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A Literature Review on the Mechanisms of Cultural Tourism Value Transformation of Li Ethnic Dance in Hainan

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Abstract

Background and Aims: With the deep integration of culture and tourism becoming a prominent trend in global cultural industries, the value transformation of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) has attracted increasing scholarly attention. Compared with craft-based heritage, dance-related ICH is more experience-oriented and relies heavily on visitor participation and embodied engagement. Existing studies on ethnic dance and cultural tourism, however, remain fragmented and lack a systematic understanding of the mechanisms through which cultural resources are transformed into tourism value. Focusing on Li ethnic dance in Hainan within an island destination and community-embedded performance ecology, this study synthesizes the literature and clarifies the underlying value-transformation mechanism.

Methodology: This study adopts a literature review approach, drawing on Chinese and international academic databases, including CNKI, Web of Science, and Scopus. Relevant studies on intangible cultural heritage dance, cultural tourism, experiential value, and value co-creation were systematically screened and thematically analyzed to identify major research trajectories, core concepts, and theoretical linkages.

Results: The review indicates that cultural tourism value transformation of intangible heritage dance converges on a three-layer mechanism: cultural elements, experiential mechanisms, and behavioral outcomes. Cultural authenticity and creative interpretation constitute the foundational cultural elements; multidimensional experiential value—comprising educational, aesthetic, emotional, and immersive experiences—functions as the key mediating mechanism; and visitor satisfaction and loyalty behaviors represent the primary outcomes of value transformation. Despite differences in research focus, existing studies show substantial convergence within this integrative framework.

Conclusion: By synthesizing dispersed research findings, this study proposes an integrative conceptual framework for understanding the cultural tourism value transformation of Li ethnic dance in Hainan. While the three-layer mechanism provides a transferable analytic lens for ICH

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dance tourism, this review highlights its application to the Li cultural context and offers a structured reference for future empirical studies and practice in heritage-based cultural tourism.
Keywords: Intangible Cultural Heritage Dance; Li Ethnic Dance; Cultural Tourism; Experiential Value; Value Co-creation

Introduction

Against the backdrop of deep culture-tourism integration, transforming cultural resources into tourism value has become a central issue for both scholarship and practice. As tourism consumption moves beyond sightseeing toward immersive and participatory forms, culture increasingly functions as a core resource for destination differentiation within the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Richards, 2018). Within this context, intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is mobilized not only for cultural transmission but also for local development, raising the question of how to generate sustainable tourism value without eroding cultural integrity.

Compared with other forms of intangible cultural heritage, such as traditional handicrafts or folk festivals, dance-related ICH has gained increasing prominence in cultural tourism in recent years. Existing studies generally indicate that intangible heritage dance is characterized by strong visual expressiveness, embodied participation, and situational resonance, through which cultural meanings are conveyed not via material objects but through bodily movement, musical rhythm, and the immediacy of on-site atmosphere (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). These characteristics render dance-based ICH particularly compatible with experience-oriented tourism consumption and endow it with considerable potential in cultural tourism contexts, including immersive performances, participatory workshops, festival events, and cultural exhibitions. In contrast to craft-based ICH, which is primarily object-centered, dance-related ICH emphasizes interactive processes among people, bodies, and cultural settings. Its value realization therefore relies heavily on tourists' on-site experiences and levels of participation, resulting in a distinctly experience-oriented mode of value creation.

Against this background, scholarly interest in the integration of intangible heritage dance and cultural tourism has expanded steadily. Existing research has examined tourism-oriented practices of intangible heritage dance from perspectives such as heritage conservation, cultural representation, tourism product development, and ethnic cultural dissemination. From an overall perspective, however, this body of research remains characterized by several limitations. First, analytical perspectives are often fragmented. While some studies focus on the tension between cultural authenticity and staged performance, highlighting the risks of transformation and distortion faced by intangible heritage dance in tourism contexts (Cohen, 1988), others emphasize market performance or tourist satisfaction associated with cultural shows. These lines of inquiry,

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however, have rarely been integrated into a coherent analytical framework, leaving the overall process of cultural tourism value transformation insufficiently theorized. Second, in terms of research design, much of the existing literature relies on case-based or experience-oriented discussions. Although such approaches are effective in illuminating context-specific practices, they often lack systematic synthesis across studies, limiting their ability to generate theoretical structures with broader explanatory power. This limitation is particularly visible in work that refers to Li ethnic dance in Hainan, where discussions of authenticity, performance adaptation, and tourist responses are often treated in parallel rather than connected in a mechanism-oriented chain.

More importantly, although experience is widely acknowledged as the core mechanism through which intangible heritage dance is incorporated into cultural tourism, much of the existing research remains at a conceptual level, emphasizing the "importance of experience" without systematically examining how cultural elements are translated into tourists' attitudes and behavioral outcomes through experiential processes. Previous studies have separately addressed the effects of cultural authenticity, creative presentation, or tourist participation on experience, yet the interrelationships among these factors within the value transformation chain remain insufficiently clarified (MacCannell, 1973; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). In particular, how experiential value mediates between cultural provision and outcomes such as tourist satisfaction, loyalty behaviors, and cultural identification has yet to be fully integrated into a unified explanatory framework. This theoretical discontinuity in the "culture–experience–behavior" chain constrains a deeper understanding of the mechanisms underlying the cultural tourism value transformation of intangible heritage dance. For Li ethnic dance tourism in Hainan, this disconnect makes it difficult to explain how context-sensitive cultural provision, including the handling of ritual meanings and community relations, is translated into tourists' experiential value and subsequent behavioral tendencies.

