



Tourist souvenir goods development in the museums in Shaanxi, Gansu, and Ningxia (Northwest China): Current state and future directions

¹Lu Mengtian, ²Wahiza Binti Abdul Wahid*, ³Amer Shakir Zainol, ⁴Li Aimin

¹College of Creative Arts, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor Darul Ehsan Malaysia; Ningxia University, 750021 Yin Chuan, Ning Xia, China.

²Visual Culture Studies, College of Creative Art, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 42300 Puncak Alam, Selangor Darul Ehsan Malaysia.

³College of Creative Art, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 42300 Puncak Alam, Selangor Darul Ehsan Malaysia

⁴College of Creative Arts, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor Darul Ehsan Malaysia; Department of Arts, Tangshan Normal University, 063000 Tangshan, Hebei Province, China.

Abstract: Under the Chinese government's advocacy and public attention, museum cultural and creative industry development has become integral to museum progress. This article conducts in-depth research on the cultural and innovative development of provincial museums in China's northwestern Shaanxi, Gansu, and Ningxia provinces through comparative analysis, focusing on the Ningxia Museum. By combining grounded theory and expert interviews, coded using ATLAS.ti, the study gains insights into similarities and differences among these regions.

The research found that while facing development challenges like high costs and insufficient competitiveness, the key to museum cultural and creative industry growth lies in better reflecting museums' social service function and attracting wider audiences. These northwestern museums possess unique regional cultures, and their proximity provides resource-sharing opportunities.

Based on prior theories, analysis, and expert summaries, the author proposes the CCPEN development strategy: Centered on museums, driven by exhibitions, continuously enhancing public appeal, and developing a clear cultural/creative product line. This strategy prioritizes embodying cultural value, integrating creativity, appealing to public aesthetics, and leveraging new media marketing.

The findings suggest innovative approaches for similar museums to promote sustainable development by capitalizing on regional cultural strengths through cooperation. This provides insights for enhancing museum competitiveness and cultural value dissemination. The research contributes new development strategies for the burgeoning cultural and creative industry within museums.

Keywords: Cultural; creative; museum; souvenirs; survey; strategy.

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1. Introduction

Museums play a vital role in preserving and promoting cultural heritage. In recent years, the development of cultural and creative industries within museums has gained significant attention to enhance public engagement, generate revenue, and disseminate cultural values. This trend has been

particularly pronounced in China, where the government has actively advocated for integrating cultural and creative elements into museum operations. However, museums, especially those in less-developed regions, often face challenges in effectively leveraging their resources to create compelling and sustainable cultural and creative products.

The study of souvenirs holds academic interest from tourist (consumer) and seller (museum) perspectives, as it pertains to more significant topics like cultural representation, tourism economics, and audience experiences. Swanson's "Tourists and Retailers' Perceptions of Souvenirs" (2014) and Fangxuan (Sam) Li's "Souvenir in Tourism Research: A Literature Review and Future Agenda" (2022) highlight how souvenirs shape tourist behaviors and destination images. From the seller side, museums increasingly view creative souvenir development as integral to public engagement, revenue generation, and brand visibility. This research thus has broader relevance to tourism studies by examining how museums capitalize on regional cultures through souvenirs to attract visitors and disseminate local histories and art.

Museum cultural and creative development primarily refers to creating and developing based on specific cultural relics, culture, regional characteristics, and spirituality within museums[1]. Tourist souvenir goods from museums have cultural and commercial value, as they are derived from museum culture and an extension of the museum's cultural functions. By searching with the keyword "museum cultural creation" on the academic website, researchers can find 1423 articles published between 2020 and 2023. Searching with the keywords "museum culture" and "creative design," 176 articles published between 2020 and 2023 can be found. However, only four relevant articles were found by searching with the keyword "museum cultural and creative development research." Most of the literature focuses on case studies of specific museum cultural creations or the extraction of certain cultural elements, such as the transformation of visual aspects like form, lines, and colors[2]. There are few articles that conduct comparative studies of museums of the same type from the perspective of practical research. Due to differences in policies and design levels, the Tourist souvenir goods of most Chinese museums have not been thoroughly planned, and the relationship between the cultural and creative value of museums and their resources is disproportionate. As first-tier comprehensive museums in the northwest region, although they have received policy support and have a vast market, they still face issues such as insufficient competitiveness, inadequate development experience, incomplete understanding of the target audience market, mismatch between domestic influence and actual capabilities, and inadequate daily promotion[3]. Therefore, the research objective of this paper is to conduct a survey on the cultural and creative development of provincial-level museums in Shaanxi, Gansu, and Ningxia provinces. In-depth interviews will be conducted with experts from Shaanxi History Museum, Gansu Museum, and Ningxia Museum. By comparing the current status and existing problems of cultural and creative development in the three provinces' museums, corresponding strategies and suggestions will be proposed, aiming to form a new perspective on cultural and creative development with a focus on Ningxia Museum.

The choice of Shaanxi, Gansu, and Ningxia provinces was made due to their geographical proximity and shared cultural heritage in northwestern China. As neighboring regions along the ancient Silk Road, they have experienced significant cultural interactions and possess similarities in their artistic styles and historical relics. While few comparative studies have examined the cultural and creative product development of museums in this specific region, Wang and Li's (2020) paper provides one example by analyzing the souvenir design strategies of museums in Shaanxi and Gansu. This highlights the research gap in extending such analysis to Ningxia and conducting a holistic regional comparison.

To contextualize this study within Chinese scholarship, it is essential to note the growing academic interest in museum souvenirs and creative industries, as evident in Hong's (2022) review, which examines the role of souvenirs in shaping cultural identity and driving tourism economies. The concept of "cultural development" in this paper refers to creating and promoting cultural and creative products derived from a museum's unique collections, regional heritage, and artistic styles.

Ningxia Museum was chosen as the focal point due to its distinct emphasis on the Western Xia culture and the region's history as a convergence point for ethnic and cultural fusion along the Silk Road. Established in 1959, the museum houses over 50,000 artifacts showcasing the pluralistic history of Ningxia. Its permanent exhibitions include the "Longxing Buddha" hall, the Western Xia gallery, and the Silk Road postal

station exhibit. By understanding Ningxia's approach to souvenir development and comparing it with the more renowned Shaanxi History Museum and Gansu Museum, this research aims to identify strategies for enhancing cultural representation and product competitiveness.

The comparative analysis will examine critical aspects such as museum focus areas, collection highlights, temporary or permanent exhibitions, product design strategies, marketing approaches, and institutional policies related to souvenir development. Insights will be drawn from expert interviews, observational data, and document analysis across the three museums.

