

# STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE MANAGEMENT OF MT. QINGCHENG

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*Received: 12-07-2024*

*Revised: 26-09-2024*

*Accepted: 26-09-2024*

## ABSTRACT

Mount Qingcheng (MT. QINGCHENG) is a prominent cultural heritage site in Sichuan Province, China, notable for its contribution to the evolution of Taoism. As a UNESCO World Heritage site, it confronts the combined problem of regulating visitor influx and protecting its cultural and ecological integrity. This study seeks to examine the historical importance of Mt. Qingcheng and the contemporary sustainable practices implemented in its administration. It seeks to identify and enhance sustainable practices to better leverage the site's cultural and natural attributes. Employing a qualitative research approach, the study utilized a combination of documentary analysis, observations, structured interviews, and focus group discussions. Participants ranged from academics to local community leaders, providing a diverse perspective on the sustainability practices at the site. The findings highlight Mt. Qingcheng's pivotal role in Taoism and its recognition as a global cultural heritage landmark. However, there are significant opportunities to enhance sustainability efforts, with potential to more fully integrate cultural elements into the site's management practices to improve its appeal and impact. The study underscores the untapped potential for integrating sustainability with cultural heritage management at Mt. Qingcheng. By enhancing sustainable practices, the site can better preserve its cultural significance while adapting to modern tourism demands, thereby ensuring its viability and integrity for future generations.

**Keywords:** Cultural Heritage, Destination Management, Mt. Qingcheng, Sustainability

## INTRODUCTION

Sustainability is a topic of paramount concern in modern society. The surge in global tourism over the past few decades has raised critical questions about its impact on sustainability and cultural heritage preservation. As the tourism industry continues to expand, it brings into focus the imperative of integrating sustainability into its core practices to ensure the protection of valuable cultural and natural resources (Chiu 2021). This growth has benefited local communities but has also precipitated a host of challenges, particularly in sustainable cultural heritage preservation (Haibo et al. 2020; Wijijayanti et al. 2020). The influx of tourists to sites like Mt. Qingcheng has raised awareness of the balance between exploiting these attractions for economic gain and safeguarding their historical and cultural integrity (Waldman 2020; Yuan and Sun 2014). Furthermore, the industry's growing interest in sustainability underscores a pressing need to harmonize economic objectives with environmental stewardship - a complex undertaking that demands astute managerial strategies (Zhang et al. 2017). Mt. Qingcheng

provides a compelling study of how cultural preservation and sustainable development can be integrated.

The transition of natural landscapes into cultural heritage sites, as witnessed with Mt. Qingcheng, is not merely a matter of designation but involves intricate planning, substantial infrastructure development, and collaborative efforts among various stakeholders, including governmental bodies, local communities, and the tourism sector itself. This complex process demands a reevaluation of traditional approaches to heritage management, advocating for strategies that prioritize the long-term preservation of cultural and natural resources while facilitating responsible tourism and community engagement. This study delves into the comprehensive spectrum of tourism management at Mt. Qingcheng, scrutinizing strategies and practices that could efficiently navigate the prevailing challenges. The intent is to furnish insights that not only direct the future trajectory of Mt. Qingcheng as a cultural heritage tourism destination but also offer instructive lessons for similar endeavors globally.

This investigation uncovers a

significant research gap concerning the systematic integration of sustainability into the management of cultural heritage sites like Mt. Qingcheng. Despite its status and the acknowledgment of its cultural and environmental significance, there exists a critical need for a more structured approach to documenting and analyzing the efficacy of sustainability practices in place. Moreover, the research emphasizes the challenges in aligning these practices with the preservation of tangible and intangible cultural elements while simultaneously catering to growing tourist demands. This dual focus presents a complex problem where the potential for cultural dilution or ecological degradation must be carefully managed through innovative, evidence-based management strategies. Thus, the primary research problem centers on developing a comprehensive understanding of how sustainable practices can be effectively integrated into heritage management to ensure that cultural significance, ecological integrity, and economic viability are harmonized to support long-term sustainability at Mt. Qingcheng. By doing so, this investigation aims to establish a foundational framework that

can inform and adapt cultural heritage tourism development strategies across diverse geographic contexts, thereby contributing to the formulation of a holistic heritage tourism management paradigm.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study is designed with two primary objectives:

1. To investigate the historical evolution and significance of Qingcheng Mountain.
2. To analyze the strategies and initiatives undertaken to develop Qingcheng Mountain as a cultural heritage tourism attraction.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainability awareness within the management of cultural heritage sites necessitates an integrative approach that harmonizes natural, cultural, and economic resource management. This alignment is not only pivotal for ensuring environmental stewardship but also for securing economic viability and fostering social equity (Ahi and Searcy, 2015). The triple bottom line (TBL) framework emerges as a critical tool in this context, facilitating a comprehensive evaluation

of environmental, economic, and social outcomes (McElroy & Van Engelen, 2012; Morali & Searcy, 2013). Such an approach is indispensable for cultural heritage sites, where the objective extends beyond merely attracting tourists to preserving the site's ecological integrity, bolstering local economies, and reinforcing the social fabric of the host communities. The complexities in the definition and application of sustainability, particularly when adopting the TBL sustainability approach with its myriad interacting factors, underscore the challenges faced in heritage management (Singh et al., 2012).

The inherent multidimensionality of sustainability introduces significant hurdles in developing suitable measures to monitor sustainability performance within the context of cultural heritage management (Bodini, 2012). While several theoretical and practical approaches have been proposed to address these challenges, there remains a recognized need for further research, especially in devising performance measures that encapsulate the TBL's comprehensive scope (Alhaddi, 2015). Given oft-conflicting objectives embedded within the TBL approach, an integrative sustainability

framework is necessary (Loviscek, 2020).

Quantitative models have gained prominence for assessing sustainability, categorized into distinct analytical modeling approaches such as life-cycle assessment (LCA) (Nunberg, Sanchez and Eckelman, 2024), analytical hierarchy process (AHP) (Mushtaha et al. 2020), equilibrium models (Zhao et al., 2023), multi-criteria decision making (MCDM) (Nadkarni and Puthuvayi, 2020), input-output analysis (IOA) (Wang, Lu and Hung, 2021), and composite metrics (Selim, Abdel-Fattah & Hegazi, 2021). Specifically, LCA has been recognized as a potent tool for evaluating potential environmental impacts across a site's lifecycle, hence supporting environmental integrity as part of the TBL (Nunberg, Sanchez & Eckelman, 2024). On the other hand, AHP and MCDM offer structured frameworks for analyzing complex, multi-objective decisions, integrating environmental, economic, and, albeit to a lesser extent, social goals within heritage site management (Nesticò & Somma, 2019). Despite advancements, the literature reveals an overemphasis on addressing environmental dimensions (Talan, Tyagi & Surampalli, 2020). This skew highlights a research gap: the

need for more inclusive frameworks that concurrently address all three sustainability dimensions.

### **Sustainable cultural heritage preservation**

In the literature on sustainable cultural heritage preservation, the concept of authenticity is pivotal in evaluating the value of heritage sites. Authenticity is often regarded as a marker of uniqueness or distinctiveness, contributing to the cultural identity of communities (Kim, Whitford & Arcodia, 2021). This notion extends beyond originality to encompass traditions, techniques, and a sense of historical and cultural continuity. However, the definition of authenticity varies among stakeholders (Zhu, Fong & Gan 2023). Traditionally, the authenticity of tangible cultural heritage, such as monuments, has been determined by materiality, design, and location. Yet, the global acknowledgment of intangible values has prompted a shift towards a broader understanding of authenticity, recognizing the importance of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in conveying social value (Li et al., 2022). This perspective necessitates a flexible approach to authenticity that accommodates the dynamic nature of cultural heritage.

Objective authenticity focuses on the genuineness of a tourism resource, distinguishing between original and replicated artifacts (Domínguez-Quintero, González-Rodríguez & Paddison, 2020). This perspective aligns with notions of ‘staged authenticity’, where a curated slice of culture is presented to tourists, often contrasting with the ‘genuine’ culture experienced away from the public eye (Tan et al., 2020). Conversely, constructive authenticity underscores the subjective construction of authenticity by tourists and host communities, highlighting how cultural interpretations evolve in response to contemporary understandings (Zhou et al., 2015). Existential authenticity, meanwhile, values personal identity and experience over tangible attributes of cultural resources, advocating for community-driven cultural expressions and transformations (Steiner & Reisinger, 2006).