In response to these gaps, this study conducts a literature review and theoretical synthesis on the cultural tourism value transformation of intangible heritage dance, using Li ethnic dance in Hainan as a focal cultural context. The review is guided by three questions. First, which cultural elements are most frequently operationalized in intangible heritage dance tourism research, and how are they framed in relation to authenticity and creative interpretation? Second, how is experiential value conceptualized and measured, including the roles of educational, aesthetic, emotional, and immersive experiences. Third, which behavioral outcomes are most consistently linked to experiential mechanisms, including satisfaction, loyalty, and culturally oriented supportive behaviors?

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Li ethnic dance in Hainan is analytically salient because it is an emblematic form of ethnic cultural expression embedded in an island-destination tourism setting and commonly presented across multiple performance contexts, such as staged programs, festival-linked scenes, and community-based encounters. These contexts create opportunities for cultural visibility and transmission while simultaneously increasing the risk of decontextualization and commodification, making the culture-experience-behavior mechanism especially consequential for both heritage sustainability and tourism development.

This review makes three contributions. It integrates fragmented discussions into a coherent three-layer mechanism linking cultural elements, experiential mechanisms, and behavioral outcomes. It consolidates definitional usage around core constructs, clarifying how authenticity, creative interpretation, experiential value, and participation are treated across studies. It also outlines a roadmap for future empirical testing by specifying mechanism linkages that can be examined in Li ethnic dance and compared across other dance-based intangible heritage contexts.

Literature Review

To avoid theory stacking and to strengthen comparability, this review organizes the literature into three dominant model families— (1) authenticity-driven heritage models, (2) experience-economy models, and (3) SDL/value co-creation models—and contrasts their core assumptions, typical constructs, and limitations before integrating convergent links into a parsimonious mechanism.

1. Overall Trajectories of Research on Intangible Heritage Dance and Cultural Tourism Integration

1.1 Intangible Heritage Dance as a Cultural Tourism Resource

In the early stages of research on culture–tourism integration, intangible heritage dance was primarily regarded as a cultural object requiring urgent protection. Related studies focused mainly on historical origins, artistic forms, and the crisis of transmission faced by traditional dances. This perspective emphasized the cultural uniqueness and irreplaceability of intangible heritage dance, while highlighting the risks of erosion and loss under processes of modernization and commercialization (UNESCO, 2003; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). However, as cultural tourism research has deepened, scholarly attention has shifted from a protection-first perspective toward treating intangible heritage dance as a cultural resource system—encompassing repertoire and movement vocabulary, bearers/performers, learning and transmission arrangements, ritual functions, venues/stages, and community authority/rights—rather than a static cultural object (Smith, 2006).

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Within this shift, the concept of cultural capital has emerged as an important analytical lens. Existing studies suggest that intangible heritage dance not only embodies symbolic meaning and cultural memory but also possesses the potential to be transformed into economic and social value through display, experience, and dissemination (Bourdieu, 1986). In tourism contexts, dance-based intangible heritage is often presented in the form of performances, festivals, and interactive experiences. Its value is therefore no longer confined to cultural preservation alone but is continuously activated and reconstructed through tourists' viewing, participation, and emotional engagement. As a result, intangible heritage dance has gradually been incorporated into destination cultural supply systems and has become an important resource for shaping local images and enhancing tourism attractiveness (Richards, 2018).

Compared with other types of intangible heritage, dance-related heritage exhibits pronounced displayability and participatory potential, but its "resource" operates through different formats—dance-as-performance product, dance-as-participatory workshop, and dance-as-festival/ritual scene—each implying distinct value logics and risks; this typology is particularly salient for Li ethnic dance tourism in Hainan, where multiple performance ecologies often coexist. On the one hand, dance possesses strong stage expressiveness through bodily movement, musical rhythm, and visual effects, making it well-suited for concentrated presentation in tourism settings. On the other hand, dance inherently involves interaction, allowing tourists to enter the experiential process through imitation, participatory performance, or learning dance movements. The combination of display ability and participation has gradually shifted intangible heritage dance from a passive object of protection to an experience-oriented cultural resource within studies of culture–tourism integration (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998).

1.2 Major Debates in the Cultural Tourism Development of Intangible Heritage Dance

Despite the growing application of intangible heritage dance in cultural tourism, debates surrounding its modes of development persist. One of the most prominent issues concerns the tension between staged performance and living transmission. Some studies argue that transforming intangible heritage dance into fixed performances or tourism programs helps expand its dissemination and generate economic benefits, thereby representing a practical pathway toward sustainable heritage development. Critics, however, contend that excessive staging may detach dance from its original social context, leading to standardized movements and simplified meanings, which ultimately weaken its cultural depth (MacCannell, 1973; Taylor, 2001).

Closely related to the debate on staging is the tension between commercialization and cultural authenticity. Under the dominance of tourism market logic, intangible heritage dance often needs to adapt to tourists' aesthetic preferences and consumption rhythms, prompting

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adjustments in choreography, duration, and modes of presentation. Some scholars argue that moderate creative adaptation enhances comprehensibility and aesthetic appeal and is therefore necessary for cultural communication. Others caution that when commercial imperatives override cultural substance, intangible heritage dance risks being reduced to symbolic performance, thereby undermining its cultural foundations (Cohen, 1988).

