultural thought [1].

Archaeological discoveries constitute one of the most important means through which ancient Wu culture can be understood and interpreted. Through tangible artifacts and material remains, these discoveries reveal the unique charm and far-reaching influence of Wu culture, providing valuable clues and insights into the origins and development of human civilization. Wu culture also shares a profound historical connection with the regions of Wuxi and Wushan, reflecting a close and enduring cultural relationship.

2. An overview of Wu culture archaeology

Wu culture is an ancient and primordial form of natural religious practice. It extends far beyond the rituals performed by *duangong* shamans and Taoist priests, encompassing a much broader range of beliefs and activities. In the early stages of human society, limited understanding of both human existence and the natural world gave rise to beliefs in the immortality of the soul, nature worship, and totem worship. People imagined that divine beings and ancestral spirits could protect them from disasters and ensure peace and prosperity. These beliefs formed the origins of primitive religion and marked the beginning of shamanistic traditions.

As defined by scholars, Wu culture emerged in the early history of humankind and employed mysterious practices such as exorcism, prayers for good fortune, supplication to deities, worship, sacrificial rites, divination, and the fulfillment of vows. Through these activities, it sought to predict fortune and misfortune, avert calamities, expel evil spirits, prevent and cure diseases, eliminate disasters, offer blessings, and plan for the future, thereby enabling people to pursue good fortune and avoid adversity [2].

2.1. The relationship between Wuxi and Wu culture

Wuxi County is recognized as one of the birthplaces of Chinese Wu culture and preserves abundant cultural relics and living traditions associated with this heritage. Although no historical records explicitly document the origin of the county's name, available literature suggests that its naming is closely connected with Wu culture. Located on the southern foothills of the eastern section of the Daba Mountains, at the junction of western Hubei, southern Shaanxi, and eastern Chongqing, Wuxi occupies a unique geographical position. The region is regarded as one of the cradles of early human habitation and development. Numerous ancient cultural remains have been discovered in the area, including natural salt springs and related archaeological sites, all of which are closely linked to the emergence and development of Wu culture.

2.2. The relationship between Wushan and Wu culture

Wushan is likewise regarded as one of the most important birthplaces of Chinese Wu culture. The name "Wushan" is traditionally associated with Wu Xian, a renowned shaman and imperial physician during the legendary reign of Emperor Yao in antiquity. After his death, Wu Xian was deified and honored as a revered spirit. The mountain was subsequently named Mount Wuxian and later abbreviated to Wushan. The Wushan region is notable not only for having administrative units bearing the character *Wu* (巫) in their names but also

for rivers and mountains similarly named after *Wu*. This widespread use of the term reflects the deep-rooted influence of Wu culture within the local population and cultural landscape.

Numerous archaeological sites related to Wu culture have been discovered in the Wushan area, among which the Daxi Cultural Site is particularly significant. The Daxi Culture is a Neolithic archaeological culture of the middle Yangtze River region and was named after the Daxi site in Wushan. Excavations at the site have revealed flexed burials and other mortuary practices that carry strong shamanistic connotations, together with a rich collection of artifacts. These discoveries provide valuable evidence for reconstructing the characteristics and developmental history of ancient Wu culture.

In addition, the Wushan region is rich in myths and legends associated with Wu culture, most notably the legend of the Wushan Goddess. Such narratives not only enrich the cultural connotations of Wu traditions but also serve as important sources for understanding the beliefs and spiritual world of ancient societies.

In summary, both Wuxi and Wushan are recognized as significant centers in the origin and development of Chinese Wu culture. The regions preserve abundant cultural remains, enduring folk traditions, archaeological discoveries, and mythological narratives related to Wu culture. Together, these resources provide invaluable materials and insights for the study and understanding of ancient Chinese shamanistic traditions.

3. An interpretation of Wu culture

Wu culture is a primordial cultural tradition that originated in ancient times and is closely associated with human survival, reproduction, and social development. The following sections provide a detailed interpretation of its origins, core elements, historical influence, and contemporary significance.

3.1. Origins and definition of Wu culture

Wu culture emerged during humanity's early developmental stages, particularly during the transition from gathering edible plants, fruits, and roots to a hunting and fishing economy based on fish, insects, birds, and wild animals. As human cognitive abilities evolved and intellectual capacities expanded, individuals possessing exceptional wisdom and spiritual sensitivity began to observe, interpret, and utilize natural phenomena. Through these processes, Wu culture gradually took shape. Broadly speaking, Wu culture refers to the cultural traditions that developed during the period of animistic belief, when people regarded all things in nature as possessing spiritual existence. As one of humanity's earliest cultural forms, it encompasses a wide range of intellectual and practical systems, including astronomy, geography, humanities, mathematics, medicine, divination, astrology, the theories of the Five Elements and the Eight Trigrams, ritual practices, and forms of entertainment. Moreover, Wu culture contributed significantly to the formation of traditional Chinese concepts concerning the Dao, philosophy, ethics, and literature. Its influence can be traced in the development of Yin-Yang theory, the philosophical thought of Laozi and Zhuangzi, the poetry of Qu Yuan, and the ethical principles of benevolence and righteousness advocated by Confucius. As such, Wu culture constitutes an important component of the pluralistic cultural heritage of Chinese civilization.

3.2. Core components of Wu culture

3.2.1. Religion

Wu culture forms an important part of China's primitive religious traditions. It encompasses shamanistic beliefs, various ritual practices, sacrificial ceremonies, exorcistic rites, and forms of spiritual worship. Shamans functioned as intermediaries between the human and divine worlds, communicating with

supernatural forces through astrology, divination, and other ritual techniques in order to fulfill people's spiritual needs, prayers, and aspirations.