Incorporating these varied conceptions of authenticity into the management of cultural heritage sites underlines the complexity of preserving physical and intangible aspects. Sustainable tourism is crucial in this context. This approach advocates for a balance between

community-based and resource-based strategies (Moayerian, McGehee & Stephenson Jr., 2022). Moreover, it recognizes the potential of cultural heritage, including ICH, to foster positive and constructive relationships between preservation efforts and tourism development (Nikbin, 2023). Through this lens, the study explores strategies for leveraging ICH as a sustainable tourism resource.

### Conceptual framework for sustainable cultural heritage tourism

Integrating sustainability into the management and development of cultural heritage sites requires an approach that aligns with principles of environmental responsibility, economic viability, and social equity. The conceptual framework for this study adopts the TBL as its guiding structure. This includes implementing sustainable infrastruc-

ture, conservation practices, and visitor education programs aimed at reducing habitat degradation, pollution, and resource depletion. Economic sustainability is also crucial, focusing on generating revenue through tourism in a way that supports conservation efforts and delivers tangible benefits. Socially, the framework emphasizes preserving cultural authenticity of heritage sites and host communities. It advocates for tourism practices that respect and celebrate local cultures, thereby contributing to the vitality and continuity of these communities. Adaptive management also highlights the need for resilience thinking in heritage site management. Furthermore, the framework acknowledges the complex challenges and opportunities presented by cultural heritage tourism, environmentally, economically, and socio-culturally.

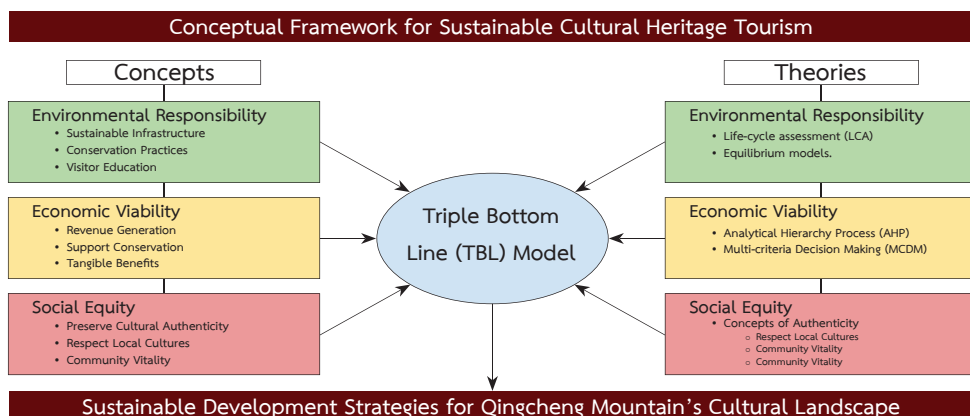


Figure 1. Conceptual framework for the investigation

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Participants were categorized to provide insights across different facets of tourism and cultural heritage. Key informants were representatives from the Dujiangyan Irrigation Project Tourism and Culture Bureau, including its PR ambassador, along with personnel from the ticketing office at Qingcheng Mountain, local entrepreneurs, and individuals involved in non-heritage tourism activities such as the traditional sliding pole operators. Additionally, individuals responsible for leisure services, including managers of prominent local hotels and transportation services, were integrated into the study to offer perspectives on the broader leisure and hospitality landscape of Qingcheng Mountain. Furthermore, the researchers gathered viewpoints from general visitors, including tourists and local businessmen.

Adopting predominantly qualitative research methods, this study explored the historical development of Qingcheng Mountain's culture through an extensive review of literature and field research. The initial phase involved distributing questionnaires and conducting on-site investigations segmented by age groups, complemented by on-site observations

informed by prior research findings. The questionnaire component was divided into unstructured and structured formats. Unstructured questionnaires, designed with open-ended questions, sought to capture the breadth of tourist experiences and perceptions outside the predefined research parameters. Conversely, structured questionnaires focused on specific aspects related to Qingcheng Mountain's historical significance and its impact on the local tourism landscape. In-depth interviews with tourism professionals also provided depth to the study, focusing on Qingcheng Mountain's historical context, resource development, and potential tourism strategies. Observational studies were conducted in two forms: direct observations of tourist behaviors and interactions within the site and non-participatory observations aimed at understanding the operational dynamics of the location.