Scholarly discussion has shifted from asking whether tourism development is permissible to specifying when and how it reshapes meaning. Staging may support transmission when it generates stable funding for apprenticeships, retains community decision rights over repertoire and narrative, and embeds interpretation that explains ritual/social functions; it is more likely to erode meaning when external organizers standardize movements, compress ritual sequences, and control representation and revenue distribution. Accordingly, "authenticity" should be treated as a governance-linked construct—who defines it, who benefits, and under what institutional constraints—rather than a purely aesthetic criterion (Smith, 2006; Su & Wall, 2014).

1.3 Characteristics of Cultural Tourism Research on Ethnic Minority Dance

Within research on intangible heritage dance, ethnic minority dance has attracted sustained attention due to its distinctive cultural characteristics. Existing studies commonly indicate that ethnic minority dance is not merely an art form but a mode of cultural expression centered on embodied practice. Dance movements often originate from labor experiences, observations of nature, or historical memory and are transmitted through repetitive bodily practice, with cultural meaning deeply embedded in performers' embodied experience (Bourdieu, 1977).

Moreover, ethnic minority dance is typically embedded within ritual contexts linked to festivals, ceremonies, and community life; when these contexts are interpretable to visitors, they tend to strengthen educational meaning-making, emotional resonance, and immersion by providing a coherent narrative frame (Turner, 1969). This ritual embeddedness poses particular challenges in tourism presentation: when dance is removed from its original ritual setting and relocated to tourism spaces, its symbolic meanings and social functions may be transformed. Research suggests that neglecting ritual context and retaining only formal display risks producing superficial cultural understanding (Turner, 1969).

Community involvement constitutes a key mechanism in ethnic minority dance tourism: community agency can function as an antecedent of perceived authenticity and as a boundary condition that shapes the quality and permissibility of co-creation. Numerous studies emphasize that the bearers of ethnic minority dance are usually members of specific communities, whose degree of participation directly influences both modes of tourism presentation and levels of cultural authenticity. Passive involvement or marginalization of communities often leads to the

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externalization and commodification of dance performance. By contrast, when community members possess agency in dance presentation and benefit distribution, greater synergy between cultural transmission and tourism development can be achieved (Su & Wall, 2014). Consequently, scholarly perspectives on ethnic minority dance tourism have expanded from a focus on display to more integrated approaches encompassing embodied practice, ritual context, and community relations.

2. Intangible Heritage Dance Research from an Experiential Value Perspective

2.1 Application of Experience Economy Theory in Cultural Tourism

The emergence of experience economy theory provides an important theoretical foundation for understanding mechanisms of value creation in cultural tourism. The theory emphasizes that as material needs are increasingly satisfied, consumers place greater importance on feelings, emotions, and meaning construction during participation, with experience itself becoming a core source of value (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). In tourism studies, the experience economy framework has been widely used to explain the transition from traditional sightseeing models toward immersive, participatory, and emotion-oriented modes of tourism consumption. Research indicates that tourists are no longer satisfied with merely "seeing sights" but seek personally meaningful experiences through interaction, learning, and emotional engagement (Richards, 2018).

Within cultural tourism contexts, experience economy theory further highlights the role of cultural content in value creation. Culture is no longer treated as an ancillary attribute of tourism products but actively participates in the generation of experiential value through narrative construction, contextual design, and interactive arrangements. Studies generally agree that the core competitiveness of cultural tourism depends on its ability to provide integrated experiences that combine educational significance, aesthetic appeal, and emotional resonance (Smith, 2006). Against this backdrop, intangible cultural heritage, with its rich cultural content and experiential potential, has increasingly become a central component of experience-based tourism.

Intangible heritage dance possesses inherent advantages within the experience economy framework. Through bodily movement, musical rhythm, and on-site atmosphere, dance transforms cultural information into perceptible and participatory experiences, enabling tourists to form direct sensory and emotional impressions through observation and engagement. Accordingly, experience economy theory is used here as a backbone lens to organize experiential mechanisms (design, engagement, evaluation), but it is treated as one lens among several: it explains value-creation logic well while under-explaining contested meanings, power relations, and governance over representation; therefore, this review explicitly bounds it with community

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authority and cultural integrity considerations when interpreting heritage-dance tourism value transformation (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998).

2.2 Major Dimensions of Experiential Value in Intangible Heritage Dance

In experiential value research, experience is widely understood as a multidimensional construct composed of various perceptual and psychological responses. Drawing on cultural tourism and intangible heritage studies, existing literature on intangible heritage dance primarily discusses experiential value in terms of educational, aesthetic, emotional, and immersive dimensions (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

Educational experience is widely regarded as a fundamental component of experiential value in intangible heritage dance. Studies indicate that tourists often enhance their understanding of historical backgrounds, cultural symbolism, and social meanings through explanations, demonstrations, and participatory learning during encounters with heritage dance. Cultural knowledge embedded in dance is materialized through bodily movement and performance contexts, facilitating deeper cultural understanding. Such cognitive gains are considered a key feature distinguishing intangible heritage dance from purely entertainment-oriented performances (Smith, 2006).

