

# **Industrialization Of Ethnic Folk Culture And Economic Value Creation: A Study Of Panzhihua Municipality In The Context Of The Cultural-Tourism Nexus**

Tianqi Li, Binghua Lu

---

## **Abstract**

*This study examines the industrialization pathways of ethnic folk cultural resources and their economic implications within the cultural-tourism nexus framework, using Panzhihua Municipality, Sichuan Province, China as a case study. Drawing on resource-based view theory and value chain analysis, the research identifies systemic constraints including fragmented industrial structures, weak brand positioning, and insufficient human capital infrastructure. The analysis proposes an integrated value chain model incorporating intangible cultural heritage experiential consumption, ethnic festival events, rural tourism, and creative derivative products. Findings indicate that structured cultural industrialization significantly enhances tourism revenue diversification, expands creative industry scale, and generates measurable rural economic development outcomes. The study contributes to cultural economy scholarship by operationalizing the cultural-tourism nexus concept in multi-ethnic resource-based city contexts and provides empirical grounding for community-based development interventions in ethnic minority regions.*

**Keywords:** *cultural-tourism nexus; ethnic folk culture industrialization; intangible cultural heritage; value creation; resource-based cities; Panzhihua*

---

Date of Submission: 14-03-2026

Date of Acceptance: 24-03-2026

---

## **I. Introduction**

### **Research Context**

Under conditions of economic globalization and cultural pluralism, the cultural-tourism nexus has emerged as a dominant paradigm in regional development strategy, particularly within China's evolving cultural and tourism policy architecture. For resource-based cities undergoing industrial transition, this nexus represents a critical mechanism for economic restructuring through the commodification of cultural assets. Panzhihua Municipality, established during the Third Front Construction period (1964–1980) as an industrial base for iron and steel production, possesses substantial cultural and natural resource endowments, notably distinctive ethnic minority cultural traditions including those of the Yi (Nuosu) and Lisu peoples.

The municipality's cultural inventory encompasses the Yisha Yi ethnic cultural complex, the Yue De Festival of Lisu People (inscribed as national-level intangible cultural heritage), and the Jueque inkstone craft tradition. Despite these resource endowments, the industrialization of ethnic folk cultural resources remains underdeveloped, with limited conversion of cultural capital into sustainable economic returns. This structural gap necessitates systematic scholarly investigation to inform evidence-based policy and practice.

### **Theoretical and Practical Significance**

Theoretically, this research advances the cultural economy literature by examining the industrialization of ethnic cultural resources through the lens of the cultural-tourism nexus, contributing to theoretical frameworks concerning heritage activation and indigenous knowledge commercialization. The study situates local empirical observations within broader debates on creative economy development and resource-based urban transformation.

Practically, the analysis identifies structural impediments and operational constraints in Panzhihua's ethnic cultural industries, proposing actionable interventions for the integration of ethnic folk culture with tourism, creative industries, and hospitality sectors. The development of distinctive ethnic cultural tourism brands carries implications for household income generation, rural economic development, and the sustainable transmission of ethnic cultural heritage—offering transferable insights for comparable multi-ethnic regions.

### **Methodology**

This research employs a mixed-methods design combining documentary analysis, field investigation, and comparative case study methodology. Documentary analysis synthesizes international and domestic scholarship on cultural-tourism integration and ethnic cultural industrialization to establish theoretical

foundations. Field investigation encompasses primary data collection through site visits to ethnic concentrated areas including Yanbian County and Miyi County, generating qualitative data on cultural resource status and industrialization constraints. Comparative case analysis examines successful and unsuccessful implementation instances to inform evidence-based recommendations. This methodological triangulation ensures analytical rigor and validity.