Despite the growing importance of museum cultural and creative industries, many provincial museums, particularly in the northwestern regions of China, struggle to develop competitive and culturally relevant products. This research aims to investigate the current state of cultural and creative development in the provincial museums of Shaanxi, Gansu, and Ningxia, focusing on the Ningxia Museum. The key research questions are:

- (1) How do museums face the unique cultural strengths and challenges in developing their cultural and creative industries?
- (2) How do their geographical proximity and shared cultural heritage influence their product development strategies?
- (3) What factors contribute to the success or failure of their cultural and creative initiatives?
- (4) How can these museums effectively leverage their resources to enhance competitiveness and disseminate cultural values through creative products?

Research objectives:

- (1) To investigate museums' unique cultural strengths and challenges in developing their cultural and creative industries.
- (2) To research the influence of geographical proximity and shared cultural heritage on product development strategies among these museums.
- (3) To examine the factors contributing to these museums' success or failure of cultural and creative initiatives.
- (4) To investigate how the museums can effectively leverage their resources to enhance competitiveness and disseminate cultural values through creative products..

2. Literature review

2.1. Museum tourist souvenir goods

Souvenirs are inextricably linked to cultural tourism, forming an integral part of the visitor experience and destination marketing. Globalization and increased mobility have heightened the significance of souvenirs as ambassadors of local cultures[4]. This intersection of souvenirs, cultural representation, and tourism economies has garnered global academic interest, as evidenced by studies from China[5], Europe[6], and North America[4].

The often-used statement about souvenirs satisfying “spiritual needs” and providing “spiritual solace” refers to their ability to evoke emotions, memories, and connections to the cultural experiences represented by the souvenir item. For many visitors, souvenirs serve as tangible reminders of their museum journey, offering a way to re-live the intellectual, aesthetic, and sentimental stimulation felt during the visit[4]. Everyday souvenir items like fridge magnets or collectible figurines allow people to bring a piece of that enriching experience into their daily lives.

Tourist souvenir goods in the museum field possess both cultural and commercial values. They are derived from the cultural and creative industries and consist of creative content and carriers. These products are developed through the thoughts, creativity, and production of designers[7]. As a new field of service to the public, the development of Tourist souvenir goods has become an important focus of museum work, in addition to exhibitions and education. It has also become one of the most attention-grabbing

business areas for museums and, to some extent, an important aspect of shaping the social image of museums. The purchase of Tourist souvenir goods by consumers is an emotional and experiential behavior. Therefore, Tourist souvenir goods emphasize innovation and creativity. Their prominent cultural attributes can satisfy consumers' spiritual needs, providing them with a certain degree of spiritual solace and emotional expression[7]. In recent years, the development of Tourist souvenir goods in Chinese museums has started to take shape. Most first-tier museums have their own cultural and creative sales centers and research and development departments, offering representative Tourist souvenir goods. However, they also face similar developmental challenges, such as conservative and singular development models and a lack of systematic development concepts, both of which restrict the market growth of Tourist souvenir goods.

In academic research, the majority focuses on cultural elements. Meng's study illustrates that the cultural genes of museum Tourist souvenir goods can be manifested through the integration of appearance. It involves directly incorporating related material cultural genes, such as shapes, patterns, and colors, into the carriers of cultural and creative designs. This method is commonly seen in current cultural and creative product design[8]. In terms of marketing management, there are also proposals for improving museum practices. Xu suggests the creation of new media marketing strategies for Tourist souvenir goods, emphasizing the need to streamline product lines and develop differentiated marketing strategies[9]. Customer satisfaction is also highlighted. In his thesis, Liu analyzes successful cases of various museums, such as the Palace Museum, Shaanxi History Museum, Shanghai Museum, and Suzhou Museum[10]. These scholars mostly delve into the discussion of a single museum or a specific element of a product, without conducting in-depth comparative analyses of similar museums or neighboring museums. It is suggested that museums of the same type in neighboring regions share common advantages in cultural and creative product development, and through comparative analysis, effective improvement strategies can be proposed in response to the challenges they face.

2.2. The common characteristics of the museums in three provinces

The author chooses to compare the provincial museums of Shaanxi, Gansu, and Ningxia to understand their commonalities and differences. This is mainly because these museums are all located in the northwest region of China and share similar geographical environments, historical and cultural backgrounds, as well as cultural relics resources. Shaanxi, Gansu, and Ningxia are all located in the northwest region of China and possess a long history and rich cultural heritage. Their geographic proximity results in some similarities in the types and characteristics of their cultural relics resources. Both the Shaanxi History Museum and the Gansu Museum are important birthplaces of the Chinese nation and Chinese civilization. The Gansu Museum and the Ningxia Museum have a historical connection through the interaction among the Song, Liao, Jin, and Xia dynasties, carrying the historical memories of the Silk Road. These three provinces have a long history and unique cultural traditions. The museums in these three provinces not only serve as guardians and exhibitors of cultural heritage but also play significant roles as platforms for academic research, educational promotion, and cultural exchange in their respective regions. By comparing the national-level museums of Shaanxi, Gansu, and Ningxia, it can better promote museum cultural and creative cooperation, resource sharing, and mutual learning.

2.3. Challenges faced by the museums in three provinces

In the literature review, scholars have pointed out several challenges in the development of Tourist souvenir goods in the Shaanxi History Museum. They argue that the research and development process requires substantial investment and cannot be mass-produced in the short term, resulting in high costs[10]. Some scholars compare the Tourist souvenir goods of the Shaanxi History Museum with those of the Shanghai Museum, Suzhou Museum, and Henan Museum. They believe that the Tourist souvenir goods of the Shaanxi History Museum often give a noble and unapproachable impression, failing to bridge the gap between cultural relics and the general public[9]. From the perspective of cultural and creative intellectual property (IP), other scholars point out that the branding of Tourist souvenir goods from the Shaanxi History Museum relies too much on the "Tang Niang" character and lacks innovation due to this over-reliance[11]. The marketing of Tourist souvenir goods lacks excitement, and there hasn't been a breakthrough product that can be considered a phenomenon. Most scholars attribute these problems to unclear branding and

product positioning, the absence of a differentiated product series, and the mismatch between the resources invested and the outcomes achieved.