Aesthetic experience occupies a central position in intangible heritage dance experiences. The structural organization of movement, musical rhythm, costume design, and spatial choreography collectively generate strong visual and auditory stimulation. Research consistently shows that the distinctive embodied aesthetics and ethnic styles presented in intangible heritage dance evoke pleasure and novelty among tourists, significantly enhancing overall experience evaluation. Aesthetic experience not only influences immediate satisfaction but also plays an important role in forming lasting impressions (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998).

Emotional experience is viewed as a critical link between cultural content and tourist attitudes. Numerous studies suggest that narrative performance and collective atmosphere in intangible heritage dance readily evoke emotional resonance, generating feelings such as awe, admiration, or identification. Such emotional responses help tourists connect dance experiences with cultural meaning, thereby strengthening emotional attachment to destination culture (Richards, 2018).

Immersive experience has attracted increasing scholarly attention in recent years. Immersion emphasizes tourists' states of concentration and "flow" during participation. When tourists learn dance steps, engage in interactive performance, or integrate into ritualized settings, their roles shift from observers to participants, significantly deepening experiential intensity. Research indicates that immersive experience not only enhances immediate enjoyment but also contributes to more stable memory formation and behavioral intention, functioning as an

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important mediator in the cultural tourism value transformation of intangible heritage dance (Pine & Gilmore, 2011).

2.3 Differences Between Dance-Based Intangible Heritage and Other Heritage Experiences

Within experiential value frameworks, dance-based intangible heritage differs markedly from other forms of intangible heritage. First, it exhibits stronger interactivity. Compared with craft-based heritage centered on material objects, dance relies on human bodies as its primary medium, allowing tourists to participate directly through imitation, co-dancing, or interactive exchange. This interactivity generates immediate feedback, enhancing participation and enjoyment (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998).

Second, dance-based heritage experiences display pronounced immediacy. Dance performances occur within specific temporal and spatial contexts, and their value lies primarily in on-site experience rather than in durable material outcomes. This immediacy increases tourists' dependence on experiential quality and underscores the importance of experience design in value transformation. Studies suggest that experiential ephemerality is not a disadvantage but may instead enhance uniqueness through emotional intensification and memory focus (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

Finally, embodied participation constitutes a defining characteristic distinguishing dance-based heritage from other heritage experiences. Dance experiences involve not only visual and auditory perception but also bodily movement and rhythmic coordination, enabling tourists to enter cultural contexts through embodied practice. Research indicates that embodied participation deepens cultural understanding and strengthens authenticity and immersion, representing a key advantage of dance-based heritage in experiential value creation (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998).

Overall, the experiential value perspective is analytically useful, but the distinctive features of dance imply specific research and management requirements: interactivity calls for co-creation measures, immediacy favors event-based or experience-sampling designs, and embodiment requires ethics-aware safeguards (consent, respectful participation protocols, and performer welfare) to prevent appropriation and labor fatigue from becoming hidden costs of "immersive" participation. Existing studies elucidate multiple dimensions and mechanisms of heritage dance experience and demonstrate the distinctive advantages of dance-based heritage in interactivity, immediacy, and embodied participation. However, most research has focused on individual dimensions or isolated factors, leaving the synergistic interactions among experiential dimensions within the value transformation process insufficiently integrated.

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3. Research on Value Co-Creation and Tourist Participation

3.1 Service-Dominant Logic and Cultural Tourism

Value co-creation theory originates from service-dominant logic (SDL), which posits that value is not created unilaterally by providers but emerges through interactive processes involving multiple actors. Within this framework, consumers are no longer passive recipients but actively participate in value formation through investments of time, knowledge, emotion, and behavior (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). When applied to cultural tourism, this perspective offers a new explanatory pathway for understanding the generation of tourist experience.

Studies in cultural tourism generally emphasize that cultural value cannot be transformed simply by embedding culture into tourism products; rather, it must be activated through tourists' perception, interpretation, and participation. Through visiting, learning, and interacting, tourists not only consume cultural content but also reinterpret and reproduce cultural meaning. Consequently, value in cultural tourism is inherently processual and interactive, with its ultimate form shaped by levels of tourist participation and experiential quality (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). From this perspective, tourists are increasingly conceptualized as co-creators of cultural experience rather than mere spectators.

The introduction of value co-creation theory has shifted cultural tourism research from supply-centered product design toward an emphasis on interactive value generation mechanisms, highlighting the critical role of tourist participation in experiential value formation. This theoretical shift provides an important analytical tool for examining highly experience-oriented cultural forms such as intangible heritage dance (Prebensen et al., 2013).

3.2 Manifestations of Tourist Participation in Intangible Heritage Dance

In research on the cultural tourism of intangible heritage dance, tourist participation is commonly regarded as the core manifestation of value co-creation. Existing studies indicate that dance-based heritage exhibits strong participatory potential, offering diverse interactive pathways through which tourists can directly invest bodily and emotional engagement in experiential processes, thereby participating in value co-creation (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998).

Learning dance movements represents one of the most common forms of participation. In tourism settings, tourists imitate dance steps and gain understanding of cultural meanings through introductory instruction or experiential workshops. This process not only enhances enjoyment but also enables tourists to deepen cultural understanding through embodied practice. Research suggests that learning-oriented participation significantly strengthens experiential memory and facilitates the formation of cultural identification compared with purely observational experiences (Prebensen et al., 2013).

