

Strategies for the Transformation and Development of Tourism in Resource-Depleted Cities-Taking Zaozhuang as a Case Study

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Abstract: Resource-depleted cities generally face the transitional dilemma of a monolithic industrial structure and sluggish economic development; fostering successor industries has become key to the sustainable development of these cities. Taking Zaozhuang City as the subject of this study, this paper systematically analyses the current status of its tourism sector's transformation and development. Although Zaozhuang possesses abundant cultural and tourism resources and has the inherent potential for a tourism-led transition, it faces five core challenges: an imbalanced product structure, low levels of industrial integration, an incomplete supporting infrastructure system, insufficient brand influence, and imperfect institutional mechanisms. Based on this, the paper constructs a 'One Belt, Three Zones, Three Parks' tourism development framework and proposes five optimisation strategies from both internal and external perspectives. The study concludes that multidimensional upgrading of the cultural and tourism industry can effectively drive Zaozhuang's industrial transformation, providing practical reference for the transformation of similar small and medium-sized resource-depleted cities across the country.

Keywords: Zaozhuang; Tourism Transformation; Resource-Depleted Cities; Successor Industries

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background, Significance and Review of Domestic and International Research

As a typical resource-based city with over a century of coal mining history, Zaozhuang is home to the Zhongxing Coal Company, established in 1878, which was one of China's three major coal mines in modern times and the country's first joint-stock enterprise. The city's

long-standing reliance on a single-industry structure centred on coal has, following the gradual depletion of resources, led to economic imbalances, employment pressures, ecological damage and a lack of alternative industries, making urban transformation an urgent priority. The tourism industry, with its strong capacity to generate employment and its green, sustainable nature, can both optimise the industrial structure and enhance urban functions and the city's image, making it an ideal successor industry for Zaozhuang's transformation. In 2007, the state introduced support policies for the transformation of resource-based cities, and in 2009, Zaozhuang was included in the second batch of nationally designated resource-depleted cities, providing significant policy support for the city's transformation.

Against the backdrop of Zaozhuang's urban transformation, this paper focuses on the selection and optimisation of local tourism development pathways. It examines tourism policies and planning systems suited to Zaozhuang's development, explores scientific pathways for high-quality tourism development, and proposes targeted policy recommendations for establishing a new framework for Zaozhuang's tourism development.

1.2 Review of International Research Progress

Research on resource-based cities abroad has undergone three major phases: definition of concepts, theoretical construction, and practical application. In the early 20th century, numerous coal-mining towns emerged in the United States, Canada, Germany and elsewhere, whilst resource-based industries began to show signs of decline. In 1930, Alonso defined mining towns, and Inés initiated specialised research; during the mid-period, the decline of cities such as Lorraine and the Ruhr drove the development of transformation practices and theoretical refinement, with transformation becoming the

core focus of research in the 1970s [1–5]. Drawing on case studies from Canada and Australia, Bradbury proposed transformation strategies including early warning systems, support measures, funds, diversification and planning. Western transformation has been government-led, driven by planning, industrial policy and fiscal support, with the Ruhr and Houston serving as typical examples. However, the Ruhr and Lorraine models rely on a robust industrial base and fiscal support, which do not align with Zaozhuang's urban endowments and cannot be directly replicated.

1.3 Review of Domestic Research Progress

Since the launch of the Reform and Opening-up policy, domestic academia has initiated research into the transformation of resource-based cities. With the support of national research grants in the 1990s, studies have focused on transformation mechanisms, case studies and strategies. Zhu Xun proposed a model centred on the integration of government and market forces, with industrial extension as a core element [6]. Zhang Mi'er categorised three types of industrial transformation models; [7]. Zhang Hong advocated a 'triple transformation'; [8]. Shen Lei and Cheng Jing emphasised leveraging local strengths [9]. Zhang Juntao emphasised the balance between economic and ecological considerations [10]. Guan Yuanliang identified the lag in the tertiary sector as a bottleneck; [11]. Xu Yi and others argued that tourism drives economic growth and employment; [12]. Tao Wei and others analysed the logic behind Jiaozuo's tourism-led transformation; [13]. and Li Guihong summarised the experience of Yangquan. Research on Zaozhuang has attracted attention: [14]. Wang Ciqing proposed the cultivation of successor industries; [15] Huang Guoqing advocated for government-led cultural and tourism development; [16]. and Han Xiao categorised Zaozhuang's tourism into six major sectors [17]. China's resource-based cities, which rely on non-renewable resources, have largely seen their reserves depleted. With prominent issues such as industrial imbalance, they are prone to falling into the 'resource curse', making early transformation an urgent priority. While there is no unified definition in academic circles, classifications are often qualitative or quantitative; this paper combines both approaches to establish a methodology. Their development has undergone four stages, and