For the Gansu Museum, in the past two years, its bronze galloping horse IP image has successfully created viral products and increased its popularity. However, most scholars still believe that the Gansu Museum started relatively late in cultural product development, lacking sufficient development experience and market understanding. This is due to a lack of talent, limited development experience, and insufficient understanding of the target market, which results in its influence not matching its own strength within the country. The daily promotion is also not adequate[12]. Gansu Museum has not yet formed a particularly comprehensive system in terms of artistic authorization for museum resources, development path for Tourist souvenir goods, operational models for the cultural and creative industry, and related incentive measures[13][14]. The geographical location and underdeveloped economy have limited the museum's Tourist souvenir goods to a regional market. Under the pressure of comparing with Tourist souvenir goods of museums in other provinces and cities, Gansu Provincial Museum still faces challenges in the market.

As the smallest of the three national first-level museums, Ningxia Museum is considered by some experts to still be in the early stage of cultural and creative development. Wu, from the perspective of brand design, believes that the cultural and creative team of Ningxia Museum has not yet formed a historical and cultural innovative business format and new model for the museum. The proportion of emerging cultural industries is low, making it difficult to sustain normal production and operation activities. The development of emerging cultural and creative industries is slow, and there is a phenomenon of "hollowing out" of cultural industries. Subsequently, there is a lack of cultural brand extension services[15]. Li also mentioned this in his paper, stating that the development proportion of the museum's collection, which exceeds 50,000 items (sets), is still very low, and its collection of cultural resources still needs further exploration[16]. The reason for this is the lack of excellent professional design talents in Ningxia Museum. The cultural and creative development of the museum started relatively late, and it has not formed its own design brand[17]. However, there are also other reasons. Several researchers point out that Ningxia Museum does not give enough emphasis on the exhibition design of Tourist souvenir goods, and the attractiveness of the product display space to the public is insufficient.

Generally, the provincial museums of Shaanxi, Gansu, and Ningxia face considerable challenges in developing compelling and competitive souvenirs or cultural products. These include costs and economic disparities, lack of systematic strategies, overreliance on authorized partnerships versus internal creativity, imbalances between cultural authenticity and commercial viability, and insufficient marketing expertise. A fundamental need is capitalizing on shared regional heritage while differentiating through unique identities. Effective solutions require holistic approaches spanning creative design, institutional policies, public engagement strategies, and cross-museum collaboration mechanisms.

3. Methodology

3.1 Theoretical framework

In 1967, Glazer and Strauss introduced the Grounded Theory. Grounded Theory is a systematic and flexible qualitative research method that extracts concepts and forms theories to address problems by conducting open, axial, and selective coding of acquired raw data. It advocates for a bottom-up approach[18]. This Theory closely links empirical research and theoretical construction, providing a set of methods and steps to induce and construct theories from raw materials, enabling researchers to develop concepts and construct theories through systematic analysis and induction of empirical data.

Qualitative research relies on in-depth interviews. It involves in-depth interviews with participants to comprehend a social group's lifestyle and experiences, examine social phenomenon development, and provide solutions to social problems. In-depth interviews provide a lot of textual and rich interview material, allowing Grounded Theory to compare and analyze individual experiences, abstract concepts, and categories and create real-life social theories[19]. Grounded Theory helps create social theories in In-Depth Interviews, however

The researchers checked respondents' responses against museum data and reports to avoid conflicts of interest. The interviewees were informed of any discrepancies during the interview or via follow-up. The

researchers were transparent and objective during data collection and analysis to correctly represent respondents' and museums' experiences and opinions.

In-depth interviews are used to acquire original data on tourist souvenir item development in three museums in Shaanxi and other provinces using Grounded Theory. Data is coded at various levels using the Atlas.It tool extracts important concepts and categories with high correlation in interviews to examine category links and develop a model of museum tourist souvenir items variables.

3.2. Research participants

A total of four respondents participated in in-depth interviews for this study, representing the Shaanxi History Museum, Gansu Museum, Ningxia Museum, and the Palace Museum in Beijing. Among them, there were two male and two female participants, aged between 44 and 59. One participant held a doctoral degree, while three had postgraduate or higher qualifications. Three participants held senior positions above associate level. Three of them had previously served in departments related to Tourist souvenir goods, and had long been engaged in the work of cultural relics display, creative product development, and exhibition planning. One of them, as the deputy curator, directly managed the research and promotion of museum cultural and creative work. The other two participants were middle-level leaders in museum management, with over five years of experience in the management of museum cultural and creative work. As early as the beginning of 2018, they were already responsible for the research and promotion of museum cultural and creative work and had published the monograph "Research and Practice of Cultural and Creative Industry Theory." There was also an expert who had participated in practical projects related to museum cultural and creative development multiple times due to their background in history and archaeology, providing theoretical research foundations and cultural elements for the projects. Therefore, it can be seen that these interviewed experts have direct experience in theoretical research, design promotion, and management aspects of museum Tourist souvenir goods. This means that all of these meet the reliability and validity requirements for interviews, and the researcher can reasonably draw the following conclusion: the data collected from the aforementioned respondents is valid and trustworthy.

3.3. Data collection process

Before conducting the in-depth interviews, the researcher explained the purpose of this part of the study to the interviewed experts and assured them that the research results would only be used for academic purposes. With the consent of the respondents, all interviews were recorded and transcribed into a text of approximately 40,000 words. This portion of the interviews was structured around two dimensions of museum cultural and creative product development: knowledge and experience, where experts answered questions based on their past experiences and work experiences at their respective museums; and opinions and suggestions, where experts provided their opinions and suggestions based on their own knowledge structures and understanding of the industry.

Following grounded Theory, the coding process consisted of two steps: substantive coding and theoretical coding, with substantive coding further divided into open coding and selective coding. The researcher performed open coding on the core answers of the experts to each question (coded as child codes by the researcher). In order to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the experts' viewpoints, as well as the connections and differences between them, the researcher conducted axial coding on the data from the expert interviews based on the open coding process (coded as parent codes by the researcher), identifying the main themes and subcategories of viewpoints through induction.

For example, Q5: Please tell us about the key factors in evaluating the development and design of museum Tourist souvenir goods.

Table 1. Key factors in evaluating the development and design of museum tourist souvenir goods.

NAME	E.Zhao	E.Wen	E.Pang	E.Yang
Evaluation criteria	...When cooperating with companies, it is allowed for them to focus on economic benefits, but they must incorporate elements of cultural relics and traditional culture from Ningxia Museum...	The consumption preferences of the public are primarily based on artistic value, aesthetics, and practicality. The popularity of a product indicates its appeal to the public. As a public institution, the primary focus of a museum is on social benefits, followed by economic benefits...	First and foremost, we need to ensure that our cultural values are correctly conveyed and creatively adapted to the current era, including incorporating various elements. However, they should not be negative or decadent. They should resonate with the needs of individuals and guide them in a positive and encouraging way...	Products should embody the cultural values and unique historical, artistic, and cultural characteristics of museum artifacts, ensuring that they reflect the distinctive cultural value and appeal of the museum...