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Interactive performance constitutes another important form of tourist participation. During festivals or performance programs, tourists are often invited to perform dance segments alongside practitioners or to become part of the performance in designated sections. Such interaction blurs boundaries between performers and audiences, transforming tourists from observers into situational participants. Studies indicate that interactive performance enhances emotional resonance and improves overall evaluations of dance experiences (Richards, 2018).

Situational immersion reflects a higher level of participation. It emphasizes tourists' immersion within spatial settings, atmosphere, and ritual sensibilities. For example, during traditional festivals or ritualized performances, tourists may integrate into cultural scenes through costume, music, and collective activity. Participation thus extends beyond specific movements to encompass holistic cultural contexts. Research shows that such contextualized participation fosters deeper cultural experience and constitutes an important pathway for value co-creation in intangible heritage dance (Turner, 1969).

Overall, tourist participation in intangible heritage dance can be described as moving from imitative learning to interactive performance and situational immersion, but it is context-constrained by cultural rules, facilitation quality, group size, tourist capability, and community consent; conceptually, participation is better captured by two axes—intensity and meaningfulness—which may exert different effects on experiential value.

3.3 Limitations of Value Co-Creation Research

Despite the prominence of value co-creation in research on the cultural tourism of intangible heritage dance, existing studies exhibit several limitations. At the theoretical level, some research remains confined to introducing or normatively advocating value co-creation concepts, emphasizing their importance without systematically analyzing underlying mechanisms. In many cases, value co-creation functions as a background concept rather than an explicitly operationalized analytical variable (Vargo & Lusch, 2008).

Structurally, existing studies often focus on the isolated effects of tourist participation—such as impacts on satisfaction or experience evaluation—while paying limited attention to its potential mediating or moderating roles between cultural elements and behavioral outcomes. As a result, the position of value co-creation within theoretical models remains ambiguous, hindering clear identification of its function within the value transformation chain (Prebensen et al., 2013).

Furthermore, substantial variation exists across studies in typical inconsistencies—treating participation as attendance vs. interaction vs. self-expression, and treating co-creation as co-production vs. co-consumption—which weakens cumulative inference; a practical remedy is to adopt a standardized construct map (definition + observable indicators) and to explicitly test model roles (participation/co-creation as antecedent, mediator, or moderator), aligned with the

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three-layer mechanism proposed in this review. This variability constrains comparability and cumulative theory building, limiting holistic understanding of value co-creation mechanisms in intangible heritage dance tourism. In light of these limitations, further theoretical integration of value co-creation and tourist participation is needed to clarify their roles in the cultural tourism value transformation of intangible heritage dance.

Methodology

To systematically review research progress in the field of cultural tourism value transformation of intangible heritage dance, this study adopts a review approach that combines structured literature retrieval with thematic synthesis. Relevant Chinese- and English-language publications were identified and analyzed to ensure comprehensive coverage of both domestic research and international scholarly discussions. The primary data sources include China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) as well as international academic databases such as Web of Science and Scopus.

During the literature retrieval process, multiple sets of keywords were constructed and cross-searched in accordance with the research focus. Chinese keywords included “intangible cultural heritage,” “intangible heritage dance,” “dance tourism,” “cultural tourism,” “culture–tourism integration,” “experiential value,” “tourist experience,” and “value co-creation.” Corresponding English keywords included intangible cultural heritage, dance tourism, cultural tourism, experiential value, visitor experience, and value co-creation. Keyword combinations were applied using Boolean logic, for example, intangible cultural heritage OR ICH, combined with dance OR ethnic dance, combined with cultural tourism OR dance tourism, and further combined with experiential value OR visitor experience OR value co-creation.

Regarding literature selection, this review prioritized studies that met the following criteria. First, the research object involved dance-related intangible cultural heritage or explicitly treated dance as a core form of cultural expression. Second, the research context was clearly situated within frameworks of cultural tourism or culture–tourism integration, with attention to the presentation, experiential processes, or value realization of intangible heritage dance in tourism activities. Third, the research content addressed issues related to tourist experience, cultural value transformation, or behavioral responses. Studies limited to formal dance analysis, purely art historical inquiry, or those lacking a tourism context were not included as focal materials in this review. Records were exported, and de-duplicated, then screened in two stages using title and abstract screening, followed by full text eligibility assessment. Studies explicitly related to Hainan or Li ethnicity were identified using the terms Hainan and Li, and were labeled during coding to support context-anchored synthesis.

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Results

The synthesis yielded three recurrent theme clusters with different degrees of support (robust, emerging, and contested). Based on these themes, we then summarize a parsimonious three-layer mechanism (cultural elements–experiential mechanisms–behavioral outcomes) as an integrative model for intangible heritage dance tourism value transformation. Overall, the cultural tourism value transformation of intangible heritage dance is not achieved through any single factor in isolation but rather through the combined effects of multiple layers of elements, enabling a gradual translation from cultural resources into tourism value. Existing studies consistently indicate that value creation in cultural tourism is inherently processual and must be realized through experiential mechanisms (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Prebensen et al., 2013). Based on the integrated literature, the cultural tourism value transformation of intangible heritage dance can be broadly summarized as a three-layer mechanism comprising cultural elements, experiential mechanisms, and behavioral outcomes.