following resource depletion, they face multiple challenges, with the core issue being industrial upgrading and optimisation. Domestically, there are three categories of transformation pathways. Transformation requires coordination between government and the market, as well as scientific government intervention. The city of Yubari in Japan declined due to over-reliance on the coal industry and a failure to cultivate successor industries in a timely manner. This lesson serves as a warning to Zaozhuang, another coal-based city, that it must accelerate the development of tourism as a successor industry to avoid repeating the same mistakes.

1.4 Research Content, Methods and Innovative Aspects of the Zaozhuang Study

(1) Research Content

Grounded in the realities of Zaozhuang's industrial transformation, this study analyses the transition of resource-depleted cities and the development of the tourism industry, with a particular focus on exploring pathways for the innovative upgrading of scenic area tourism and the enhancement of regional influence. The study employs a combination of normative and empirical methods to summarise the patterns of industrial development during urban transformation, clarify the government's functions in policy planning and brand building, explore a cultural and tourism development model suited to Zaozhuang, and propose recommendations for optimisation. This research can serve as a reference for the transformation of similar cities, with a particular focus on analysing the interrelationship between Zaozhuang's transformation and cultural and tourism development, as well as the government's leading role. A key challenge lies in formulating feasible policies for the integrated development of cultural and tourism sectors and urban construction, taking into account Zaozhuang's regional characteristics.

(2) Current Development Status of Zaozhuang

Located in southern Shandong, Zaozhuang is one of China's earliest coal-mining industrial cities, home to five major coalfields with a mining history spanning over a century. Large-scale coal development began during the late Qing Dynasty, with the local Zhongxing Coal Company serving as a landmark enterprise in China's modern coal industry. Long-term heavy reliance on the coal industry has resulted in a lack of economic resilience in

Zaozhuang. As coal resources gradually deplete, the closure of coal mines has led to economic imbalances, employment pressures and ecological damage, making urban transformation an urgent priority.

Innovative Aspect: Existing research has largely focused on macro-level transformation policies and industrial selection, lacking empirical analysis of the micro-level linkage mechanisms and product system optimisation within tourist attractions in resource-depleted cities. By constructing a ‘One Belt, Three Zones, Three Parks’ spatial framework, this paper fills this research gap.

2. Overall Framework, Feasibility and Existing Issues in the Development of Zaozhuang’s Tourism Industry

2.1 Overview of Zaozhuang’s Transformation

In recent years, Zaozhuang has advanced its urban transformation by promoting coal chemical processing and the service sector as

successor industries. Although phased achievements have been made, the city still faces development challenges. As a resource-based city founded on coal, Zaozhuang was designated a national resource-depleted city in 2009. Since then, it has positioned the cultural and tourism industry as the core of its transformation. By leveraging the historic town of Tai’erzhuang to establish a cultural and tourism brand, the city has gradually integrated diverse resources such as mines and wetlands. Through the development of ‘Panoramic Zaozhuang’, it has enriched the cultural and tourism sector, making tourism a key pillar of the city’s high-quality transformation [18–21].

2.2 Overall Framework for the Development of Zaozhuang’s Tourism Industry

The overall planning framework for the development of Zaozhuang’s tourism industry from the perspective of cultural and tourism transformation is shown in Table 1

Table 1. Overall Planning Framework for the Development of Zaozhuang’s Tourism Industry from the Perspective of Cultural and Tourism Transformation