Through this work, nine main viewpoints were identified, namely cultural value, cultural genes, evaluation criteria, policies, management, gaps, cases, future, and suggestions. Additionally, there were 56 categories that represented these viewpoints. These categories can be classified into 13 negative factors, 2 neutral factors, and 41 positive factors, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Viewpoints category representation.

Parent Code	Question	Child Code	Influence	Quote
Evaluation criteria	Q5	Regional Focus	Positive	E.zhao
		public appeal	Positive	E.wen
	Q12	Cultural Relevance	Positive	E.pang
		Cultural Representation	Positive	E.yang
		Cultural factor	Positive	E.zhao
		Public aesthetic	Positive	E.wen
		Museum capability	Positive	E.pang
		innovation	Positive	E.yang
Policy	Q6	lack of standardization	Negative	E.zhao
		lack of intellectual property	Negative	E.wen
		policy evolution and recognition	Positive	E.pang
		Influence of economic equilibrium	Negative	E.yang
Management	Q7	Social Impact and Collaborations	Positive	E.zhao
		Internal Oversight and Exhibition-Related Creativity	Positive	E.wen
		Innovative Collaborations and Brand Promotion	Positive	E.pang
		Diverse Development Models and Marketing Strategies	Positive	E.yang

Based on the coding results, the researcher further conducted selective coding, which is an extension of axial coding at a higher level of abstraction. The purpose of this step was to determine a core category, around which grouping and integration were done, resulting in the construction of a museum cultural and creative impact factor mode, as depicted in Figure 1. The model reflects several important relationships in the development of museum cultural and creative initiatives. Museum success cases are influenced by the positive and effective dissemination of cultural value, and the evaluation criteria for Tourist souvenir goods are influenced by cultural value, museum success cases, challenges, and supportive policies. Cultural value has a positive impact on the future development of museum cultural and creative initiatives, while innovation in management is influenced by challenges and supportive policies, playing a driving role in the future development of museums. These interconnected relationships form dimensions of museum cultural and creative development.

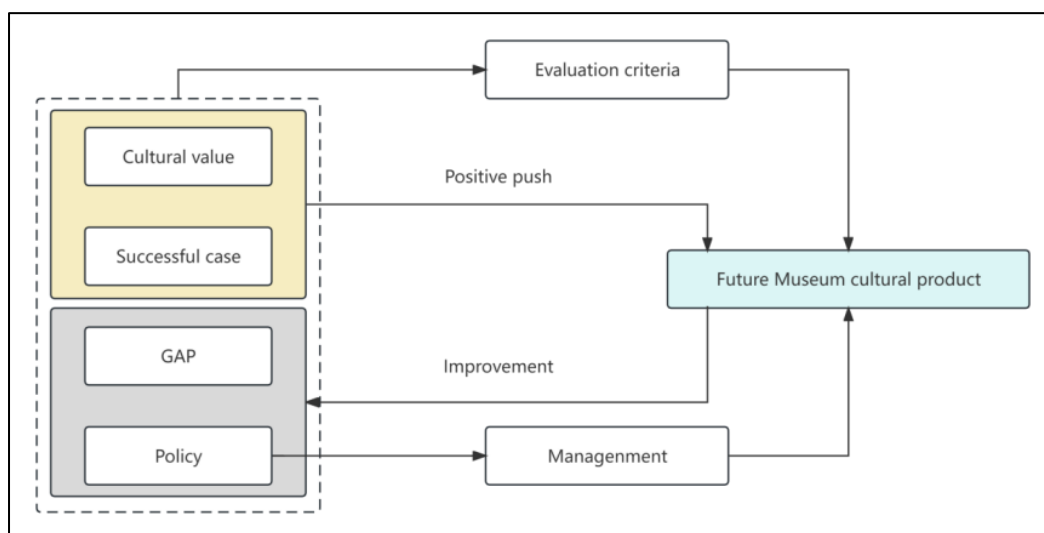


Figure 1. Museum cultural and creative impact factor mode.

3.4. Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations were paramount in this research. Before the interviews, all participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided written consent for their participation. They were told that the research data would be used academically and their privacy would be safeguarded. Interviewees could stay anonymous or reveal their identities to reduce publication risks. Three of four respondents requested anonymity, while one provided their identity.

Semi-structured interviews allowed open-ended discussions while maintaining essential questions. With participant consent, interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

3.5. Conclusion

The study used Grounded Theory, a qualitative research method that generates theories from actual data. Researchers can get ideas, categories, and theories directly from the raw data using this inductive method, which includes collecting and analyzing data over and over again.

Experts from four essential museums, the Shaanxi History Museum, the Gansu Museum, the Ningxia Museum, and the Palace Museum in Beijing, were interviewed in-depth to get most of the information. These museums were chosen because they are close to each other, share a cultural history, and are important for showing what the northwest of China is like. The interviews were meant to get different points of view on how cultural and creative goods are made, the problems that come up, and possible ways to make things better.

Using the ATLAS.ti software and the grounded theory coding methods, the interview data were coded in a planned way. Open coding was used to look through the raw data and find and mark important ideas. Then, axial coding made links and ties between these ideas, which turned them into groups and subgroups. Finally, selective coding integrated and refined the categories into a theoretical framework representing the key factors influencing the development of cultural and creative products in these museums.

The coding process yielded nine main categories: cultural value, evaluation criteria, and management, each with multiple subcategories representing specific aspects or dimensions. These categories formed the basis for comparative analysis and theory development.

It is acknowledged that the study focused primarily on expert perspectives from museum representatives, which may not fully capture visitor expectations and preferences. Future research could incorporate visitor interviews or surveys to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the demand and market dynamics for cultural and creative products.

Including the Palace Museum in Beijing, the expert provided a broader national perspective and enabled the comparison of strategies employed by a renowned institution with those of the regional museums under study.

In general, the grounded theory approach allowed for a systematic and rigorous analysis of the qualitative data, facilitating the identification of key themes, challenges, and potential strategies for enhancing the development of cultural and creative products in these northwestern Chinese museums.