## **II. Inventory Of Ethnic Folk Cultural Resources In Panzhihua**

### **Resource Typology**

Panzhuhua's ethnic cultural landscape is characterized by multi-ethnic coexistence, with Yi (Nuosu) and Lisu heritage constituting primary resource categories. The Yisha Yi cultural complex represents the municipality's most significant ethnic cultural asset, manifesting distinctive architectural traditions, textile arts, and ceremonial practices that demonstrate historical continuity and cultural resilience. The Yue De Festival of Lisu People, designated as national intangible cultural heritage, features elaborate ritual protocols and performative traditions that constitute important ethnographic resources.

The Jueque inkstone craft tradition exemplifies place-specific material culture, utilizing locally sourced mineral resources to produce artifacts embodying technical sophistication and aesthetic distinction. This craft tradition provides tangible evidence of the relationship between local geological endowments and cultural production systems.

### **Resource Characteristics**

Panzhuhua's ethnic cultural resources demonstrate two defining characteristics: multi-ethnic coexistence patterns and place-specific uniqueness. The multi-ethnic configuration has generated distinctive cultural hybridization processes, wherein distinct ethnic traditions maintain autonomous identity markers while simultaneously engaging in mutual cultural borrowing and synthesis. For instance, the Yi Torch Festival and Lisu Yue De Festival maintain distinct ritual structures and symbolic meanings, yet demonstrate coordinated coexistence within the regional cultural ecology.

Place-specific uniqueness is evidenced by resource dependencies on localized material conditions. The Jueque inkstone tradition, for example, relies upon mineral deposits unique to the Panzhuhua geological formation, creating non-replicable competitive advantages. This uniqueness enhances cultural resource distinctiveness and provides foundations for differentiated market positioning within cultural tourism and creative product markets.

## **III. Current Status Of Ethnic Folk Cultural Industrialization**

### **Existing Industrialization Models**

Current industrialization efforts concentrate in tourism and creative industry sectors. Within tourism, Panzhuhua has integrated Yisha Yi villages and Lisu Yue De Festival traditions into tourism product development, generating experiential cultural tourism offerings. Yisha Village has achieved regional destination status through the commodification of Yi architectural heritage and performative traditions. The Jueque inkstone craft has been partially integrated into tourism value chains through the development of observational craft production and souvenir retail.

Creative industry development has focused on the commercialization of traditional crafts and heritage elements. Jueque inkstone production has been repositioned toward high-end gift and collectible markets by select enterprises. Yi embroidery and Lisu weaving traditions have generated limited creative product lines, though production scale remains constrained and brand recognition underdeveloped. Overall, industrialization models remain exploratory, lacking systematic value chain integration and economies of scale.

### **Achieved Outcomes**

Cultural industrialization has generated measurable outcomes in heritage preservation and economic development. Heritage preservation has been advanced through the integration of Yisha Yi culture and Lisu Yue De Festival into tourism programming, generating revenue streams that incentivize conservation. Yisha Village's Torch Festival events have expanded audience exposure to Yi traditions, while Jueque inkstone master craftspeople have utilized tourism platforms to implement training programs ensuring technical transmission.

Economic impacts include sustained growth in tourism revenues for ethnic village destinations and the expansion of creative product distribution channels. Yisha Village tourism revenues have demonstrated continuous growth trajectories, generating direct income effects for resident households. Jueque inkstone and Yi embroidery products have achieved national market penetration, expanding brand visibility for Panzhuhua's ethnic cultural resources.

### **Structural Constraints**

Several systemic constraints impede industrialization progress. Primary among these is low industrialization intensity, manifesting in shallow resource development and truncated value chains. Cultural products remain concentrated in primary processing stages—simple craft production and basic cultural performance—without substantial value-added derivative development. This superficial development pattern constrains commercial value extraction and limits sectoral sustainability.

Weak brand positioning represents a secondary constraint. Neither Yisha Yi villages nor Jueque inkstone traditions have achieved national-level brand recognition, attributable to absence of unified brand strategy and ineffective marketing implementation. Fragmented administrative coordination exacerbates this condition, as localized development initiatives operate without regional integration, diluting collective brand impact.

