

The Revitalization of Chengdu's Cultural Heritage from the Cultural Creativity Perspective: Value for Engagement and Barriers

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Abstract

Since the 21st century, cultural creativity has become a prominent way to revitalize cultural heritage such as historical buildings and historical landscapes. However, many current practices are dominated by the government, and the factors affecting individual willingness to participate are still unclear. In this study, 28 respondents (16 men, 12 women) were recruited in Chengdu, China, through semi-structured interviews, and the interview data were qualitatively evaluated using thematic analysis. The results show that the influencing factors mainly include six themes: “inclusion of creative environment”, “economic investment risk”, “potential development space”, “information access channels”, “uncertainty of the creative product quality”, and “creation level.” The findings will have important implications for the protection and development of current and future cultural heritage and strengthen the construction of creative cities in specific cultural heritage contexts.

Keywords

Cultural Diversity, Historic Urban Landscape, Cultural Sustainable Development, Cultural Heritage, Cultural Creativity

1. Introduction

Cultural creativity can be described as cultural reconstruction and innovation that integrates multiculturalism while arranging related disciplines and using different carriers (Sasaki, 2010). With the continuous development of globalization and informatization, cultural creativity, as an emerging and effective strategy

with both cultural and economic value, redefines the urban development model that gradually transforms into a knowledge-based economy (Sasaki, 2013; Giglitto et al., 2022). Cultural heritage is the legacy of accumulated human culture in different historical periods. In the contemporary context, cultural heritage has multi-level expressiveness in terms of form, content, and cultural spiritual structure (Echavarria et al., 2022). In recent years, with the deepening of people's understanding regarding the value of cultural heritage, revitalizing cultural heritage through cultural creativity has proven to be economically beneficial, while providing strong support for the protection and management of cultural heritage. Therefore, promoting creative interaction with cultural heritage has become a hot topic.

In May 1997, British Prime Minister Tony Blair first put forward the concept of "creative industry" at a conference and promoted the national brand value of the United Kingdom. Since then, some countries and regions have proposed creative-based economic development models (Gouvea et al., 2021). In 2011, the "Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape" issued by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) stated that "The historic urban landscape approach considers cultural diversity and creativity as key assets for human, social and economic development, and ensure that contemporary interventions are harmoniously integrated with heritage" (UNESCO, 2011). It is worth mentioning that the integration of cultural creativity and cultural heritage has not only brought new vitality to ancient culture, but also provided a solid cultural foundation for creative development (Hani et al., 2012). An increasing number of studies show that revitalizing cultural heritage through cultural creativity is not only conducive to maintaining cultural diversity, but also promotes the urban economy as well as cultural sustainable development (Nowicka, 2022; Silva et al., 2022; Giliberto & Labadi, 2022).

The Forbidden City in Beijing is one of the largest and best-preserved examples of ancient wooden structure architecture in the world. It is also the most distinctive and valuable Chinese cultural heritage. Recently, the Forbidden City has continued to develop through advanced technology and cross-border cooperation, leading to the creation of hot topics on social media via cultural creativity, in terms of cultural economic income, reaching a stupendous 1.5 billion Chinese Yuan in 2017 (China Daily, 2019). Presently, the Forbidden City integrates academics and entertainment, which allows not only for the retention of its cultural value, but also for the increase of its commercial value. In Japan, as a derivative image of Kumamoto's local culture, the Kumamon bear has also gained people's love and social attention and created cultural values (Freedman & Slade, 2017). Moreover, in addition to relying on traditional cultural relics and natural landscapes, the intriguing human stories behind cultural heritage also inspire creativity. For instance, art creations featuring White Snake and Green Snake, derived from its myths and legends, not only reflect the creator's personal values, but also expand people's perceptual understanding and cultural recognition of

West Lake. As mentioned in [Zhang and Taylor's \(2020\)](#) research, the attraction of West Lake's cultural heritage is related to individual and collective memory, and people's participation seems to be an eager attempt to find and express a connection with local cultural values.

Chengdu is the birthplace of the ancient Shu and is among the government's first list of famous historical and cultural cities. For more than 2000 years, Chengdu has accumulated voluminous historical and cultural resources. However, unfortunately, many of these resources have been severely damaged multiple times by wars, social revolution, and urbanization. Some have been continuously repaired and passed down to the present day, while others have been ruined or destroyed, and exist now only in our imaginations. When looking at the history of Chinese regime changes, marked by the birth of each new dynasty, the conservation or destruction of the buildings and landscapes that belonged to the previous dynasty has become the focus of frequent discussion. Regarding their destruction, what typically occurred is that, after deliberation by the new dynasty, the cultural heritage pieces would generally be considered symbols of "backwardness" and "failure" and would be burned down. Simultaneously, due to the highly developed urbanization process, some cultural heritage is sometimes considered an obstacle to social and economic development. In order to meet their transportation, residence, and business needs, some citizens have also contributed to the further destruction of certain cultural heritage artifacts ([Cheng et al., 2017](#)). Hence, the current cultural heritage in Chengdu is unevenly distributed, poor in continuity, and low in social attention. However, a study pointed out that a city's cultural connotations should be comprehensive reflections of multiple factors, including history, society, and education but that the importance of historical accumulation cannot, nonetheless, be ignored ([Chengdu Government, 2009](#)). Besides, the current revitalization of cultural heritage via cultural creativity is primarily led by the government. Thus, the research and practice regarding individuals are still limited, and the specific influencing factors are still unclear, which leads to the results of such creative products often being more template-based, lacking innovation and breakthroughs. More research is needed to expand the research in this area.