4. Comparative analysis and finding

The researcher imported the coding from Table 1 into ATLAS.ti for data analysis, aiming to explore the similarities and differences among expert viewpoints. This analysis provided a deeper understanding of the connections between expert opinions and the variations in different perspectives. Furthermore, it delved into the similarities and differences among the three provincial museums, offering a thorough theoretical analysis to address the research questions.

4.1. Perspectives on cultural value

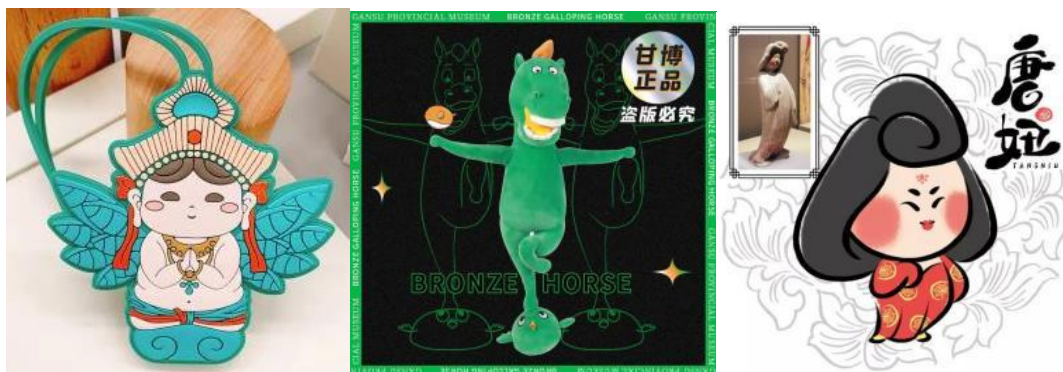
Table 3. Perspectives on cultural value.

Word	Length	Code-1	%	Total	%
cultural	8	128	6.34%	128	6.34%
products	8	84	4.16%	84	4.16%
creative	8	69	3.42%	69	3.42%
museums	7	45	2.23%	45	2.23%
development	11	34	1.68%	34	1.68%
value	5	16	0.79%	16	0.79%
research	8	13	0.64%	13	0.64%
market	6	11	0.55%	11	0.55%
needs	5	11	0.55%	11	0.55%
public	6	11	0.55%	11	0.55%
industry	8	10	0.49%	10	0.49%
Total			100%	2026	100%

Regarding the cultural value of Tourist souvenir goods, the researcher found a high level of consensus among experts. As demonstrated in Table 3 and Figure 2 through statistical analysis in ATLAS.ti, terms such as “culture,” “creativity,” “value,” and “development” were the most frequently mentioned by experts during interviews.



Firstly, according to expert viewpoints, Tourist souvenir goods ultimately reflect the cultural value of museum collections. Experts noted that Tourist souvenir goods extend the functions of museums, with the primary function of museums being social service. Promoting cultural innovation through Tourist souvenir goods is the outcome of the integration of commerce and culture. Through these products, museums can effectively convey cultural values to the public and disseminate their research findings. Experts recognized that Tourist souvenir goods give museums new cultural symbols and become important means of promoting museum culture.



Secondly, according to expert viewpoints, Tourist souvenir goods represent the cultural genes of specific regions through the external manifestation of cultural elements. As each museum has its own unique cultural characteristics, mainly influenced by regional culture, experts mentioned that successful cultural IPs from the three museums incorporate elements from the cultural relics of their respective regions. For example, Plate 1 shows the “Miao Wa” series of Tourist souvenir goods from Ningxia Museum, inspired by the rare bird figurine from the Western Xia period in the museum's collection. The “Green Horse” IP from Gansu Museum is based on a bronze galloping horse from the Eastern Han dynasty, while the brand image of “Tang Niu” from Shaanxi Historical Museum is derived from the depiction of female servants in Tang Dynasty culture. Experts also noted that neighboring regions have experienced cultural interactions and can find similarities in their cultural genes. By sharing cultural resources and promoting mutual development, cultural elements can be utilized to create a product matrix, allowing Tourist souvenir goods to possess both historical depth in terms of cultural connotations and horizontal diversity.

4.2. Comparison of cultural and creative development in similar museums in the region



Plate 2. Taken by researcher.

Through expert interviews and on-site investigations conducted by the researcher, three museums were compared. The comparison revealed that all three museums are national-level museums located in the northwest region of China, focusing on the development of cultural and creative elements with distinct cultural themes. Experts mentioned that the three provinces have been historically intertwined with the Silk Road, embodying the characteristics of multicultural integration. As a result, there is a genetic similarity in the artistic style of the cultural relics. The differences lie in the fact that painted pottery is prevalent in the Shaanxi History Museum and the Gansu Museum, while the Tang Dynasty culture is the highlight of the Shaanxi History Museum, and the Silk Road is the highlight of the Gansu Museum. The Western Xia culture has also blended in Gansu and Ningxia, making the Ningxia Museum unique with its focus on the Western Xia culture, Silk Road postal stations, and the history of ethnic fusion at the border.

In terms of the development and management of Tourist souvenir goods, experts believe that all three museums primarily adopt an authorized cooperation system as their main form of collaboration and operate mainly through agency operations. Each museum has also set up a dedicated cultural and creative product store on the ground floor, visually emphasizing their famous intellectual properties (IP) to attract the public, as shown in Plate 2. The researcher also found that all three museums operate online flagship stores on China's largest e-commerce platform, combining offline and online marketing models. The difference lies in the fact that the Shaanxi History Museum has the most diverse forms of development and marketing, involving cooperative development, authorized development, and independent development. Both the Shaanxi History Museum and the Gansu Museum have set up cultural and creative counters of various sizes on different floors. Among them, the agents at the Shaanxi History Museum present a more diverse range of products, while Ningxia Museum is relatively more focused. The Gansu Museum has a cultural and creative café on the second floor, selling products such as cultural and creative coffee, whereas Ningxia Museum does not have a larger-scale display showcasing different forms of Tourist souvenir goods. This could be due to the fact that the cultural and creative product system of the Shaanxi History Museum has already been preliminarily established, with an increasingly improved sales network and a prominent brand image. The Gansu Museum has gradually become a popular museum in recent years with its online celebrity products, which has increased the sales volume of Tourist souvenir goods while enjoying the advantages of location and resources.

Currently, in terms of tangible goods, the Tourist souvenir goods of these three museums fall into two categories. The first category involves enlarging or shrinking cultural relics, using them as models. These Tourist souvenir goods closely resemble the appearance and image of cultural relics and possess certain collection value and commemorative significance. The second category involves selecting the most recognizable symbols from the collection, such as patterns, shapes, and texts, and manufacturing them into stationery, jewelry, toys, decorations, and other products. Experts also categorize them as high-end products and affordable products based on their price range.