3.2.2. *Customs and folk practices*

Wu culture is also reflected in a wide variety of customs and social practices, including shamanistic traditions, funeral rites, taboos, and other customary behaviors. These practices reveal not only the modes of thought and emotional concerns of early societies but also indirectly reflect the level of economic productivity and social organization during prehistoric times.

3.2.3. *Art*

Wu culture gave rise to a rich and diverse array of artistic expressions, including shamanic songs, dances, ritual dramas such as *Nuo* opera, poetry, sacred texts, myths, and legends. These artistic forms have greatly enriched the literary and artistic heritage of Chinese civilization while demonstrating the creativity, imagination, and intellectual achievements of ancient peoples.

3.2.4. *Science and technology*

In ancient societies, shamans often fulfilled multiple social functions. In addition to serving as religious specialists, they frequently acted as physicians, singers, dancers, historians, and experts in astronomy and calendrical calculation. Through their ritual activities, shamans accumulated extensive scientific and cultural knowledge and played a crucial role in the collection, preservation, and transmission of that knowledge. Consequently, they contributed significantly to the early development of science, medicine, and intellectual culture.

3.3. Influence and historical development of Wu culture

From its inception, Wu culture possessed considerable organizational capacity and social authority. It strengthened interpersonal relationships, enhanced social cohesion, and provided mechanisms for maintaining communal stability. With the emergence of private property and the increasing complexity of social relations, shamans gradually assumed additional responsibilities as interpreters and promoters of customary law. By invoking the authority of supernatural forces, they adjudicated disputes, distinguished right from wrong, and helped maintain social order. Wu culture also exerted influence over political life. In many early tribal societies, political leaders simultaneously served as shamans. Their perceived access to divine power enabled them to exercise authority, organize collective activities, and unify their communities.

Nevertheless, as history progressed and social institutions became increasingly sophisticated, the influence of Wu culture gradually declined. After the Han and Jin periods, Buddhism and Daoism rose to prominence and received strong support from ruling elites, while Confucianism became established as the dominant ideological system. Although the public status of shamanistic practices diminished significantly, Wu culture did not disappear entirely. Instead, it survived in latent forms within both popular society and imperial courts, continuing to exert influence on later generations through customs, beliefs, literature, and ritual traditions.

3.4. Contemporary significance of Wu culture

Although the social prominence of Wu culture has been greatly reduced in modern times, it remains an important component of humanity's cultural heritage and retains substantial contemporary value.

First, Wu culture provides invaluable materials for understanding ancient societies, cultural traditions, and religious beliefs. It offers important insights into the worldview and social organization of early human communities. Second, many symbols, motifs, and artistic elements derived from Wu culture continue to be widely employed in contemporary cultural production and artistic creation. Its influence can be observed in

literature, visual arts, performance traditions, and popular culture. Third, the philosophical concepts embedded within Wu culture—particularly the emphasis on harmony between humanity and nature—continue to offer meaningful guidance for contemporary society. These ideas remain relevant to discussions of environmental ethics, sustainable development, and the relationship between human beings and the natural world.

In summary, Wu culture is an ancient cultural tradition distinguished by its depth, complexity, and enduring appeal. It represents not only an important component of the diverse cultural heritage of Chinese civilization but also a valuable treasure within the broader history of human culture. Through the study of Wu culture, we can gain a deeper understanding of the diversity, complexity, and historical development of human civilization.

4. *The Ode to Wudianyuan*

Dr. Bin Chunyu, a distinguished scholar of Wu culture, has devoted many years to the study of its origins, traditions, and cultural significance. Inspired by his profound understanding of Wu culture, he composed *The Ode to Wudianyuan (Wudianyuan Fu)*, a literary work that celebrates the historical legacy of Wu civilization and the cultural vision embodied in the Wudianyuan project. The text reads as follows: "Since time immemorial, civilization has shone with enduring brilliance. Tracing its origins through historical inquiry, whether among the Chinese or other peoples, one finds that all ultimately began with Wu culture. In ancient clan societies, shamans stood at the forefront of leadership. There were the Azure Emperor Taihao and Zhu Rong, the God of Fire; Shennong who tasted the hundred herbs; Cangjie who created writing; Fuxi who drew the trigrams and interpreted the myriad phenomena of the universe; and Goumang who upheld the rising sun and protected the sacred mulberry lands. In that era, shamanic teachings were revered above all. Shamanic arts flourished, and shamanic customs permeated society. Seasonal sacrifices were observed without fail; rites concerning birth, death, marriage, and daily life were conducted with solemn reverence. Shamans practiced medicine, prepared elixirs, and communicated with the divine; science and technology emerged from these ancestral traditions. Through divination and the interpretation of oracle inscriptions, shamans laid the foundations of civilization itself. Whether in the worship of gods and ancestors, the veneration of dragons and phoenixes, or the offering of sacrificial animals, jade, and silk, all rituals were conducted with dignity and solemnity. Music, dance, drama, poetry, painting, myths, and legends flourished; totems were depicted, evil spirits were warded off, and sacred devotion illuminated every aspect of life. The theories of Yin and Yang, the *Book of Changes*, the Five Elements, the Eight Trigrams, the River Chart and Luo Writing, written characters, numerological arts, the Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches, and the Twenty-Four Solar Terms—all bear the imprint of shamanic wisdom. The shamans were pioneers of civilization and transmitters of timeless knowledge. Later, when Emperor Zhuanxu separated the realms of heaven and earth, some shamans became ritual specialists, diviners, historians, officials, artisans, and advisers to rulers, assisting sovereigns and benefiting the people. Few can fully grasp the profound wisdom hidden within *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*. Subsequently, the teachings of Huang-Lao evolved into Daoism; divine authority gradually receded while ritual and music flourished. The philosophies of Laozi, Zhuangzi, Confucius, and Legalist thinkers explored morality and governance, while *The Book of Songs* and *The Songs of Chu* displayed literary brilliance. Yet the source of all Wu traditions under heaven can be traced back to Wuxi.