Infrastructure deficits and human capital shortages constitute tertiary constraints. Transportation infrastructure and public service facilities in ethnic concentrated areas remain underdeveloped, negatively affecting visitor experience quality. Professional talent for creative industry development is scarce, particularly individuals possessing dual competencies in ethnic cultural knowledge and contemporary market operations. These structural barriers necessitate targeted intervention through policy mechanisms and institutional innovation.

## **IV. Innovation Pathways For Cultural Industrialization**

### **Integrated Value Chain Construction**

The cultural-tourism nexus framework enables reconceptualization of industrialization through an integrated value chain model incorporating intangible cultural heritage experiential consumption, ethnic festival events, rural tourism, and creative derivative products. Intangible cultural heritage experiential consumption requires deep resource excavation and living exhibition of traditions such as Yisha Yi culture and Lisu Yue De Festival, implemented through heritage workshop establishments and interactive participation programs to enhance visitor engagement and cultural identification.

Ethnic festival events leverage cultural cohesion and market attractiveness through the institutionalization of distinctive celebrations including Yi Torch Festival and Lisu Yue De Festival, generating visitor flows and regional brand enhancement. Rural tourism functions as a urban-rural economic linkage mechanism, developing ethnic culture-themed tourism routes that integrate cultural experience, ecological sightseeing, and leisure accommodation within comprehensive destination products. Creative derivative product development extends value chains through the integration of Jueque inkstone craft traditions with contemporary design methodologies, producing culturally embedded, market-competitive product lines.

Implementation requires multi-stakeholder coordination: governmental policy support for heritage preservation and capital investment guidance; enterprise innovation in market operation diversification; and civil society participation in cultural authenticity maintenance. Through collaborative governance, Panzhihua's ethnic cultural industries can achieve brand development and economies of scale, generating economic returns for regional development.

### **Immersive Experience Design**

Contemporary tourism consumption trends toward immersive experiences and micro-vacation formats necessitate the design of immersive ethnic cultural environments to enhance product market attractiveness and value capture. Immersive experience design emphasizes multi-sensory engagement facilitating deep cultural situational involvement. Implementation strategies include: (1) development of immersive ethnic living environment zones utilizing Yisha Village and comparable settlements, reconstructing traditional residential architecture, daily life scenarios, and performance traditions to communicate multi-ethnic coexistence dynamics; (2) deployment of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technologies for dynamic cultural visualization, including VR reconstruction of Lisu Yue De Festival ceremonial contexts and AR interpretation of Jueque inkstone historical development.

Narrative architecture and participatory design constitute additional essential elements. Thematic cultural routes with structured storylines—such as "Exploring Yisha Yi Ancient Settlements" or "Experiencing Lisu Traditional Craft"—guide active visitor exploration and cultural comprehension. Interactive programming, including visitor participation in ceremonial protocols and craft production learning, reinforces engagement and cultural identification. Multi-dimensional immersive experiences address contemporary demand for personalized, depth-oriented tourism consumption while enhancing market competitiveness and value margins.

### **Targeted Intervention Mechanisms**

Targeted intervention mechanisms for ethnic concentrated areas represent essential instruments for cultural economic transformation and rural development objectives. These mechanisms require context-specific policy design, resource integration, and precise alignment with localized development requirements to achieve cultural preservation and economic development complementarity.

Infrastructure investment priorities include transportation network expansion, telecommunications infrastructure, and public service system enhancement in Yanbian and Miyi counties to establish foundations for cultural-tourism integration. Project planning must incorporate resource endowment analysis to prevent homogenized competition and ensure comparative advantage exploitation. Human capital development requires collaborative programming among government, academic institutions, and industry associations to cultivate professional competencies combining ethnic cultural knowledge and contemporary management skills, supplemented by preferential policies for external talent attraction.

Cultural resource management must maintain equilibrium between preservation and commercialization, adhering to "culture shaping tourism, tourism exhibiting culture" principles to prevent excessive commercialization from compromising cultural authenticity. Dedicated funding mechanisms for intangible cultural heritage preservation and resident participation incentives can generate mutually reinforcing preservation and development outcomes. Monitoring and evaluation systems should track intervention implementation, enabling adaptive management and continuous improvement. Through refined intervention architecture, Panzhihua's ethnic regions can achieve cultural asset-based economic development, providing transferable models for comparable contexts.