Regarding the development of Tourist souvenir goods at the Ningxia Museum, experts discussed the achievements and current challenges faced by the museum in an interview. They also mentioned how to utilize advantages to overcome difficulties. Firstly, experts acknowledged the unique cultural value of the Ningxia Museum, which lies in its distinctive history of the Western Xia culture, setting it apart from other regions. However, being located inland, Ningxia's economic development is not as strong as other areas, resulting in a relatively smaller museum size and insufficient financial support for developing Tourist

souvenir goods. Consequently, the development of these products is still at a relatively early stage. Experts pointed out how these problems are linked and stressed the need for complete answers, especially by using the Ningxia Museum's strengths to increase its impact through teamwork. One example that experts gave was how the growth of tourist souvenirs and the general growth of the museum can help each other. The Ningxia Museum has gotten invites from other museums in different areas, like the Zhengzhou Museum and the Alashan Museum, to hold exhibitions outside of Ningxia. This is possible because the museum sells souvenirs to tourists. This exchange is seen as a positive loop because it helps the museum's exhibitions grow and attracts tourists who want to buy souvenirs. The unique results of the museum's creative and cultural projects can also help its image and social impact.

Researchers compared the cultural value advantages of the Ningxia Museum and the Gansu Museum and found that each museum has its unique strengths, which also complement each other. The Gansu Museum's advantage lies in its distinct themes of cultural relics and its independent product system centered around colored pottery civilization and the Silk Road culture. This aligns with the Ningxia Museum's strengths. The Gansu Museum can leverage its unique regional cultural characteristics for long-term product planning and exchange, thereby enabling the shared development of cultural elements. Another advantage is that the Gansu Museum already has highly popular internet celebrity products, which differentiates it from the Ningxia Museum. With a larger scale and more visitors, the Gansu Museum has already established market influence to some extent. However, how to continuously attract visitors and grasp public aesthetics remains a challenge mentioned by experts. Another challenge faced by the Gansu Museum is the lack of policy support, as there are no relevant laws or regulations at the national level to provide guidance for the museum, resulting in management difficulties in areas such as the design and execution standards of Tourist souvenir goods and intellectual property rights. Additionally, the outdated internal incentive system also restricts the development of cultural and creative product management at the Gansu Museum.

As for the Shaanxi History Museum, experts believe that its rich collection, exquisite exhibition system, and distinctive social image have laid a solid foundation for the development of museum Tourist souvenir goods and the cultural industry. The museum possesses abundant collections and research advantages, enabling it to closely integrate its collections, research, and exhibition development to deeply explore cultural connotations and develop corresponding Tourist souvenir goods, such as their Tang Niang series. However, the Shaanxi History Museum also faces some challenges in the process of developing Tourist souvenir goods. For instance, experts mentioned the insufficient specialization of management personnel and the museum itself. The continuous development of museum Tourist souvenir goods requires accurate positioning, precise marketing strategies, and practical market strategies. Although the Shaanxi History Museum has achieved some success, it still encounters challenges in terms of market strategy and intellectual property rights.

Table 4. Museum key features summary.

Museum	Collection Highlights	Exhibitions	Product Range	Marketing Strategies
Shaanxi History Museum.	Tang Dynasty culture, Terracotta Warriors.	Permanent exhibitions like the “Longxing Buddha” hall.	A wide range of products like the “Tang Niang” series.	Multiple channels - cooperative development, authorized products, independent lines.
Gansu Museum	Colored Pottery civilization, Silk Road culture.	Silk Road exhibits, bronze galloping horse IP	More focused product lines like the popular “Bronze Horse” items.	Emerging online celebrity products, some offline displays.
Ningxia Museum	Western Xia culture, ethnic diversity.	Western Xia gallery, Silk Road postal stations.	Relatively narrower range centered on	They mainly authorized products with limited in-house creative

4.3. Comparison of obstacles and development opportunities

Researchers compared the mentioned advantages and development difficulties of various museums, mainly focusing on the Ningxia Museum and Gansu Museum, and identified some similarities and differences. Overall, the development difficulties faced by these three museums are similar. Firstly, experts noted that the market cultivation cycle for museum Tourist souvenir goods is short, requiring substantial investment. However, the museums receive limited financial support, resulting in a mismatch between the development of Tourist souvenir goods and government policies. Secondly, the experts pointed out that the professionalism of museums is still insufficient, lacking marketing experience. The management awareness and innovative management models in terms of market competition mechanisms are not enough, which is also related to the absence of relevant implementation standards at the national level, and the lack of policy basis for reform in museums nationwide. Thirdly, the core obstacle to the development of Tourist souvenir goods lies in the selection and transformation of cultural elements. This requires the selection of museum culture, but the reality is that the experts mentioned the economic development disparity between the eastern and western regions. The production level and copyright system of museums in the western inland areas are not well-established. Therefore, there is a contradiction between production speed and cultural interpretation, which has a detrimental effect on the development of museum Tourist souvenir goods. In comparison, the development scale of the Ningxia Museum is relatively smaller. Production relies on design and production companies in Shenzhen, Guangzhou, and Shanghai, resulting in greater limitations in terms of required costs and production technology. The marketing management of Gansu Museum's Tourist souvenir goods needs to be carried out on a larger scale, requiring institutional innovation and new mechanisms for incentive development.

In terms of sustained competitive advantages, experts mentioned that both the Ningxia Museum and Gansu Museum have unique regional cultural characteristics. Particularly in terms of the Western Xia history, the ancient Ningxia region and parts of Gansu belonged to the Western Xia dynasty. The similar history and rich cultural integration provide conditions for mutual support and development of cultural relics resources in museums. In addition, the Western Xia culture resources of the Ningxia Museum have unique identification in China, and Gansu's painted pottery culture and Silk Road culture are also distinctive. These are the advantages that differentiate these two museums from other comprehensive museums in China. The regional cultures are very distinct, and the cultural elements have uniqueness. Experts from the Palace Museum specifically mentioned that in the recent cultural tourism boom, Ningxia and Gansu, located in the northwest, have attracted numerous tourists with their similar desert landscapes and frontier charm, which is an advantage that other regions do not possess. Museums can take this opportunity for the integration of culture and tourism development.