The analytical phase involved organizing the collected data through various visualization techniques, including charts and tables, to facilitate a clearer understanding of the findings. Descriptive statistical methods were employed to summarize and interpret the data, while

advanced statistical techniques, such as t-tests, analysis of variance, and regression analysis, were used to validate the statistical significance of the findings and support the research conclusions.

Expanding upon concepts discussed in the literature review, the methodology for this investigation was designed based on theoretical insights identified in related studies. The purposive selection of participants ensured a comprehensive understanding of the various dimensions of tourism development at Qingcheng Mountain. This approach facilitated an in-depth exploration of the strategies employed to preserve Qingcheng Mountain's cultural heritage while fostering sustainable tourism growth, thereby attempting to reconcile the often-competing objectives highlighted by the literature. The use of questionnaires, interviews, and on-site observations as primary data collection tools allows for the examination of Qingcheng Mountain's historical context, resource development, and potential tourism strategies from a variety of angles. This qualitative exploration is essential for capturing the dynamic interactions and uncertainties inherent in heritage site

management, which often elude more rigid, quantitative analyses. Moreover, this methodology supported the development of an integrative understanding of how Qingcheng Mountain's unique dynamics influence its sustainability practices.

## RESULTS

### Cultural Heritage and Ecological Preservation at Qingcheng Mountain

Qingcheng Mountain, nestled in the northwest of the Dujiangyan Irrigation Project's grassland, is located merely 10 kilometers from Dujiangyan and 68 km from Chengdu. It boasts an evergreen vista, its lush peaks resembling the grandeur of ancient city walls, hence earning its name Qingcheng, which translates to 'Green City'. It has been recognized as a premier 5A level scenic spot in the country, gaining global acknowledgment with its inclusion in the World Natural Heritage List in 2000, and further celebrated with its designation as part of the Sichuan Giant Panda Sanctuaries in 2006. Key informants stressed the need for strategies adaptable for various ages, suggesting dynamism to ensure historical and educational messages resonate.



Qingcheng Mountain's cultural landscape contributes to the mountain's distinctive religious beliefs and cultural systems. As one of the cradles of Taoism, this sacred mountain traces its spiritual roots back to the era of the First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty. It is imbued with a profound Taoist cultural essence and religious heritage, distinguished by its profound commitment to both internal and external rejuvenation aimed at achieving immortality and liberation. Its pivotal role in the genesis and spread of Taoism underscores the mountain's significance beyond its geographical confines. The integration of cultural narratives and education within tourism activities was highlighted by informants as essential for preserving and disseminating traditional culture, with visits to landmarks like the Shangqing Palace and Laojun Pavilion identified as opportunities to deepen tourists' connections to cultural heritage.

The Taoist tradition is notable for its authenticity and depth. This spiritual lineage dates back to the Han Dynasty, with evidence of monastic life emerging by the Tang Dynasty. The region saw a significant flourish in Taoist practices during

the Song and Yuan dynasties, transforming it into a pivotal centre for the Fax School of Taoism. By the Ming and Qing dynasties, the mountain attracted numerous Taoist figures. Casual informants suggested the incorporation of Qingcheng Mountain's historical narratives and myths into the tourism experience, advocating for cultural performances as a means to animate the mountain's storied past.

Qingcheng Mountain is at the vanguard of China's efforts to cultivate ecological civilization. It has been the site of numerous ecological initiatives aimed at enhancing drainage, conserving water sources, developing ecological corridors, and restoring vegetation, all directed towards preserving its untouched environment. This ecological preservation aligns with broader global efforts towards sustainable development, highlighting the balance of cultural heritage and environmental stewardship. General informants underscored the role of cultural tourism in promoting local culture and stimulating economic growth, calling for research-driven strategies to align with government policies and meet the evolving demands of the tourism market.

In parallel, Qingcheng Mountain has emerged as a hub of cultural innovation and tourism. Initiatives encompass Taoist cultural derivatives, Baiju culture, and local specialties, and offer visitors a distinctive experience. The diversity of tourism activities on Qingcheng Mountain includes mountaineering, hiking, camping, cycling, and sightseeing. Additionally, the mountain is a venue for cultural gatherings, hosting events like the Taoist Culture Festival, music, and literature festivals, thereby attracting a global community of cultural enthusiasts, artists, scholars, and practitioners.