Wuxi was the ancient Wushan and sacred mountain, the homeland of Wu Xian and the prehistoric capital of salt production. Here the Ten Shamans practiced divination, produced salt, gathered medicinal herbs, and refined elixirs. The people enjoyed abundant food and clothing without excessive toil and lived in harmony and contentment. Today, the Dong family of Shanghuang in Wuxi County, inspired by a commitment to

benefit the local community and improve people's well-being, has chosen the scenic Yanjia Village—blessed with beautiful mountains and clear waters—as the site for reviving the grandeur of ancient Wu civilization. After years of careful planning and dedicated effort, Wudianyuan has finally taken shape. Surrounding the park are landscapes that appear divinely crafted: mountain formations resembling dragons gathering in assembly, sacred peaks imbued with spiritual vitality. Twin-Breast Peak and Witch Mountain stand like graceful goddesses; Bijia Mountain and Mao Gong Mountain evoke the descent of noble spirits; Aotou Fortress and Reclining Dragon Ridge conceal sages and recluses. Within the park are scenes depicting the union of Fuxi and Nüwa and the origins of Chinese civilization, as well as natural formations resembling two dragons playing with a pearl, auspicious phoenixes soaring through clouds illuminated by the rising sun, and countless other symbolic landscapes. The park fully showcases the ancient customs of Wu and Ba cultures while promoting the ethical teachings of Wu traditions. Visitors may pay homage to the Five Emperors and Three Sovereigns, tread upon the Living Trigrams, make wishes for fortune and prosperity at the Pool of Blessings, and receive moral instruction through the ritual symbolism of Filial Piety River. The Source-Code Monument gathers the wisdom of the ancestors, while the Sun-and-Moon Pavilion symbolizes the vastness of the cosmos. Through the genealogical records of the Dong clan one may glimpse heavenly revelations; through the walnut groves one may contemplate the geography of the Nine Provinces.

The Four Towers of Zhou Rituals teach family virtues and cultural inheritance, while the archery grounds preserve the traditions of the Six Arts. Shamanic songs and dances inspire virtue and beauty; shamanic customs cultivate purity and moral integrity. Truly, this is a sacred source of spiritual inspiration and a paradise where the soul may wander freely.

Clouds drift across Wushan, mountains encircle the fertile plain, and peach blossoms fill the air with fragrance. Wudianyuan is the place nearest to enlightenment. It stands unrivaled in its preservation of Wu cultural heritage, illuminating the past and inspiring future generations. Dedicated to becoming a model of rural cultural tourism, it combines tradition with innovation and appeals to both refined and popular tastes. How extraordinary is Wudianyuan, the garden of Wu rites beneath heaven! How magnificent is this Eastern sanctuary upon the earth!"

5. Significance of the Wudianyuan cultural industry development

5.1. Promoting rural revitalization and economic development

As a comprehensive rural cultural and tourism service complex, the development of Wudianyuan has directly contributed to local economic growth. By creating employment opportunities, attracting tourist spending, and stimulating the sale of agricultural products, the project has generated additional income sources for local residents and improved their living standards. Moreover, the successful development of Wudianyuan provides a replicable model for rural revitalization in other regions, offering valuable experience for promoting broader regional economic development.

5.2. Facilitating cultural preservation and innovation

Throughout its development process, Wudianyuan has actively explored, integrated, and utilized local cultural resources, including Wu culture and traditional family-value culture. By incorporating these cultural elements into tourism products, activities, and visitor experiences, Wudianyuan enables tourists to engage with a distinctive cultural environment while simultaneously promoting the preservation and creative transformation of local traditions. Such efforts not only enhance the cultural vitality and soft power of the region but also enrich rural tourism with deeper cultural significance and unique characteristics.

5.3. Improving ecological and environmental quality

The development of Wudianyuan adheres to the principles of ecological priority and green development, placing strong emphasis on environmental conservation and restoration. Through measures such as afforestation, soil and water conservation, waste classification, and ecological management, the project has created an attractive natural environment for visitors while improving local environmental conditions. These improvements not only enhance the overall tourism experience but also contribute to a healthier and more sustainable living environment for local communities.

5.4. Promoting the integrated development of agriculture, culture, and tourism

Wudianyuan serves as a representative example of the integrated development of agriculture, culture, and tourism. By combining agricultural production with cultural resources and tourism services, the project has established a diversified development model. Activities such as agricultural product harvesting, rural homestay experiences, and cultural immersion programs allow visitors to appreciate natural landscapes while experiencing the lifestyle, traditions, and cultural heritage of rural communities. This integrated development approach not only strengthens the attractiveness and competitiveness of rural tourism but also fosters coordinated growth among the agricultural, cultural, and tourism sectors.