At the level of cultural elements, cultural authenticity and creative interpretation are widely regarded as foundational conditions for the cultural tourism transformation of intangible heritage dance. Research suggests that cultural authenticity constitutes a key feature distinguishing intangible heritage dance from conventional tourism performances, reflecting the internal consistency among dance content, form, and cultural context. Across both qualitative accounts and survey-based studies, perceived authenticity is repeatedly linked to stronger cognitive appraisal and affective response, which then shape subsequent experiential evaluation. At the same time, the literature is not fully consistent in how authenticity is conceptualized, with some studies emphasizing object-oriented features and others treating authenticity as a socially constructed perception, which limits strict comparability across contexts (MacCannell, 1973; Cohen, 1988). Authenticity, however, does not imply mechanical replication of traditional forms. With changes in cultural tourism contexts, creative interpretation has increasingly been viewed as an important means of connecting traditional culture with contemporary aesthetics. Evidence suggests authenticity tends to matter more when tourists seek cultural credibility and meaningful context, such as first-time encounters and ritual-linked settings, whereas its effect may weaken when the experience is primarily entertainment-oriented. Through narrative reconstruction, stage design, musical arrangement, and innovation in interactive formats, creative interpretation enhances the comprehensibility and attractiveness of intangible heritage dance, thereby facilitating its integration into tourism experience systems. Existing research suggests authenticity and creative interpretation can be complementary, but their joint effect is conditional on who controls interpretation and how adaptation is justified. Creative interpretation tends to enhance comprehensibility and appeal when it is aligned with community-accepted meanings, whereas it

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can undermine authenticity perceptions when it standardizes repertoire under external control or removes key contextual cues (Richards, 2018).

At the level of experiential mechanisms, experiential value is identified as the key mediator linking cultural elements with behavioral outcomes. Previous studies consistently emphasize that cultural attributes alone cannot be automatically transformed into tourism value; rather, their effects must be realized through tourists' experiential processes (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). In the context of intangible heritage dance, experiential value typically manifests as a multidimensional structure encompassing educational, aesthetic, emotional, and immersive experiences. Cultural authenticity tends to add meaning depth, while creative interpretation often increases intensity and accessibility. Within experiential value, studies commonly report interdependence among dimensions, where aesthetic cues facilitate emotional resonance and can strengthen immersion, and interpretive information enhances educational value that may further amplify emotional and immersive responses. Tourist engagement through observation, participation, and interaction is frequently treated as an antecedent of experiential value, although some studies position participation as a moderator that strengthens the experience-to-outcome link under supportive facilitation conditions. As a result, experiential mechanisms are widely regarded as the most explanatory mediating layer in the cultural tourism value transformation of intangible heritage dance and are repeatedly emphasized as the core component in existing research (Smith, 2006; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998).

At the level of behavioral outcomes, tourist satisfaction and loyalty behaviors are viewed as the observable manifestations of cultural tourism value transformation. The literature indicates that higher experiential value is consistently associated with stronger overall satisfaction, and satisfaction is frequently linked to revisit intentions and recommendation behaviors. By contrast, supportive attitudes toward cultural preservation are discussed less consistently and are supported by a smaller empirical base, suggesting that this outcome may be more context dependent and sensitive to how participation and interpretation are designed (Chen & Chen, 2010). This process reflects the extension of cultural experience from immediate perception to longer-term behavioral orientation. Notably, some studies further suggest that satisfaction should not be regarded as an endpoint but rather as an important mediator in the formation of loyalty behaviors, underscoring the chain effects linking experiential value with cultural elements and behavioral outcomes (Prebensen et al., 2013).

Across the included studies, three theme clusters recur with different degrees of support. The authenticity and creative interpretation cluster is widely discussed but shows conceptual variation, the experiential value cluster is repeatedly emphasized as the translation mechanism with relatively stable support, and the outcome cluster shows stronger consistency for satisfaction

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and loyalty than for broader cultural support behaviors. Based on these patterns, this study presents a conceptual framework that summarizes the three-layer mechanism as a parsimonious synthesis for future empirical testing and cross-context comparison.

Figure 1 summarizes the synthesized patterns into a three-layer mechanism, linking cultural authenticity and creative interpretation to experiential value and then to satisfaction and loyalty outcomes.