Distinctively marked by its Taoist architecture, such as the Laojun Pavilion, Yuecheng Lake, Tianshi Cave, and Shangqing Palace, Qingcheng Mountain serves as an educational landscape for those keen on exploring Taoist philosophy. This is enriched by contributions to Taoist humanities, including music, Qigong, literature, and arts. Traditional musical instruments produced 'Qingcheng Piano Sounds' and 'Flowing Water', receiving recognition in 2005 for their cultural value. This acknowledgment from the cultural sector underscores the mountain's

ongoing influence in the preservation of Taoist arts, integral components of China's intangible cultural heritage. The mountain is also a host to various Taoist rituals and festivities, providing insights into the spiritual practices of Taoism and a haven for reflection and spiritual growth.

However, Qingcheng Mountain faces challenges in maximizing its tourism potential. Despite attracting a significant number of tourists, especially during peak seasons, there is a noticeable void in offering a holistic tourism experience that encompasses sustainable and participative activities. Presently, the focus is primarily on sightseeing, with scant opportunities for visitors to engage with the mountain's Taoist culture, including its cuisine, healthcare practices, martial arts, and meditative disciplines. Addressing these challenges requires a blend of innovative and engaging strategies. The local government and tourism bodies have begun to fortify infrastructure and diversify marketing initiatives. Yet, integrating Taoist cultural heritage with immersive, participatory tourism activities presents a promising avenue to enhance the mountain's appeal as a cultural and ecological landmark. This strategy not

only seeks to amplify visitor engagement but also aims to fortify Qingcheng Mountain's position within the global narrative of cultural and ecological preservation. Through fostering a deeper appreciation of its Taoist roots and environmental significance, Qingcheng Mountain can offer a more profound, enriching experience to its visitors, thus showcasing the harmonious interplay between human culture and natural splendor.

The ongoing challenge lies in crafting experiences that allow for a meaningful interaction with the mountain's cultural depth and ecological beauty, transcending conventional tourism models. It is consequently imperative to harness innovative methodologies that enable the dissemination and experiential engagement with its Taoist heritage and natural wonders. In doing so, Qingcheng Mountain not only retains its esteemed heritage but also evolves into a dynamic site of cultural exchange. The urgency for such strategic enhancements is underscored by the fluctuating visitor volume and rankings of Qingcheng Mountain among scenic spots in Sichuan Province over the last five years. There has

been a notable decline in tourist volume from 2018 to 2022, despite maintaining a high ranking among Sichuan's scenic spots.

### **Sustainable Development Strategies for Qingcheng Mountain's Cultural Landscape**

In the management of the Qingcheng Mountain cultural landscape, emphasis must be placed on the guiding principles of landscape tourism development. Foremost among these principles is the prioritization of safeguarding. Development initiatives must be balanced with the preservation of natural landscapes, environmental integrity, and cultural heritage. This not only safeguards the authentic natural scenery but also fosters an environment for innovative tourism product and service development. By leveraging the unique characteristics of Qingcheng Mountain, novel tourism offerings can significantly enhance the site's market competitiveness. An example of this is the Qingcheng Mountain slide, a tourist attraction that has garnered considerable interest. However, variability in pricing for different stages of the mountain slide, as well as elevator services, has prompted adverse reactions, impacting overall perception and raising

concerns regarding the management of pricing strategies (Zhang Bo, personal communication, February 10, 2023).

It is essential that the formulation of a comprehensive and reasonable planning strategy is grounded in a strategy that ensures the sustainable growth of tourism. Such planning should adhere to a set of core principles: prioritizing conservation, fostering innovation, engaging in planning, tailoring developments to meet identified needs, and focusing on customer satisfaction (Hu Xiuli, personal communication, February 11, 2023). Adherence to these principles can guide the holistic and sustainable advancement of landscape development and tourism within the region. Consequently, their implementation is projected to facilitate the sustainable development and value augmentation of tourism on Qingcheng Mountain, ensuring the site can continue to offer enriching and environmentally responsible experiences.