## **V. Economic Value Creation Analysis**

### **Tourism Economic Effects**

Ethnic cultural industrialization has enhanced Panzhihua's destination competitiveness, generating positive effects on visitor volumes and tourism revenues. Integration of Yisha Yi culture and Lisu Yue De Festival into tourism products has established distinctive cultural tourism offerings that attract domestic and expanding international visitor segments. Research indicates that deep cultural resource development in tourism destinations extends length of stay and increases per capita expenditure. Panzhihua's "Six Dimensions" endowment framework—encompassing climatic comfort, environmental quality, landscape aesthetics, altitude suitability, agricultural productivity, and social harmony—has enabled positioning as wellness tourism and international cultural tourism destinations, functioning as significant economic drivers.

Brand institutionalization of ethnic cultural events, particularly the Lisu Yue De Festival, has improved seasonal demand distribution, generating continuous annual tourism revenue flows. Infrastructure and service quality improvements through cultural-tourism integration have enhanced visitor reception capacity and experience satisfaction, contributing to tourism value chain extension and revenue diversification. Industrialization has stimulated spillover effects in accommodation, food service, and transportation sectors, generating broad economic multiplier effects.

### **Creative Industry Development**

Ethnic cultural industrialization has generated significant creative industry development, particularly in product design, distribution channel expansion, and sectoral scale growth. Panzhihua's ethnic cultural inventory provides substantial inspiration and material resources for creative product development. The Jueque inkstone tradition, as national intangible cultural heritage, constitutes a primary creative industry entry point. Integration of traditional craft techniques with contemporary design has generated culturally embedded, market-competitive product lines addressing consumer demand for personalized cultural commodities while enhancing regional creative brand visibility.

Cultural-tourism integration has expanded creative product distribution through scenario-based marketing in tourism destinations and festival events. Yue De Festival periods demonstrate significant creative product sales increases, confirming the correlation between cultural experience and consumption behavior while informing market expansion strategies. Digital marketing through e-commerce platforms and social media has extended market reach beyond physical distribution constraints.

Sectoral scale expansion is evidenced by progressive development of integrated design-production-distribution value chains, attracting capital investment and professional talent. Creative industry-tourism sector convergence has generated "creative + tourism" hybrid formats, injecting economic dynamism into regional development.

### **Rural Economic Development Impacts**

Ethnic cultural industrialization has generated substantial rural economic development impacts, particularly in household income generation and rural revitalization. Employment creation and entrepreneurship promotion through cultural industries have directly increased household incomes in ethnic regions. Yisha Yi Village residents have obtained stable income streams through participation in heritage experience programs and festival event services. Targeted intervention mechanisms have prioritized cultural industry development in Yanbian and Miyi counties, enabling local employment and mitigating labor outmigration.

Rural revitalization has been advanced through the integration of rural tourism resources and ethnic cultural assets, generating "culture + tourism + rural development" pathways. In Lisu concentrated areas, Yue De Festival-based intangible cultural heritage tourism routes have attracted substantial visitor flows, stimulating rural economic activity and infrastructure improvement. Material and intangible heritage preservation has been converted into economic resources, strengthening endogenous development capacities.

Socio-cultural sustainability has been reinforced through enhanced resident cultural identity and pride resulting from industrialization processes. This cultural confidence establishes foundations for long-term regional stability and development. Through household income enhancement, rural development promotion, and cultural confidence strengthening, ethnic cultural industrialization has generated comprehensive contributions to regional economic advancement.

## VI. Conclusion

### Research Synthesis

This study examined the relationship between ethnic folk cultural industrialization and economic value creation within the cultural-tourism nexus framework, utilizing Panzhihua Municipality as an empirical case. Systematic analysis of multi-ethnic cultural resource endowments and industrialization status revealed structural constraints including low industrialization intensity, truncated value chains, and weak brand positioning. The research demonstrated that resource-based cities require cultural industrialization to establish competitive advantages within cultural-tourism development contexts.