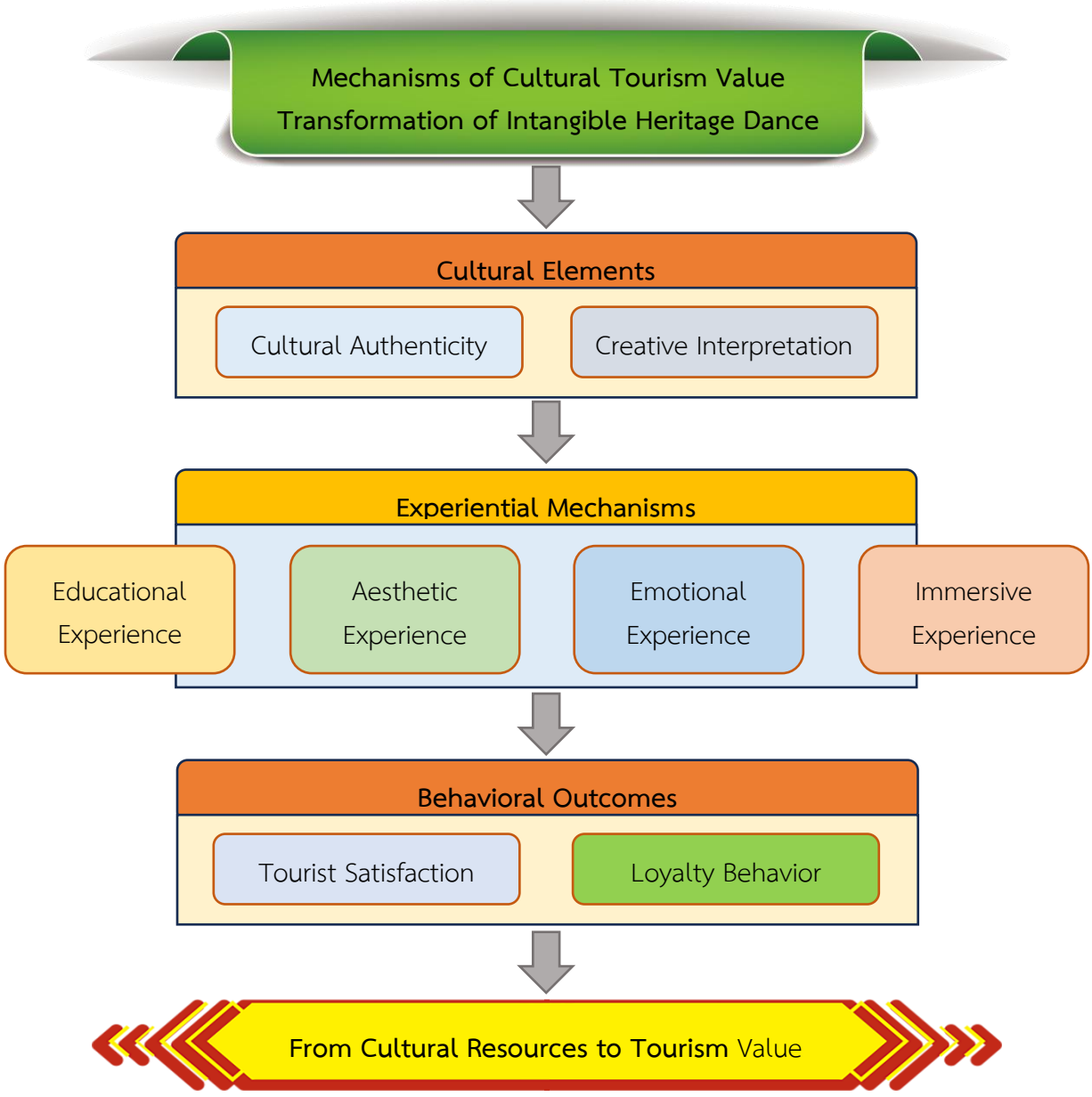


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of Cultural Tourism Value Transformation of Intangible Heritage Dance

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By proposing this integrative framework, the study responds to current challenges in the literature related to fragmented mechanisms and unclear pathways, providing a theoretical tool for dialogue, comparison, and further development in research on intangible heritage dance and cultural tourism. The framework also offers a clear analytical structure for future empirical studies, cross-case comparisons, and practical evaluation.

Conclusion

This study has integratively reviewed and synthesized existing research on how intangible heritage dance is transformed into cultural tourism value, with Li ethnic dance in Hainan as the focal cultural context. Guided by the review aim of clarifying what cultural elements are most frequently operationalized, how experiential value is conceptualized and measured, and what outcomes are consistently linked, the review consolidates evidence around cultural authenticity, creative interpretation, experiential mechanisms, and participation. It also clarifies how these themes are discussed in Li ethnic dance tourism in Hainan, where multiple performance settings and community authority make value transformation especially sensitive to context. Overall, the synthesis shows a clear shift from isolated case descriptions toward mechanism-oriented explanations that can be compared across contexts, while retaining the case-anchored relevance of Li ethnic dance tourism in Hainan.

Building on this synthesis, the study shows that value transformation follows a structured three-layer mechanism, and the key theoretical takeaway is that experiential value is the translation mechanism connecting cultural provision to outcomes. Cultural authenticity and creative interpretation constitute key cultural elements enabling intangible heritage dance to enter tourism systems; experiential value functions as the core mediating mechanism linking cultural elements with behavioral outcomes; and tourist satisfaction and loyalty behaviors represent the most consistently supported tourism outcomes. Complementarily, heritage-centered outcomes such as transmission vitality, community benefit, and cultural integrity should be treated as additional endpoints of sustainable value transformation. Across the literature, experiential mechanisms are repeatedly identified as the critical link connecting cultural provision and tourism outcomes, underscoring the theoretical significance of the experiential perspective for understanding the integration of intangible heritage dance and cultural tourism.

The conclusions of this review offer important implications for future research and practice in intangible heritage dance tourism. At the practical level, development should be grounded in cultural meaning while improving experience design and participation; in Hainan, this balance can be operationalized by co-defining representation rules with Li community bearers, embedding interpretation that explains meanings rather than only displaying movements, and designing

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participation in gradual formats from guided observation to structured learning activities. Overall, this study seeks to provide both theoretical reference and practical insight for achieving the sustainable transformation of intangible heritage dance into cultural tourism value under conditions of culture–tourism integration.