Targeted development objectives focus primarily on augmenting tourism

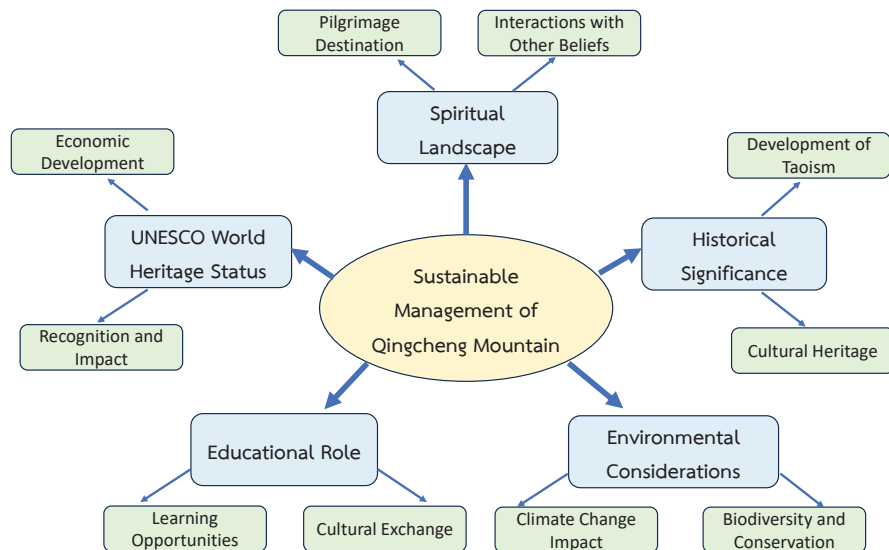
benefits, enhancing the tourist experience, and bolstering the overall economic benefits derived from tourism (Zhang Xin, personal communication, February 10, 2023). This entails the comprehensive development of the Qingcheng Mountain Scenic Area to ameliorate the environment within the area, thereby augmenting visitor satisfaction and loyalty, which in turn promotes tourism and facilitates a people-oriented approach (Li Changqing, personal communication, February 12, 2023). To realize these objectives, several strategic initiatives have been identified. Enhancing Qingcheng Mountain's brand to attract more visitors, developing personalized cultural tourism products and services to boost customer satisfaction and loyalty, and expanding the tourism market by integrating Qingcheng Mountain with adjacent cities and cultural attractions are pivotal. A feasibility analysis (Table 1) shows the economic, social, and environmental considerations underlying the development strategies for Qingcheng Mountain.

**Table 1.** Feasibility Analysis of Development of Mt. Qingcheng

Aspect	Considerations
Economic Feasibility	Return on investment from infrastructure upgrades, scenic area enhancements, and marketing; Market size and growth potential; Operating costs including labor, maintenance, and protection.
Social Feasibility	Enhancements to the social environment through ecological construction and governance; Preservation and promotion of Taoist heritage; Benefits to public interest including economic development, employment, and income enhancement.
Environmental Feasibility	Commitment to ecological protection and governance; Focus on ecotourism and cultural tourism development.

**Conclusion**

This study reveals the role of Mt. Qingcheng in the development of Taoism and its contribution to the cultural and spiritual landscape of the region. Qingcheng Mountain’s designation as a UNESCO World Heritage site underlines its influence on the region’s tourism and economic development. The research findings demonstrate the importance of integrating cultural insights and historical depth, which not only enrich the visitor experience but also foster appreciation for local traditions. Such integration promotes regional development, positioning Qingcheng Mountain as an example of how cultural landmarks can drive the expansion of the tourism industry. Furthermore, infrastructure enhancements, stakeholder collaboration, and sustainability measures are key developmental drivers. By advocating for a symbiotic relationship between cultural preservation and tourism, this research makes a significant contribution to the establishment of a sustainable landscape tourism mechanism in Sichuan. It highlights the potential of cultural heritage as a cornerstone for local economic advancement and tourism innovation.



**Figure 2** Mindmap to demonstrate the sustainable management of Qingcheng Mountain

## DISCUSSION

The findings highlight the need to adopt an integrative framework that harmonizes environmental, economic, and social sustainability, as delineated by Ahi and Searcy (2015), and the crucial role of the triple bottom line approach in ensuring a holistic evaluation of outcomes (McElroy & Van Engelen, 2012; Morali & Searcy, 2013). This thematic exploration emphasizes how Qingcheng Mountain's development strategies embody principles of sustainability while navigating complexities in heritage management (Singh et al., 2012).