4.4. Strategies and recommendations

Based on the development of their own museums, the interviewed experts proposed some suggestions for improving museum Tourist souvenir goods. For example, experts from the Ningxia Museum mentioned two levels of museum development. At the museum level, traditional culture should be integrated into modern life, which is also the future development model for cultural and creative industries in the country. At the national level, the development, problems, and shortcomings of major museums can be summarized. At the end of each year, the National Cultural Heritage Administration conducts statistical analysis and identifies existing problems, then formulates corresponding policies. Major museums formulate development strategies based on different regions, the development status of museums, the quantity and characteristics of cultural relics, etc., forming a virtuous cycle.

Experts from the Gansu Museum believe that, first of all, system innovation can be pursued, and relevant supporting policies can be demonstrated to include qualified Tourist souvenir goods in the scope of special construction fund support. The development of Tourist souvenir goods should be included in the support and service system for cultural industry investment and financing. Secondly, the product structure of cultural and creative product development needs to be optimized and adjusted. Respect for originality, cultivate new industrial concepts, and foster awareness and abilities for creative innovation. Thirdly, the

introduction of a temporary exhibition + cultural and creative model can address the problems encountered in capital sources and development methods, highlighting the public service function of museums.

Experts from the Shaanxi History Museum believe that the professionalism of museums needs to be improved, especially in terms of positioning Tourist souvenir goods. They suggest strengthening the development of original exhibitions and local Tourist souvenir goods. By presenting these products through exhibitions to different audiences in different regions, museum creative products can gain recognition and support from the public. In addition to the embodiment of the comprehensive product concept in the research and development of museum Tourist souvenir goods, the exhibition and sales of museum Tourist souvenir goods should also be more innovative. Scene-based presentation of series of products should completely break away from the traditional independent counter display, creating the "last exhibition hall" of the museum.

Experts from the Palace Museum in Beijing believe that museums can learn from the successful experiences of other museums and better utilize their own collections and cultural advantages. Secondly, museums can divide Tourist souvenir goods into profit-making and representing research results, to ensure that the products have both commercial value and reflect the research achievements and cultural value of the museum. In addition, museums can transform research results into Tourist souvenir goods, such as replicating historical activities or specific artifact styles, to demonstrate the inheritance and innovation of traditional culture. In conclusion, museums need to attract more visitors and enhance their influence.

5. Discussion

In reviewing the research and comparing it with similar museums, the advantages of the museums in the three provinces are obvious. They have rich cultural resources and collections that contain unique cultural value that is difficult to replicate. They have also achieved certain success and gained management and marketing experience. However, they also face prominent challenges, such as the disproportionate relationship between the cultural and creative value and museum resources. Despite receiving policy support and having a large market, they still face issues in attracting the public and improving marketing effectiveness. The reasons for these problems include the high production and development costs caused by the gap in economic development and level between the provinces and the eastern coastal regions. The government has not formed standardized guidance documents, and the incentive policies for museum management are inadequate and lack professionalism. There is a gap between authorized development and the museum's intentions, and the design companies have varying levels of cultural value expression. There are differences in the size and social influence of museums, and there is a lack of in-depth planning for Tourist souvenir goods, resulting in insufficient appeal to the public.

The researchers summarized the opinions and suggestions of experts on optimizing the development strategy of museum Tourist souvenir goods, which can be divided into three levels from micro to macro. At the first level, experts suggest improving the innovation and design level of Tourist souvenir goods, closely integrating the museum's collections, research, and exhibitions, and deeply exploring cultural connotations to develop corresponding Tourist souvenir goods. Injecting cultural genes into museum Tourist souvenir goods helps improve the cultural connotation of the product design and its representativeness[20]. Especially, Tourist souvenir goods should be oriented towards the needs of the masses, meeting various levels of demands and focusing on the integration of creativity and culture, practicality and artistry, allowing Tourist souvenir goods to integrate into people's daily lives. At the second level, experts suggest that museums should focus on exhibitions to attract more visitors and shape the museum's social image. The higher the relevance between Tourist souvenir goods and the exhibits in the museum, the more easily they can be accepted by the audience[1]. Collecting the public's needs and interests ensures that Tourist souvenir goods are welcomed by a diverse audience and effectively enhance the visitor experience. At the third macro management level, experts suggest that the country should strengthen statistical and planning documents for the development of museum Tourist souvenir goods, thus providing more legal and regulatory standards. Increasing support for investment and financing policies can activate encouragement mechanisms at the management level. Additionally, strengthening cooperation and communication

mechanisms can reduce the current imbalance in regional development.

In terms of specific development and design aspects, experts suggest that product design should enhance the brand influence and cultural dissemination of museums. Museums can learn from the successful experiences of other museums and divide Tourist souvenir goods into profit-oriented and research-representing parts, ensuring that products possess both commercial value and reflect the research achievements and cultural values of the museum. Additionally, museums can transform research results into Tourist souvenir goods, such as restoring historical lifestyles or the styles of specific cultural artifacts, to demonstrate the inheritance and innovation of traditional culture. Lastly, museums can fully embody their cultural genes and characteristic artifacts in the design of Tourist souvenir goods to ensure they possess unique historical and artistic value. These improvement strategies help prioritize the brand value and cultural dissemination effects of products, ensuring that Tourist souvenir goods effectively disseminate the cultural values of museums, thus attracting more visitors and enhancing the influence of museums.