5.5. Strengthening social cohesion and community identity

The development of Wudianyuan has also enhanced social cohesion and residents' sense of belonging within the local community. Through participation in the planning, construction, and operation of the project, villagers have increased communication and cooperation, fostering shared goals and common interests. Furthermore, the achievements of Wudianyuan have generated a strong sense of pride and accomplishment among local residents, reinforcing their identification with their hometown and strengthening community solidarity. Such social benefits provide an important foundation for sustainable rural development and long-term community vitality.

6. Prospects for the development of the Wudianyuan cultural industry

Looking ahead, Wudianyuan will continue to adhere to the principles of sustainable development, further enrich its tourism offerings, improve supporting facilities and services, and strive to attain the status of a National AAA Tourist Attraction. At the same time, the project will continue to explore and utilize the region's distinctive ecological advantages and cultural resources, seeking innovative pathways and models for the integrated development of agriculture, culture, and tourism. Through continuous innovation and sustained effort, Wudianyuan is expected to become a new symbol of rural tourism and an important engine for rural revitalization in the region.

The development of Wudianyuan has consistently emphasized the dual objectives of ecological conservation and cultural inheritance. In the future, the project will further diversify its tourism products, strengthen infrastructure and service systems, and deepen the integration of local ecological and cultural resources. By doing so, it aims to contribute to regional economic growth and increase income opportunities for local residents.

From its inception, Wudianyuan was envisioned as a multifunctional rural cultural and tourism complex designed to promote local economic development and social progress through rural tourism.

The future prospects of the project can be analyzed through four dimensions: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

6.1. Strengths of Wudianyuan cultural industry development

"As a unique cultural gene of Chongqing's regional culture, Wu culture has become deeply integrated with water-related cultural heritage, forming tourism resources that possess both historical value and distinctive folk characteristics. However, these resources currently face three major challenges in tourism development: the gradual disappearance of Wu culture, insufficient tourism development, and limited dissemination. These issues not only constrain the full realization of their cultural and economic value but also hinder cultural inheritance and the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy" [3].

6.1.1. Advantages in natural resources

Wudianyuan is not only associated with the origins of Wu culture but also possesses abundant natural resources. The park enjoys fresh air, is surrounded by mountains, and contains more than 300 acres of ecological walnut forests interspersed with nationally protected tree species such as the Chinese yew (*Taxus chinensis*). The area is characterized by high concentrations of negative oxygen ions, making it an ideal destination for leisure, recreation, and wellness tourism. At the same time, Wudianyuan has effectively integrated Wuxi County's rich historical and cultural heritage into its development strategy. Ancient Wu ritual traditions and the cultural values of Chinese family ethics have been incorporated into the design and construction of the park, creating a distinctive cultural tourism landscape.

"Reasonable utilization itself constitutes a form of living preservation. Under appropriate conditions, introducing local shamanic customs and folk traditions and organizing Wu cultural exhibitions and performances can satisfy tourists' desire for novelty and unique experiences while promoting the development of local cultural tourism" [4].

Since its launch, the Wudianyuan project has adhered to the development philosophy of "using culture to shape tourism and tourism to showcase culture". The project occupies approximately 498 acres and is located at the junction of Wuxi, Fengjie, and Wushan counties at an elevation of approximately 950 meters, benefiting from a strategic location and abundant natural resources.

Through the creation of themed cultural zones centered on concepts such as *Wu* (shamanic culture), ritual propriety, filial piety, agriculture, learning, recreation, public discourse, and moral cultivation, Wudianyuan has successfully integrated natural scenery with cultural heritage. A variety of interactive activities based on Wu rituals and family-value traditions have been carefully designed, allowing visitors to experience "Wu Rituals and Family Culture" through dining, recreation, sightseeing, entertainment, and cultural participation. As a result, tourists can appreciate both the beauty of the rural environment and the unique appeal of Wu culture.

6.1.2. Advantages in transportation and regional location

Wudianyuan is located in Yanjia Village, Shanghuang Town, Wuxi County, Chongqing Municipality. The site enjoys convenient transportation and accessibility from multiple directions. With the continuous improvement of China's transportation infrastructure, visitors can reach the destination through a variety of transportation modes with relative ease. Furthermore, Wudianyuan is situated within an important strategic area of the Yangtze River Economic Belt. As regional development initiatives continue to advance, the surrounding area is expected to experience unprecedented growth opportunities. The upgrading and coordinated development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt will bring increased flows of tourists, capital, and logistics resources, thereby creating favorable conditions for the rapid expansion of Wudianyuan's cultural tourism industry.

6.1.3. Policy advantages

The Wudianyuan project has received considerable attention and strong support from government authorities. At the policy level, the government has provided substantial assistance, including financial support and equity

participation mechanisms. In addition, initiatives such as government-enterprise cooperation forums for rural revitalization have established effective communication and collaboration platforms between public authorities and private enterprises, injecting strong momentum into the project's development. From an investment and planning perspective, Wudianyuan follows the principles of scientific planning and rational spatial organization. Comprehensive development strategies and investment plans have been formulated to ensure orderly implementation, sustainable growth, and long-term project viability. These supportive policy conditions provide an important institutional foundation for the future development of Wudianyuan and enhance its competitiveness within the cultural tourism sector.