Framework Modules	Core Content
Top-level Strategic Positioning	1. Development Positioning: A benchmark for cultural and tourism transformation in resource-depleted cities; a renowned cultural and tourism city along the Grand Canal 2. Core Concept: Panoramic Zaozhuang – Shared by Residents and Visitors
Spatial Layout (One Belt, Three Zones, Three Parks)	1. One Belt: The Grand Canal Cultural Tourism Belt 2. Three Zones: Tai’erzhuang Ancient City Cultural Tourism Zone, Shanting Ecological Leisure Tourism Zone, Tengzhou Weishan Lake Wetland Tourism Zone 3. Three Parks: Guanshi Lychee Garden Cultural Industry Park, Xuecheng Industrial Cultural Industry Park, Railway Guerrilla Red Cultural Industry Park
Core Resource System	1. Cultural Resources: Canal culture, revolutionary culture, industrial culture, folk culture 2. Ecological Resources: Wetland ecology, mountainous ecology, rural ecology
Cultural and Tourism Product System	1. Core products: sightseeing tours, revolutionary history study tours, eco-leisure, industrial experiences, rural holidays 2. Innovative business models: night-time tourism, cultural tourism and wellness, digital cultural tourism, festivals and exhibitions
Directions for Industrial Integration	Culture and Tourism + Agriculture (leisure, rural complexes), Culture and Tourism + Industry (heritage sightseeing, industrial study tours), Culture and Tourism + Sport (mountain sports + water sports events), Culture and Tourism + Wellness (Traditional Chinese Medicine wellness), Culture and Tourism + Digital (smart scenic areas, virtual experiences)
Support Systems	Policy support, financial support, talent support, organisational support, service support

2.3 Feasibility Analysis of Tourism as a Successor Industry

Essentially, the transformation of resource-based cities involves repositioning and restructuring the city’s economic framework and competitive advantage industries. The pathways for such transformation are diverse, and as each city faces a unique development environment, the successor industries and development measures chosen will vary accordingly. However, in all

cases, cities undergoing transformation must formulate transformation strategies and industrial orientations tailored to local conditions, and rebuild their competitive advantages by leveraging their own strengths. Overall, Zaozhuang enjoys convenient transport links and is rich in historical, natural and cultural tourism resources, providing favourable conditions for the development of the tourism industry. The rapid development of tourism will have a positive catalytic effect on the urban

transformation of Zaozhuang.

2.3.1 Analysis of Zaozhuang's tourism resources

Zaozhuang is endowed with superior tourism resources, characterised by diversity and significant concentration, covering core categories such as natural ecology, historical culture, revolutionary heritage, industrial heritage and intangible cultural heritage and folk customs. Resources within the city, including the Tai'ierzhuang section of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, Tai'ierzhuang Ancient City, Baodugu National Geopark, Guanshi Pomegranate Garden, Weishan Lake Red Lotus Wetland and the Zhongxing Coal Mine industrial heritage. These resources combine World Heritage value, revolutionary education value, ecological tourism value and industrial civilisation value, forming a four-dimensional resource landscape integrating 'ancient canal, revolutionary heritage, ecology and industry'. With strong resource complementarity and distinct regional characteristics, they provide a solid foundation for the development of the cultural and tourism industry.

2.3.2 Analysis of the Prospects for Zaozhuang's Tourism Industry

Zaozhuang's cultural and tourism industry has a solid foundation and broad prospects for transformation. The region is endowed with excellent tourism resources, providing support for high-quality industrial development [22]; relying on a convenient transport system, it possesses significant locational advantages, whilst also benefiting from multi-tiered policy support and a comprehensive transformation safeguard system [23–24]. Compared with the benchmark tourism city of Huangshan (Table 2), Zaozhuang's total tourism revenue in 2025 is projected to reach 26.745 billion yuan, representing a year-on-year increase of 11.34%. Although the scale of the industry falls short of that of Huangshan, its growth momentum is strong. The potential for integration within its cultural and tourism sectors is notable, aligning with mainstream consumer demand and demonstrating the endogenous momentum required for catch-up and upgrading.