Theoretical and practical analysis informed the proposal of an integrated value chain model incorporating intangible cultural heritage experiential consumption, ethnic festival events, rural tourism, and creative derivative products; immersive experience environment design; and targeted intervention mechanisms. These interventions advance cultural economy scholarship and promote integration among ethnic cultural industries, tourism, and creative sectors, generating regional economic development and sustainable heritage transmission.

Empirical analysis of Yisha Yi cultural resources and Lisu Yue De Festival demonstrated positive contributions of cultural-tourism integration to rural development. Industrialization processes convert cultural resources into economic returns, enhance household incomes, and elevate regional economic performance. Findings provide practical reference for cultural asset-based development in ethnic regions and contribute to theoretical development concerning heritage activation within cultural-tourism frameworks.

### Research Agenda

Several directions warrant continued scholarly investigation. First, operational implementation of the integrated value chain model requires further specification, particularly regarding the equilibrium between cultural preservation and commercial development—an area necessitating additional empirical research. Second, immersive experience design requires dynamic optimization incorporating evolving technologies and consumption trends to maintain market competitiveness and value capture.

Targeted intervention mechanisms for Yanbian and Miyi counties warrant continued exploration of government-enterprise-civil society collaborative models to enhance intervention efficiency and coverage. Cross-regional comparative analysis could examine the transferability of Panzhihua's industrialization experience to other ethnic regions, informing national-level cultural economic development policy. Finally, quantitative impact assessment utilizing big data methodologies could provide precise measurement of contributions to tourism economics, creative industries, and rural development, establishing evidentiary foundations for policy formulation.

## References

- [1]. Feng, C. (2021). Harmony And Symbiosis: On The Path Of Cultural-Tourism Integration In China—An Academic Exploration Centered On Panzhihua City. *Journal Of Chongqing Three Gorges University*, 37(1), 71–80.
- [2]. Lin, Z. (2022). On The Integrated Development Of Cultural Industry And Tourism Industry In Panzhihua, China. *Market Outlook*, (15), 14–16.
- [3]. Zhu, N. (2018). On The Protection Of Intangible Cultural Heritage And Cultural Tourism Industry Development In Panzhihua City. *Comparative Study Of Cultural Innovation*, 2(13), 44.
- [4]. Ma, Y. (2022). Development And Innovation Of Folk Cultural Tourism Under The Background Of Cultural-Tourism Integration. *Overseas Digest*, (4), 49–52.
- [5]. Fang, H. (2023). Research On The Development Model And Promotion Path Of Panzhihua Sunshine Wellness Industry. *Journal Of Panzhihua University*, 40(3), 34–40.
- [6]. Chen, M., & Xiao, Z. (2023). Typical Models And Optimization Paths Of Cultural-Tourism Integration In Ethnic Regions. *Western China*, (4), 108–115.
- [7]. Cui, C., & Tang, X. (2022). Research On Internationalization Strategies For Panzhihua Wellness Tourism Destinations. *Journal Of Panzhihua University*, 39(1), 38–46.
- [8]. Chen, X., Liu, T., & Han, F. (2023). Research On Plastic Cultural And Creative Product Design Based On Cultural-Tourism Integration. *China Plastics Industry*, 51(4), 197–198.

- [9]. Yang, X. (2020). Exploration And Practice Of Cultural-Tourism Integration In Western New Industrial Cities—A Case Study Of Panzhihua City. *Inner Mongolia Science Technology & Economy*, (1), 18–19.
- [10]. Tang, Q. (2022). Research On The Integrated Development Of Cultural Creative Industry And Tourism Industry In China—A Review Of "Theory And Practice: Research On Contemporary Cultural Creative Industry Development". *Journal Of Guangdong University Of Finance & Economics*, 37(5), 10003–10004.