6.2. Weaknesses of Wudianyuan cultural industry development

6.2.1. *Insufficient integration of culture and tourism*

"In certain regions, the misallocation of resources has resulted in homogeneous competition among cultural tourism projects. Insufficient consideration of resource uniqueness has led to repetitive project designs and unhealthy competition, thereby undermining sustainable development. The industrial chain linking rural cultural tourism and agriculture remains short and incomplete, resulting in value loss. Deficiencies in agricultural product processing, tourism product development, and brand marketing have limited both value-added agricultural production and tourism consumption potential. Furthermore, the benefit-sharing mechanisms between rural cultural tourism and agriculture are often inadequate, with enterprises capturing most of the profits while farmers receive relatively few benefits. This reduces farmers' willingness to participate. Governments should strengthen guidance and coordination to create mutually beneficial outcomes for all stakeholders. In addition, shortcomings in agricultural support services, logistics systems, and financial services constrain agricultural circulation and cultural tourism development, becoming major bottlenecks in the integration of rural industries" [5].

(1) Manifestation of the Problem

Although Wudianyuan has integrated a variety of elements—including local cuisine, accommodation, conference facilities, educational programs, family-culture experiences, and parent-child recreational activities—the depth of integration between culture and tourism remains limited. Existing cultural elements are often presented at a relatively superficial level and lack sufficient depth, interpretation, and interactivity. As a result, visitors may find it difficult to gain a comprehensive and immersive understanding of the cultural significance underlying the tourism experience.

(2) Recommendations

Wudianyuan should further explore and utilize local cultural resources, particularly Wu culture and family-value traditions, and integrate them into tourism products through storytelling, thematic interpretation, and immersive scenarios. In addition, more culturally distinctive tourism programs should be developed, including cultural lectures, traditional handicraft workshops, ritual performance experiences, and heritage education activities. These initiatives would strengthen visitor participation, enhance cultural engagement, and foster a deeper sense of cultural identity among tourists.

6.2.2. *Insufficient brand building and marketing promotion*

(1) Manifestation of the Problem

As an emerging rural cultural tourism complex, Wudianyuan currently possesses relatively limited brand recognition and market influence. Low public awareness may reduce its visibility among potential visitors and consequently weaken its attractiveness and competitiveness within the increasingly competitive cultural tourism market.

(2) Recommendations

Greater emphasis should be placed on brand development and marketing promotion. On the one hand, professionally designed promotional materials, cultural festivals, tourism events, and media campaigns can be utilized to enhance the visibility and reputation of Wudianyuan. On the other hand, partnerships with travel agencies, online travel platforms, and digital marketing channels should be strengthened in order to expand market reach and attract a broader visitor base.

6.2.3. Infrastructure and service quality require further improvement

(1) Manifestation of the Problem

As visitor numbers continue to increase, Wudianyuan may face growing pressure on its infrastructure and service systems. Facilities such as visitor reception centers, accommodation services, and dining establishments may experience capacity constraints or service-quality challenges, potentially affecting visitor satisfaction and the overall tourism experience.

(2) Recommendations

Investment in infrastructure development should be increased to enhance both service capacity and operational quality. Measures may include expanding visitor reception facilities, increasing accommodation capacity, upgrading dining services, and improving supporting amenities. At the same time, systematic staff training and management programs should be implemented to strengthen professional competence, service awareness, and hospitality standards, thereby providing visitors with a higher-quality tourism experience.

"The establishment of smart tourism and intelligent analytics platforms can provide data support for government decision-making in tourism resource allocation and safety management. Such systems can offer visitors comprehensive smart services throughout the entire travel process—from pre-trip planning to on-site experiences and post-trip services. Through itinerary planning, intelligent navigation, AI-assisted travel guidance, real-time monitoring, information services, and personalized recommendations, these efficient digital services can comprehensively enhance the quality and technological sophistication of cultural tourism services, promote the development of specialized, high-quality, and customized tourism products, and create new avenues for cultural tourism consumption at the county level" [6].

6.2.4. Ecological protection and sustainable development challenges

(1) Manifestation of the Problem

With the continued growth of tourism activities, environmental protection has become an increasingly important concern for Wudianyuan. Balancing tourism development with ecological conservation and ensuring long-term sustainability represents one of the key challenges facing the project.

(2) Recommendations

Wudianyuan should continue to adhere to the principles of ecological priority and green development. Scientifically designed tourism development plans should be implemented to ensure that tourism activities do not negatively impact the natural environment. Environmental education and awareness programs should also be strengthened to encourage responsible behavior among both visitors and local residents. In addition, advanced environmental technologies and resource-efficient management systems can be introduced to improve resource utilization, reduce pollution emissions, and minimize ecological impacts. Through these measures, Wudianyuan can achieve a more balanced relationship between tourism development and environmental conservation, thereby ensuring sustainable long-term growth.

6.3. Opportunities for the development of the Wudianyuan cultural industry

6.3.1. Deepening the integration of culture and tourism

As a comprehensive rural cultural tourism service complex integrating dining, accommodation, conference services, educational programs, family-culture experiences, and parent-child recreational activities,

Wudianyuan has already demonstrated considerable attractiveness and development potential. In the future, the project is expected to further strengthen the integration of culture and tourism by exploring and incorporating the region's abundant natural and cultural resources. Through the development of distinctive tourism products and immersive cultural experiences, Wudianyuan will be better positioned to meet the increasingly diversified demands of visitors. At the same time, Wudianyuan can enhance cooperation with surrounding tourist attractions to create complementary tourism routes and integrated tourism products. Such regional collaboration would contribute to the formation of a more competitive tourism destination network and promote the coordinated development of the broader regional tourism economy.