Table 2. Comparison of Key Tourism Indicators for Zaozhuang and Huangshan (both prefecture-level cities) in 2025

Indicator Category	Specific Indicator	Zaozhuang (Coal City Transformation)	Huangshan (Famous Tourist City)	Ratio of Difference	Data Source
Core Revenue	Total Tourism Revenue	26.745 billion yuan (up 11.34% year-on-year)	Approx. 100 billion yuan (estimated, up 18.7% year-on-year)	Huangshan is 3.74 times that of Zaozhuang	Zaozhuang City 2025 Statistical Bulletin; Huangshan City Culture and Tourism Bureau 2025 Annual Report
Visitor numbers	Total annual visitor numbers	28.7649 million (year-on-year increase of 10.59%)	Approx. 92 million (forecast, up 10% year-on-year)	Huangshan is 3.2 times that of Zaozhuang	Zaozhuang Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism; Huangshan Municipal Government Work Report
Scenic Area Quality	Number of 5A-rated scenic spots	1 (Tai'ierzhuang Ancient Town)	3 sites comprising 8 locations (Huangshan Scenic Area, Ancient Villages of Southern Anhui – Xidi and Hongcun, Ancient Huizhou Cultural Tourism Area)	Huangshan is three times that of Zaozhuang	Ministry of Culture and Tourism website; announcements from the cultural and tourism bureaus of both cities
Core scenic areas	Visitor numbers at core scenic areas	Tai'ierzhuang Ancient City: 7.2 million visitors	Huangshan Scenic Area: 5.168 million visitors Hongcun: approximately 2 million visitors	Visitor numbers in core scenic areas are comparable	Tai'ierzhuang Ancient City Management Committee, Zaozhuang City; Huangshan Scenic Area Management Committee
Industrial Base	Total number of A-rated scenic areas	66 (14 4A-rated)	49 sites	Zaozhuang has a high quantity but low quality	2025 statistics from the cultural and tourism bureaus of both cities
Supporting	Provincial-level	2	4	Huangshan is	Shandong Provincial

facilities	level tourist resorts			twice the size of Zaozhuang	Department of Culture and Tourism; Anhui Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism
Transport infrastructure	Motorway mileage	322.5 km	451 km	Huangshan has 128.5 km more than Zaozhuang	Zaozhuang Municipal Transport Bureau; Huangshan City Statistical Bulletin

Table 3. Analysis of Development Bottlenecks and Restrictive Impacts of Zaozhuang's Tourism Industry

Dimension of Bottlenecks	Specific Manifestations	Restrictive Impacts
Product Supply Structure	The siphon effect of leading tourist attractions is pronounced, whilst coordination among attractions across the region is weak; the revitalisation of distinctive resources is insufficient, and product homogenisation is evident	It is difficult to establish an industry structure supported by multiple pillars, limiting the effectiveness of all-for-one tourism development
Extension of the Industrial Value Chain	Over-reliance on the ticket economy, with the cultivation of new business models integrating culture and tourism lagging behind; insufficient supply of cultural and creative products and immersive experiences	Low industrial value-added, making it difficult to improve resource utilisation efficiency and profitability
Support Services System	Transport links between scenic areas are inadequate, and supporting infrastructure is underdeveloped; there is a significant shortage of specialised talent in the cultural and tourism sectors	Insufficient visitor experience, with a lack of support for the large-scale and standardised development of the industry
Brand Marketing Competitiveness	City cultural and tourism brands lack distinctiveness, and there is insufficient integration between core scenic areas and the city brand; digital marketing capabilities are weak	Weak regional market competitiveness, with limited scope for visitor source expansion and market reach
Institutional and Mechanism Support	Inadequate municipal-level coordination mechanisms and low participation of private capital; significant path dependence in the transformation of resource-based cities	Significant challenges in integrating industrial resources, with insufficient impetus for market-oriented and intensive development

2.3.3 Bottlenecks in the Development of Zaozhuang's Tourism Industry

Zaozhuang's tourism industry has achieved steady development by leveraging its resource advantages and policy support; however, it still faces numerous constraints in the process of high-quality industrial transformation. To clearly identify its developmental shortcomings, this paper summarises and analyses the bottlenecks in Zaozhuang's tourism industry from multiple dimensions, as shown in Table 3.

Zaozhuang's tourism industry has expanded in scale by leveraging cultural and tourism resources, but high-quality development faces multiple bottlenecks. The product supply structure is unbalanced, with a pronounced 'siphon effect' from leading attractions, whilst coordinated development across the region and the revitalisation and transformation of resources lag behind; the industry is overly reliant on the 'ticket economy', with insufficient cultivation of new business models and low added value.