Deficiencies and Prospects

Although research on the integration of intangible heritage dance and cultural tourism has expanded in recent years and has yielded meaningful insights into cultural presentation, experiential value, and tourist behavior, the field as a whole remains at a stage of theoretical integration and mechanism refinement. Existing studies still exhibit several limitations in terms of research focus, methodological approaches, and theoretical perspectives. Accordingly, the following prospects are organized as targeted remedies to recurring deficiencies in the reviewed literature, including tourist-only samples, cross-sectional survey dominance, inconsistent operationalization of authenticity and participation, and limited dance-specific digital experience evidence, with Li ethnic dance in Hainan as a focal context for future testing.

1. Expanding Multi-Actor Perspectives: From Tourist-Centered Analysis to Collaborative Governance

Most existing studies adopt a tourist-centered perspective, focusing on tourist experience and behavioral responses and emphasizing the effects of cultural elements and experiential value on satisfaction and loyalty behaviors. While this approach contributes to understanding how intangible heritage dance generates value within tourism markets, it tends to understate the roles of other key actors. The creation, transmission, and presentation of intangible heritage dance depend heavily on the sustained involvement of community members and heritage bearers, and its value transformation is inherently the result of interactions among multiple stakeholders.

A recurring deficiency is that studies rely heavily on tourist-only samples and rarely operationalize governance, which makes multi-actor claims difficult to test. Future research should incorporate communities, heritage practitioners, cultural institutions, tourism operators, and tourists into the three layer mechanism by measuring decision rights over choreography and representation, benefit sharing arrangements, representation control, and safeguarding protocols, so that community and institutions are modeled as conditions shaping authenticity claims and acceptable creative interpretation, while operators shape experience design and tourists shape co creation through participation and interpretation. Particular attention should be paid to how levels of community participation influence modes of dance presentation, perceptions of cultural authenticity, and tourist experience, as well as how benefit distribution mechanisms feed back into transmission motivation and cultural sustainability. By introducing multi-actor perspectives,

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research on intangible heritage dance tourism can move beyond experience-centered analysis toward issues of governance and collaborative coordination. In Li ethnic dance tourism in Hainan, these indicators are particularly relevant because representation authority and benefit distribution directly affect bearer motivation and safeguarding legitimacy.

2. Longitudinal and Process-Oriented Research: From Outcome Analysis to Value Formation Mechanisms

Current studies on intangible heritage dance tourism predominantly employ cross-sectional designs, focusing on correlations or causal effects among variables. While such approaches are effective in identifying key influencing factors, they are limited in their ability to capture the dynamic processes through which experiential value and behavioral intentions evolve. Experiences of intangible heritage dance are often context-dependent and staged, and their effects may differ between short-term encounters and long-term engagement.

A recurring deficiency is cross-sectional survey dominance, which cannot capture how educational understanding consolidates into emotional attachment and then develops into loyalty or safeguarding support over time. Future research could adopt follow-up surveys after one week and one month, repeat visitor comparisons, or short diary-based tracking during festivals to observe memory change, meaning consolidation, and intention formation, and these designs are well-suited to Li ethnic dance in Hainan, where experiences are staged and highly context dependent. For example, studies may explore whether repeated participation enhances cultural understanding or whether differences exist between initial impressions and long-term memories. Process-oriented research may also help clarify the causal sequencing among cultural elements, experiential mechanisms, and behavioral outcomes, thereby deepening understanding of value transformation mechanisms in intangible heritage dance tourism.

3. Integrating Digitalization and Immersive Technologies

With the advancement of digital technologies, modes of presenting and experiencing intangible heritage dance are undergoing continuous expansion. Technologies such as virtual reality, augmented reality, immersive audiovisual media, and interactive platforms offer new pathways for the dissemination and experience of heritage dance. Although existing studies have begun to examine digital applications in intangible heritage presentation, systematic research focusing specifically on dance-based heritage remains relatively limited.

A recurring deficiency is the lack of dance-specific evidence on digital experience, and existing discussions often treat digitalization as neutral while overlooking risks. Future studies should treat technology as a mediator that can enhance immersion and access yet also reshape authenticity perception through decontextualization, raising issues of community consent, cultural rights, and intellectual property; research can test tradeoffs such as whether higher digital

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immersion weakens perceived authenticity, and whether digital modes complement rather than substitute on site encounters, especially for Li ethnic dance in Hainan. Of particular interest is whether digital experiences can substitute for or complement on-site encounters, and how technological mediation affects tourists' perceptions of cultural authenticity. Integrating digitalization with experiential value research may help extend the theoretical boundaries of intangible heritage dance tourism studies.

4. Cross-Cultural and Cross-Heritage-Type Comparative Research

Existing research on intangible heritage dance tourism is largely concentrated on specific regions or cultural contexts, leaving the external applicability of research findings insufficiently tested. Significant differences exist across cultures in terms of expressive forms, ritual meanings, and social functions of intangible heritage dance, and corresponding value transformation mechanisms may therefore vary.

A recurring deficiency is that comparative claims are rarely grounded in principled case selection or harmonized measurement. Future research should select cases that vary on theoretically decisive dimensions such as ritual embeddedness, community control, tourism commercialization intensity, and performance format, then apply a shared three-layer mechanism with harmonized constructs and comparable measurement protocols to test which links strengthen or weaken, using Li ethnic dance in Hainan as one anchor case for multi-site comparison. Comparative research across heritage types is also of considerable importance. By contrasting dance-based heritage with craft-based or festival-based heritage, scholars may further elucidate the distinctive advantages of dance experience in interactivity, immediacy, and embodied participation, thereby enriching theoretical understanding of differences among intangible heritage types.

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