6.3.2. Continuous improvement of supporting facilities

As the reputation of Wudianyuan grows and visitor numbers continue to increase, opportunities will arise for the further improvement of supporting infrastructure and service facilities. Future investments can focus on upgrading the visitor reception center, the Family Culture Hotel, fitness and hiking trails, children's recreational facilities, and other tourism-supporting amenities. In addition, the introduction of intelligent and visitor-oriented technologies will further enhance the quality of tourism services. Smart navigation systems, digital information platforms, online reservation systems, and intelligent visitor management technologies can provide tourists with a more convenient, comfortable, and secure travel experience while improving the overall operational efficiency of the destination.

6.3.3. Expansion of brand influence

Since the commencement of trial operations, Wudianyuan has welcomed a substantial number of visitors and received positive feedback from tourists and stakeholders. As public recognition and reputation continue to grow, the project's brand influence is expected to expand significantly. A stronger brand image will increase the destination's attractiveness to both regional and national tourism markets, thereby generating greater visitor flows and contributing to local tourism development. Furthermore, active participation in tourism promotion campaigns, cultural exhibitions, industry forums, and tourism award programs can further enhance the visibility, credibility, and competitiveness of the Wudianyuan brand.

6.3.4. New pathways for the integrated development of agriculture, culture, and tourism

Wudianyuan has already achieved notable progress in integrating agriculture, culture, and tourism, creating a solid foundation for future innovation. Moving forward, the project can explore additional development pathways to expand its business scope and market opportunities. For example, partnerships with local farmers could facilitate the promotion and sale of specialty agricultural products and rural tourism experiences. Collaboration with educational institutions could support the development of study tours, cultural education programs, and parent-child learning activities. Cooperation with cultural and creative enterprises could also lead to the design and production of tourism souvenirs and cultural products that reflect local traditions and regional characteristics. These initiatives would not only diversify tourism offerings but also strengthen linkages among agriculture, culture, education, and tourism, thereby creating a more resilient and sustainable development model.

6.3.5. Policy support and community participation

The development of Wudianyuan has benefited from strong support from local government authorities and active participation by community residents. As China's Rural Revitalization Strategy continues to advance and rural tourism experiences sustained growth, Wudianyuan is expected to receive additional policy support, financial assistance, and resource allocation opportunities. Equally important is the continued involvement of local communities. Broad participation by residents in project planning, operation, and service provision can inject vitality into the destination while ensuring that development benefits are more widely shared.

Community engagement not only strengthens local ownership of the project but also contributes to social sustainability and long-term stability.

Overall, the development prospects of Wudianyuan are highly promising. Building upon its existing strengths, the project is well positioned to capitalize on emerging opportunities associated with cultural-tourism integration, infrastructure improvement, brand enhancement, innovative agriculture–culture–tourism collaboration, and supportive public policies. With continued government support, community participation, and strategic innovation, Wudianyuan has the potential to achieve sustainable development, strengthen its role in rural revitalization, and become a prominent cultural tourism destination with regional and national influence.

6.4. Threats to the development of the Wudianyuan cultural industry

To ensure the sustainable development of the Wudianyuan cultural industry, it is necessary to establish a comprehensive evaluation framework encompassing cultural substance, market potential, experiential transformation, commercial viability, and risk management. Given the unique characteristics of Wu culture, the development prospects and potential risks of Wudianyuan can be examined through the following five core dimensions (Table 1).

Table 1. Five core dimensions for evaluating the development of the Wudianyuan cultural industry

Evaluation Dimension	Key Indicators	Core Questions
Cultural Substance	Uniqueness; Depth of Cultural Meaning	Do the core cultural symbols possess strong recognizability? Is the narrative system sufficiently rich and compelling?
Market Potential	Emotional Resonance; Audience Base	Can it provide emotional value that is scarce in modern society? Does it possess cross-demographic recognition and appeal?
Experiential Transformation	Spatial Adaptability; Interactive Technology	Can it be translated into immersive experiences? Is it suitable for integration with AR, VR, and other digital technologies?
Commercial Monetization	Business Diversification; Industrial Chain Development	Can it generate diversified consumption through cultural products, educational programs, wellness tourism, and related sectors?
Risk Management	Ethical Compliance; Demystification	Has superstition been appropriately excluded? Are local communities and cultural stakeholders respected and protected?

6.4.1. Cultural core

(1) Cultural Scarcity and Recognizability

This dimension evaluates whether the core elements of Wu culture—such as Nuo masks, sacrificial rituals, totemic patterns, and mythological narratives—possess irreplaceable regional characteristics and strong visual recognizability. The more unique and difficult to replicate these cultural symbols are, the higher their potential value as cultural Intellectual Property (IP).

(2) Depth of Cultural Meaning and Interpretability

This aspect examines whether the IP contains a sufficiently rich narrative system, philosophical ideas (e.g., the harmonious coexistence between humans and nature), or historical memory that can be continuously explored. Only culturally deep and multilayered IPs can sustain long-term development in educational

tourism, live performances, and cultural creative industries, thereby avoiding superficial and theatricalized representations that lack substantive cultural grounding.

6.4.2. Market potential

(1) Audience Base and Recognition

This involves assessing the existing level of public awareness of the Wu culture IP. If it has already been supported or reinforced by films, games, or literary works—similar to mythological IPs such as Sun Wukong or Nezha—then the threshold for cultural tourism commercialization will be significantly lower.