Supporting services, infrastructure and talent support are weak, and the competitiveness of cultural and tourism brands is lacking. Coordination mechanisms, social capital and path dependence in transformation further constrain the intensive development of Zaozhuang's industry

3. Optimal Pathways for Zaozhuang's Tourism Industry to Drive Urban Transformation

Optimise the supply of products across the entire region to overcome the constraints of isolated development; integrate scenic area resources to establish a coordinated regional framework; extend the industrial value chain to reduce reliance on the 'ticket economy'; promote the integration of culture and tourism to enhance the industry's added value; improve the supporting service system to strengthen the foundation for transformation; address infrastructure shortcomings; and reinforce service and talent

provision. Strengthen brand marketing and promotion to enhance the city's overall competitiveness; build cultural and tourism brands to boost the city's influence. Improve institutional and mechanism safeguards to stimulate the vitality of market-oriented transformation; refine coordination mechanisms to activate the driving forces of market-oriented development.

3.1 Strategic Positioning of Zaozhuang's Tourism Development

Adhering to the core development philosophy of "Panoramic Zaozhuang: Shared by Hosts and Guests" [25], and in line with the innovative development trends of all-for-one tourism and the cultural and tourism industry, Zaozhuang will address the core demands of industrial transformation in resource-depleted cities. It will fully revitalise the city's distinctive cultural and tourism resources-including those related to the ancient Grand Canal, revolutionary heritage, ecology, and industry-and seize the strategic opportunity presented by the construction of the National Grand Canal Cultural Belt to scientifically define the specialised development positioning of Zaozhuang's cultural and tourism industry. With the cultural and tourism industry serving as the core driver of urban transformation, Zaozhuang is committed to establishing itself as a national benchmark for the cultural and tourism transformation of resource-depleted cities and a landmark cultural and tourism city along the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, whilst actively striving to become a national demonstration zone for the integrated development of culture and tourism. By focusing

on the two core functions of revolutionary history study tours and the revitalisation of industrial heritage, the city aims to drive the coordinated upgrading of urban ecological development, infrastructure and social welfare through the enhancement of quality and efficiency in the cultural and tourism industry; Leveraging its geographical advantage at the junction of Jiangsu, Shandong, Henan and Anhui, the city is proactively integrating into the process of cultural and tourism integration within the Huaihai Economic Zone to build a regional cultural and tourism destination with distinctive characteristics. Leveraging the city's endowments of the Grand Canal, pomegranates, its heritage as a coal city, and its revolutionary culture, we will shape the core cultural and tourism image of "Zao Zhuang: Pearl of the Canal, Land of Pomegranates; A Revitalised Coal City on Revolutionary Soil", and continuously enhance the brand recognition and market competitiveness of "Panoramic Zao Zhuang".

3.2 Strategies for the Development of Zaozhuang's Tourism Industry

In light of the existing bottlenecks in Zaozhuang's tourism sector and based on the aforementioned strategic positioning for tourism development, targeted implementation measures are proposed across five key dimensions-product supply, industrial value, supporting services, brand marketing and institutional safeguards-to drive high-quality development in the tourism sector and empower urban transformation. The specific measures are outlined in Table 4

Table 4. Implementation Measures for the High-Quality Development of Zaozhuang's Tourism Industry to Empower Urban Transformation

Dimension of Measures	Corresponding Bottleneck	Specific Implementation Measures
Optimising the Supply of Area-Wide Tourism Products	Weak coordination between attractions across the region	Integrate resources across the 'One Belt, Three Zones and Three Parks', upgrade core scenic areas, and develop model sites for rural tourism
Extending the cultural and tourism industry value chain	Over-reliance on the ticket economy (from Table 3)	Move away from the ticket-based economy, foster new cultural and tourism business models, and deepen the integrated development of culture and tourism with agriculture, industry, health and wellness, and digital sectors
Improve the supporting service system	Poor coordination between scenic areas Inadequate supporting infrastructure	Addressing infrastructure shortcomings in scenic areas; collaborating with enterprises to provide skills training to attract and cultivate specialised talent in the cultural and tourism sector; and establishing service standards for all-for-one tourism
Strengthen brand	Low recognition of urban cultural	Establish a 'city and scenic area' marketing system,

marketing and promotion	and tourism brands; insufficient integration between core scenic areas and the city brand; weak digital marketing capabilities	conduct digital online promotion, and engage in joint cultural and tourism marketing with neighbouring cities
Improve institutional and mechanism safeguards	The municipal-level coordination mechanism is not fully developed, and participation by private capital is low; resource-based cities exhibit significant path dependence in their transition	Establish a municipal-level cultural and tourism coordination mechanism; relax market access to attract private capital for development; and promote the coordinated development of the cultural and tourism sector with the lithium-ion battery and new energy industries