The role of Qingcheng Mountain as a UNESCO World Heritage site shows how

strategic focus on utilizing cultural assets to drive tourism development can ensure balance, a move that echoes Ahi and Searcy's (2015) call for integrative strategies that simultaneously cater to environmental, economic, and social dimensions. The innovative creation of tourism products also serves as a practical manifestation of theories surrounding sustainable cultural heritage preservation. These stress the importance of maintaining authenticity and adopting a flexible interpretation of cultural heritage (Kim, Whitford & Arcodia, 2021). Qingcheng Mountain exemplifies how cultural heritage sites can engage in sustainable

practices that enhance appeal and contribute to socio-economic uplifting of surrounding communities. This aligns with the triple bottom line framework, advocating for a comprehensive evaluation of heritage management strategies through the lenses of environmental stewardship, economic viability, and social equity (McElroy and Van Engelen, 2012; Morali & Searcy, 2013). Qingcheng Mountain shows the potential of cultural heritage sites to serve as custodians of history and culture, thereby contributing to the broader goals of cultural preservation and sustainable development (Talan, Tyagi & Surampalli, 2020; Loviscek, 2020).

The use of multimedia or cultural dissemination at Qingcheng Mountain illustrates the acknowledgment of technology's role in augmenting visitor engagement, a recurrent theme in heritage discourse (Nunberg, Sanchez & Eckelman, 2024). This approach mirrors calls to embrace innovative technological solutions to communicate cultural narratives more effectively (Mushtaha et al., 2020). By integrating multimedia technologies, Qingcheng Mountain's management is able to present its Taoist heritage and values in a manner that is

engaging and informative. This not only aligns with the sustainability objective of preserving the site's ecological and cultural integrity but also exemplifies the practical application of theoretical models that advocate for the harmonization of environmental, economic, and social sustainability (Ahi & Searcy, 2015; Morali & Searcy, 2013). Furthermore, this integration of technology enhances the site's visibility and attractiveness as a sustainable tourism destination, showing how such strategies can contribute to competitive advantage (Talan, Tyagi & Surampalli, 2020; Zhao et al., 2023).

Effective market supervision and the critical implementation of multilingual signage to welcome international visitors resonates with discussions advocating for vigilant market oversight and the improvement of accessibility and inclusivity (Domínguez-Quintero, González-Rodríguez & Paddison, 2020; Talan, Tyagi & Surampalli, 2020). Such inclusive practices are instrumental in promoting the sustainable evolution of Qingcheng Mountain and are pivotal in constructing a socio-economic framework that favors the preservation of cultural heritage and accommodates diverse

linguistic and cultural needs. In doing so, Qingcheng Mountain can enhance its global appeal and align with the triple bottom line approach in seeking to harmonize economic viability with environmental stewardship and social equity (McElroy & Van Engelen, 2012; Morali & Searcy, 2013). This approach underlines the importance of considering the visitor experience from a holistic perspective, recognizing that the sustainable management of cultural heritage sites requires a careful balancing of conservation efforts with the demands and expectations of a global audience (Kim, Whitford & Arcodia, 2021; Zhou et al., 2015).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Feedback from respondents during this investigation has led to actionable recommendations, emphasizing the critical need for a holistic approach to the sustainable management of Qingcheng Mountain as a cultural heritage site. The integration of age-specific programming aims to widen the site's demographic reach, ensuring that the intrinsic value and lessons of local culture permeate societal

strata. By fostering an early connection to cultural heritage, the initiative seeks to cultivate future custodians of Qingcheng Mountain's legacy. The enhancement of experiences through the deliberate incorporation of cultural education and emotional engagement with the site's landmarks also offers a blueprint for enriching visitor interactions.

Simultaneously, the strategic promotion of Qingcheng Mountain's historical narratives and myths, alongside the adoption of cultural performances, presents a pathway to cultural tourism development. This approach not only revitalizes the local cultural landscape but also underscores the potential of cultural heritage as a lever for socio-economic development. Informants advocate for the alignment of research outcomes with policy-making, underscoring the necessity of adaptive strategies that respond to the dynamic tourism market. Ultimately, these recommendations envision Qingcheng Mountain as a paragon of sustainable cultural tourism, where the preservation of cultural heritage and the promotion of economic vitality coalesce.



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