(2) Emotional Value and Resonance

Contemporary tourism consumption is increasingly driven by "emotional consumption". This dimension evaluates whether the IP can provide scarce emotional experiences for modern audiences, such as a sense of mystery that stimulates curiosity, ritualized experiences that offer psychological comfort, or cultural aesthetics that reinforce identity recognition. Strong emotional resonance directly enhances visitors' willingness to pay premium prices and increases repeat visitation rates.

6.4.3. Experience transformation

(1) Spatial Adaptability and Carrying Capacity

This refers to whether suitable physical environments exist for implementation, such as ancient villages, caves, forests, or historic towns, and whether these spaces can support immersive experiences like night tours, Live-Action Role-Playing (LARP), or themed cultural districts.

(2) Interactivity and Technological Integration

This dimension assesses whether the IP can be combined with AR/VR, holographic projection, and other digital technologies to transform static cultural symbols into dynamic interactive experiences. For example, augmented reality could animate Nuo masks via mobile devices, or VR systems could reconstruct ancient sacrificial ceremonies. The stronger the interactivity, the longer the visitor dwell time and the higher the level of participation.

6.4.4. Commercial monetization

(1) Business Diversification Potential

This examines whether the IP can be extended across industries to generate diverse consumption scenarios, including: Cultural and creative products: transforming totemic symbols into high-value consumer goods such as jewelry, blind-box collectibles, or digital cultural assets. Themed catering and accommodation: developing wellness-oriented "food-medicine homology" diets or tribal-style themed homestays. Educational tourism: offering paid programs such as intangible cultural heritage workshops and folk culture exploration courses.

(2) Industrial Chain Integration Capability

This assesses whether local stakeholders possess the capacity to integrate upstream cultural excavation, midstream experience design, and downstream product commercialization. Weak integration may lead to homogenization, inefficient resource allocation, and fragmented development.

6.4.5. Risk management

(1) Cultural Authenticity and Demystification

This dimension evaluates whether the development strategy maintains cultural authenticity while appropriately removing elements of superstition, low-level horror, or distorted representation. The goal is to preserve symbolic and ritual significance while transforming it into healthy folk-art expression.

(2) Intellectual Property Protection and Community Rights

This involves assessing whether trademarks, copyrights, and other IP protections are clearly established, and whether local communities and intangible cultural heritage inheritors can genuinely benefit from

development. Failure to ensure fair benefit-sharing or improper cultural appropriation may lead to social tensions and governance risks.

7. The original vision for the development of the Wudianyuan cultural industry

Wudianyuan was envisioned as a new landmark for cultural tourism and a shining cultural destination within the broader development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt. The project seeks to strengthen cultural confidence by preserving the roots of Wu culture, restore the historical legitimacy of Wu culture through cultural tourism development, interpret its values through the principles of morality, ritual propriety, and social trust, and revitalize its heritage through innovative forms of preservation and transmission. Against the backdrop of the upgrading and transformation of the Yangtze River Economic Belt, the Wudianyuan project has been conceived as a cultural and tourism initiative capable of becoming a new driver of regional development through its distinctive planning philosophy, rich cultural resources, and comprehensive development advantages.

Dr. Bin Chunyu, a senior scholar specializing in Wu culture studies, has played a central role in formulating the conceptual framework for the project. Based on his extensive research and careful planning, a preliminary vision for the in-depth industrial development of Wudianyuan was proposed.

7.1. Project background and positioning

Wudianyuan is located in Yanjia Village, Shanghuang Town, occupying an area of approximately 498 acres at an elevation of around 950 meters above sea level. The site enjoys a favorable ecological environment, pleasant climate, and abundant natural resources. Drawing upon these unique environmental advantages, Wudianyuan was envisioned as a comprehensive rural cultural tourism service complex integrating dining, accommodation, conferences, educational programs, family-culture experiences, and parent-child recreational activities. The project's development strategy is centered on utilizing local ecological and cultural resources to promote rural tourism, stimulate economic growth, and contribute to the implementation of rural revitalization initiatives.

7.2. Functional planning and design

7.2.1. Tourist reception and accommodation

Wudianyuan includes a planned Visitor Reception Center to provide convenient and efficient tourism services. The accommodation component is centered on the Family Culture Hotel, which consists of four parallel buildings. Each building contains more than ten guest rooms, including both standard rooms and king-bed rooms, thereby meeting the diverse accommodation needs of visitors. The hotel complex is also equipped with a range of supporting facilities, including a swimming pool, conference rooms, and educational/research rooms, which significantly enhance the overall visitor experience and service capacity.

7.2.2. Leisure and recreation

The park is equipped with various leisure facilities, including fitness walking trails and micro-landscape viewing platforms, providing visitors with opportunities for walking, sightseeing, and photography. In addition, a sunken-style children's playground has been planned to offer dedicated recreational space for family-oriented tourism, thereby improving the park's suitability for parent-child experiences and multi-generational visitors.

7.2.3. Culture and education

Wudianyuan places strong emphasis on family-culture experiences and educational tourism programs. Through pictographic character sculptures, culturally themed architectural design, and the overall cultural atmosphere of the Family Culture Hotel, the project seeks to inherit and promote the fine traditions of Chinese culture. Meanwhile, dedicated educational facilities such as study and research rooms provide convenient venues for organizing various forms of experiential learning activities, including cultural workshops, field studies, and heritage education programs.