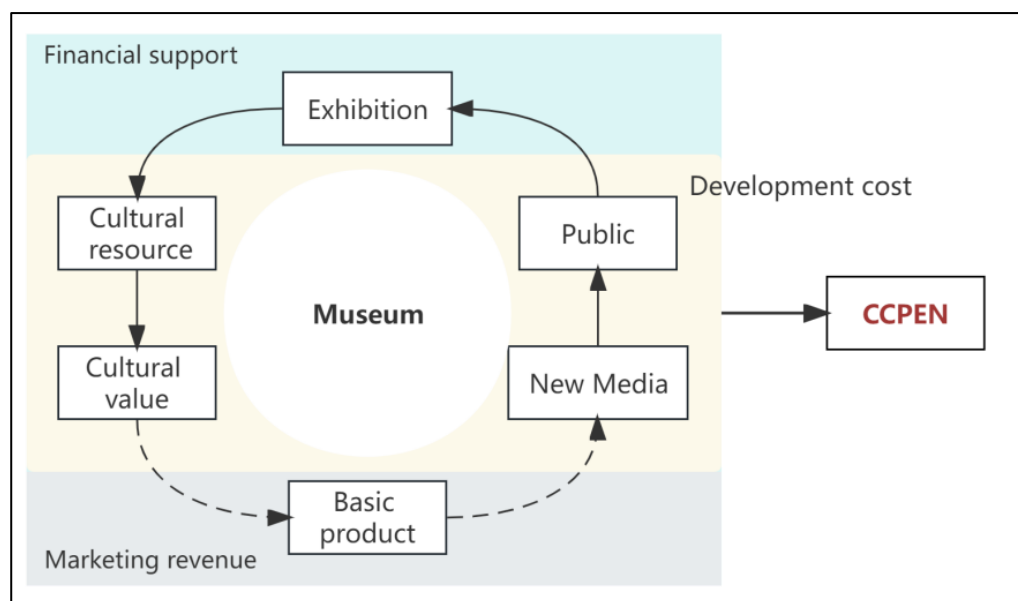


Figure 3. CCPEN Model

Based on the analysis results from expert interviews and with the perspective of the Ningxia Museum, the researchers combined the actual situation of the Ningxia Museum. Summarizing the opinions of experts and comparing the commonalities among three provinces to form a development strategy called CCPEN, shown as Figure 3. Always centered around the social functions of museums, exhibitions drive Tourist souvenir goods, while Tourist souvenir goods influence exhibitions. The direction for the vertical and in-depth development of museums is to showcase cultural values through basic products and attract the public through well-organized exhibitions. By combining various forms of new media marketing, the museum can expand its appeal to the public, continuously explore cultural resources, and expand the social image of the museum as a means of horizontal expansion.

The CCPEN development strategy establishes three perspectives as the evaluation standards for Tourist souvenir goods: the museum's perspective, the perspective of Tourist souvenir goods, and the public's perspective. The core criteria from the museum's perspective lie in the reflection of museum needs, especially whether new products have sufficient innovative appeal to the public, which affects whether museums can enhance their social influence through Tourist souvenir goods. The core criteria for Tourist souvenir goods revolve around whether they have sufficient cultural relevance, which can be reflected by extracting cultural elements from the museum's unique regional culture and representative culture. The core of the public's perspective lies in whether it meets the aesthetic preferences of the general public and provides more experiential value in situational consumption.

Centered around museums, the focus is on the social functions of museums, and all activities of the museum primarily serve public welfare. Museums attach importance to cultural and creative design, which

represents the image of the museum to some extent. The art shop is one of the most important tools for creating a positive image of the museum[21]. Permanent exhibitions are the foundation for the Ningxia Museum and similar museums. In the past development, the museum has developed and produced a portion of mass products, selecting culturally representative museum collections and fully utilizing them, either through complete references or partial elements. The advantage of this approach is the ability to highlight the cultural nature of the collections and promote museum culture to the public through new carriers[22]. These products have already showcased a certain image and characteristics of the museum to the public. Different forms of exhibitions, such as temporary exhibitions, original exhibitions, and imported exhibitions, can launch various forms of Tourist souvenir goods, providing opportunities for new product releases and sales. In the continuous development of exhibitions and basic products, it is important to integrate cultural connotations, enhance creativity and cultural value, and create a comprehensive and competitive matrix of museum Tourist souvenir goods.

The public evaluation and marketing effects of museum Tourist souvenir goods can only be demonstrated if the museum has sufficient public appeal. Therefore, the Ningxia Museum and similar museums need to expand their marketing methods horizontally to attract more audiences. Combining current economic development trends and communication trends, on the basis of the offline and online marketing platforms already established by museums, they can strongly integrate new media marketing. By utilizing new media channels to generate “buzz,” “topics,” and “traffic,” efforts can be made to elevate the image of the museum and its Tourist souvenir goods. This helps the public choose target products and facilitates the development of differentiated marketing strategies. In particular, by combining cultural and tourism development, it can compensate for the disadvantages of the Ningxia Museum being located remotely and receiving less attention. It leverages new media to enhance the museum's visibility, promote Tourist souvenir goods, or attract the public through the popularity of Tourist souvenir goods.

Another horizontally expanding resource is cultural resources. Zhang et al. (2020) propose that museums should adhere to the principle of innovation and break through the difficulties of product development by creating cultural value through collaboration[23]. Taking the Ningxia Museum as an example, there are many cultural resources that can be shared with neighboring areas, including the Gansu Museum, Shaanxi History Museum, and Inner Mongolia, among others. The Ningxia Museum can leverage the advantages of cultural integration to carry out joint projects, collaborate in planning and implementing activities such as cultural and creative product development and promotion, and promote resource sharing and complementary advantages. Establishing cooperation agreements and mechanisms, clarifying the rights and obligations of both parties, regulating cooperative relationships, and ensuring smooth cooperation are essential. In addition, encouraging innovative thinking and fostering a culture of innovation within the museum's internal management can provide employees with ample space and incentives to propose new ideas and design solutions. These methods can help museums improve their product innovation and design capabilities, and promote the continuous development and enhancement of Tourist souvenir goods.

It can be seen that the development strategy advocated by CCPEN centers around museums and forms a virtuous development process. Based on exhibitions, it explores cultural resources, embodies cultural value, attracts the public, and develops new media marketing. Alternatively, it can be based on products, using new media marketing to attract the public and drive museum exhibitions, thus realizing more value for cultural resources. As for the museum itself, it can also achieve a better balance between expenditure and income. This is a new approach that continuously develops within a cycle.

6. Conclusions

Researchers have found from the perspectives of experts from Shaanxi History Museum, Gansu Museum, and Ningxia Museum that the development of Tourist souvenir goods has become an indispensable part of museum development. Particularly under the current form of online dissemination, Tourist souvenir goods can represent the social image of museums and the public's perception of museums. Museums can also use Tourist souvenir goods to disseminate cultural value into the public's lives. In the development process of similar museums represented by the Ningxia Museum, due to their remote location and imbalanced economic development, products have not reached a larger scale, which hinders the

development of Tourist souvenir goods in museums. However, these museums can continuously build the social influence of exhibitions through their unique regional cultural characteristics, attracting the public. They can also seek cooperative development of cultural resources through cultural and tourism development and cultural and creative cooperation projects, promoting the sustainable development of museums. As the researchers propose in the CCPEN strategy, museums should be the center, exhibitions should be the foundation, and public appeal should be continuously enhanced to develop a clear line of Tourist souvenir goods, forming a matrix of Tourist souvenir goods. This further promotes the activation of the museum's internal driving force for Tourist souvenir goods. Of course, the researchers' survey work is limited to the three provinces in northwest China and does not cover the actual situation of other museums in China. It has theoretical limitations to some extent, and the practical guidance may not be applicable to all museums. In future research, continuous improvement and supplementation will be conducted.

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