3.2.1 Implementation methods from the perspective of endogenous circulation

Extend the cultural and tourism industry value chain to break free from reliance on the ‘ticket economy’: Zaozhuang is focusing on upgrading cultural and tourism business formats, prioritising the cultivation of emerging industries such as night-time tourism and educational tourism and cultural creativity. By leveraging local intangible cultural heritage and agricultural innovation resources to extend the industrial chain, the city aims to drive the transformation of the cultural and tourism industry from a single-source ‘ticket economy’ to a comprehensive industrial economy [26]; detailed implementation measures are shown in Table 4.

Improving the comprehensive supporting service system to strengthen the foundation for cultural and tourism transformation: Prioritising the optimisation of the municipal tourism transport network and the improvement of basic facilities within scenic areas, whilst cultivating specialised talent through university-industry collaboration to comprehensively enhance the quality of tourism services. Detailed construction content is shown in Table 4.

Strengthen the marketing and promotion of cultural and tourism brands to enhance the city’s competitiveness in this sector: Conduct multi-dimensional marketing campaigns utilising digital new media and distinctive festive events; integrate the city’s overall cultural and tourism IP with the brands of core scenic areas; and expand the regional influence of the cultural and tourism sector. Detailed promotion strategies are outlined in Table 4.

3.2.2 Policy dimensions: external support for implementation methods

Optimising the supply of region-wide tourism products to address the challenges of isolated development: By integrating high-quality cultural and tourism resources across the city and establishing channels for coordinated development among scenic areas, distinctive themed tourism routes will be created to build a

region-wide, interconnected tourism product system Detailed optimisation plans are provided in Table 4.

Improve institutional mechanisms for cultural and tourism development to stimulate the vitality of market-oriented transformation: Establish a unified municipal-level coordination mechanism for cultural and tourism affairs, introduce social capital to participate in the construction and operation of cultural and tourism projects, and refine the policy support system for the cultural and tourism industry . Detailed institutional development measures are presented in Table 4.

4. Conclusions

Research Summary: This study takes Zaozhuang, a resource-depleted city, as its subject and conducts a systematic analysis centred on tourism-driven urban transformation. The research reviews the current state of Zaozhuang’s cultural and tourism industry development, accurately identifying three core bottlenecks: a monotonous business model reliant on ticket revenue; inadequate supporting services and talent systems; and insufficient integration of cultural and tourism resources coupled with weak regional coordination. Combining the needs of urban transformation with the trends in all-for-one tourism, the study clarifies the positioning of Zaozhuang’s cultural and tourism development. It proposes optimisation strategies across four dimensions-industrial upgrading, supporting services, brand marketing, and all-for-one coordination-thereby establishing a cultural and tourism development pathway suited to Zaozhuang’s urban transformation.

Theoretical Contributions: This study possesses significant theoretical and practical value. Theoretically, by focusing on resource-depleted cities possessing a combination of canal, revolutionary heritage, industrial and ecological resources, this paper refines the research context for tourism-driven transformation, thereby addressing the lack of detail in existing studies

on the cultural and tourism transformation of similar cities. Practice demonstrates that the key to tourism-led transformation in such cities lies in breaking free from path dependence on industrial and mining sectors, deepening the integration of culture and tourism by leveraging diverse local resources, and resolving transformation challenges through business model innovation and comprehensive market-oriented development. The research findings can serve as a reference for the cultural and tourism-driven transformation of similar resource-depleted cities across China.

Limitations and Future Directions: This study has certain limitations. The research data is primarily based on secondary sources such as government statistical bulletins and official documents, lacking primary survey data such as visitor satisfaction; simultaneously, the optimisation strategies proposed in this paper are based solely on theoretical analysis and have not undergone empirical testing. In the future, primary market data could be supplemented through questionnaire surveys, and the effects of policy implementation could be simulated using system dynamics models to further refine cultural and tourism transformation development plans, thereby enhancing the scientific rigour and practical applicability of the research.

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