8. Development trends of the Wudianyuan cultural industry

The development of Wudianyuan has demonstrated strong momentum and promising growth prospects. Its progress is reflected in several key areas:

8.1. Project positioning and functional improvement

Wudianyuan is located in Yanjia Village, Shanghuang Town, Wuxi County, Chongqing Municipality. Covering approximately 498 acres at an elevation of about 950 meters, the site benefits from a favorable ecological environment and a pleasant climate. The project has been positioned as a comprehensive rural cultural tourism service complex integrating dining, accommodation, conference services, educational programs, family-culture experiences, and parent-child recreational activities. Since commencing trial operations, Wudianyuan has continuously improved its facilities and service functions. Key infrastructure includes a Visitor Reception Center, the Family Culture Hotel, fitness and hiking trails, scenic observation platforms, and children's recreational facilities. Together, these amenities provide visitors with a diversified and comprehensive tourism experience that combines leisure, education, and cultural engagement.

8.2. Significant economic benefits

Since its trial opening, Wudianyuan has generated notable economic returns. According to relevant reports, the project has received more than 10,000 visitor visits and generated approximately RMB 1.5 million in operating revenue. These achievements have not only produced direct economic income for the destination but have also contributed indirectly to local development through employment creation and expanded market opportunities for agricultural products. To support the development of the Wudianyuan project while simultaneously increasing collective village income, Yanjia Village invested policy-based funds into the project over several years. The total investment reached RMB 1.5 million in equity participation, generating fixed annual dividends. In 2023, dividend income amounted to RMB 85,000. Through this investment mechanism, the village collective economy achieved sustained income growth, further strengthening the economic foundation for rural revitalization. The development strategy of Wudianyuan has consistently emphasized the use of rural tourism as a catalyst for local economic growth, demonstrating the potential of cultural tourism projects to stimulate rural development and increase community income.

8.3. Outstanding social benefits

In addition to its economic contributions, Wudianyuan has produced substantial social benefits. First, the project has created numerous employment opportunities for local residents. During the construction and subsequent improvement phases, a considerable number of jobs were generated. Following the commencement of trial operations, the project continued to recruit employees for catering, accommodation, and tourism services. More than twenty long-term positions have been maintained in these sectors, with

monthly salaries exceeding RMB 2,400, helping to alleviate local employment pressures and improve household incomes. Second, by attracting visitors and increasing tourism activity, Wudianyuan has expanded market channels for locally produced agricultural goods. Products such as livestock, poultry, fruits, and vegetables not only supply the park's daily catering operations but are also sold directly to visitors. This has increased the added value and market competitiveness of local agricultural products while creating new income opportunities for rural households.

Furthermore, Wudianyuan places strong emphasis on family-value education and educational tourism programs. Through various cultural activities and experiential learning initiatives, the project contributes to the preservation and promotion of China's outstanding traditional culture while enhancing the cultural awareness and civic values of local residents.

8.4. Integrated development of agriculture, culture, and tourism

As a model of integrated agriculture–culture–tourism development, Wudianyuan fully leverages the region's rich natural and cultural resources to build a thematic framework centered on "Wu culture, ritual propriety, filial piety, farming, learning, leisure, discourse, and practice". Based on this framework, the project has developed a spatial and experiential system consisting of "One Park, Two Zones, Four Courtyards, and Six Scenic Areas", and has designed and implemented a series of cultural and educational activities. These initiatives not only enrich the overall tourist experience but also promote the deep integration of the agricultural, cultural, and tourism sectors. Through this integrated development model, Wudianyuan has strengthened its brand identity and market competitiveness, while injecting new vitality into the broader rural revitalization agenda.

9. Top-level design and business model

The top-level design of the Wudianyuan project fully takes into account market demand and visitor experience. Through the development framework of "One Park, Two Zones, Four Courtyards, and Six Scenic Attractions", the project achieves a clear functional zoning system and a diversified tourism product structure. This spatial and functional planning ensures both operational efficiency and a rich variety of visitor experiences. In terms of business model, Wudianyuan adopts a diversified revenue structure, including ticketing income, catering and accommodation services, specialty product sales, and cultural experience programs. This multi-channel monetization approach reduces dependence on a single revenue source and provides a solid foundation for the project's long-term sustainability and financial stability.

10. Operational team and professional management

Wudianyuan is supported by a professional and efficient operational team. The team possesses extensive experience in cultural tourism project management as well as strong market insight, enabling it to accurately respond to market trends and visitor demands. This provides strong operational assurance for the project's development and implementation. In addition, the project places significant emphasis on talent recruitment and capacity building. Continuous efforts are made to attract skilled professionals and enhance staff training, thereby improving overall team competence, service quality, and operational efficiency. These measures contribute to delivering a more high-quality, convenient, and satisfying experience for visitors.

11. Conclusion

In summary, the Wudianyuan project demonstrates broad development prospects and significant market potential, supported by its distinctive development strategy, rich cultural and tourism resources, advantageous geographical location, strong natural environment, favorable policy support, and well-structured investment planning. Its scientific top-level design, diversified business model, and professional operational team further strengthen its capacity for sustainable growth. Against the backdrop of China's strategic initiative to upgrade and develop the Yangtze River Economic Belt, Wudianyuan is well positioned to seize emerging opportunities and advance its development momentum. It aspires to become a new highland for regional cultural tourism development and a shining cultural landmark along the Yangtze River Economic Belt.

The significance of the Wudianyuan cultural industry lies in its contribution to rural revitalization and economic development, cultural inheritance and innovation, ecological environment improvement, integrated development of agriculture, culture, and tourism, as well as the strengthening of social cohesion and community identity. The realization of these objectives will not only improve the living standards and well-being of local residents but also inject new vitality into the sustainable development of rural tourism.

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