In summary, cultural creativity is a sustainable development strategy to maintain the cultural value of cultural heritage and realize economic value. Through semi-structured interviews ([Horton et al., 2004](#)), taking Chengdu as the study area, this study aims to identify the factors influencing people's willingness to participate in revitalizing cultural heritage through cultural creativity. In this way, through the understanding gained, this study may help to expand the recognition of cultural heritage and the value of discovery, utilization, conservation, and dissemination. In addition, recommendations on how to revitalize the cultural heritage of other similar cities are also provided. In terms of research structure, this study gradually introduced the research site, the scientificity of the research method, and the rationality of the sample, and presented results by categorizing

specific themes.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Study Background

Chengdu is located in the hinterland of the Chengdu Plains, southwest China, and is known as the “land of plenty.” In 2021, the “Conservation Planning for the History City of Chengdu (2019-2035)” (hereafter the “Plan”) was issued by the Chengdu Municipal Bureau of Planning and Natural Resources (Chengdu Municipal Bureau of Planning and Natural Resources, n.d.a). The purpose of the Plan is to preserve urban memory, highlight urban characteristics, promote high-quality development, and elevate urban influence. As such, the Plan has become an important piece of background material for our interview respondents, which helped them understand existing cultural heritage resources and representative cultural elements in Chengdu.

2.2. Methodology and Data Analysis

Thematic analysis is considered an effective method for analyzing qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Luo et al., 2021). The thematic analysis comprises the following steps: 1) information familiarization, 2) initial codes generation, 3) theme collection, 4) theme review, 5) theme decision, and 6) report generation (Figure 1) (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

2.3. Interviewees

In total, 28 respondents (16 men and 12 women, four with high school qualifications, fourteen undergraduates, nine with master’s degrees, and one with a PhD)

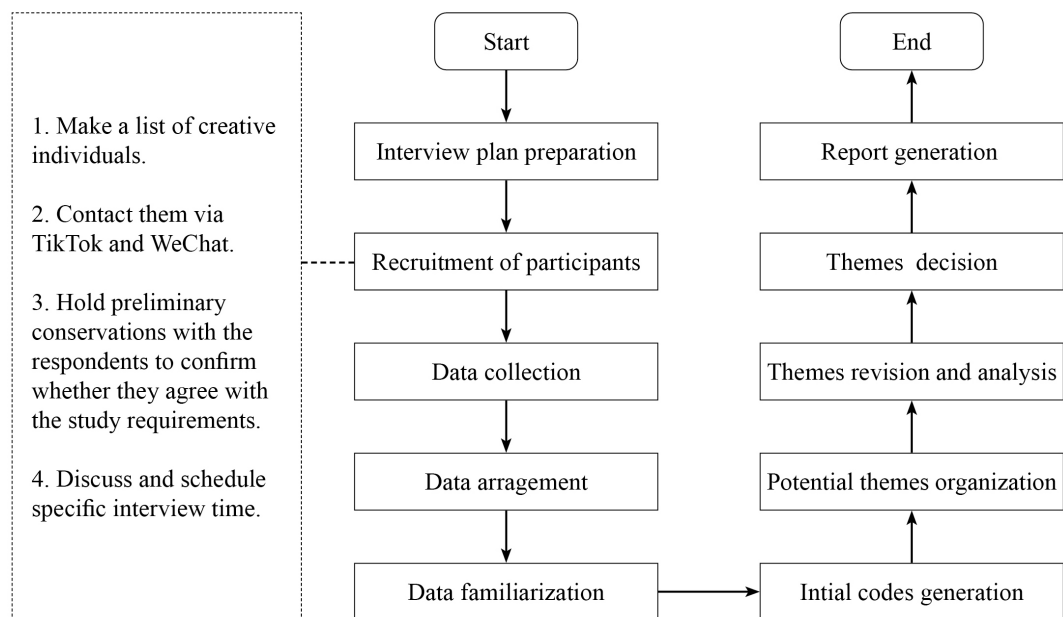


Figure 1. Research framework.

were recruited for this study in 2022. Participants' ages ranged from 20 to 46 years, with a mean age of 31.3 years (SD = 7.5). We proactively contacted volunteers through the social media apps WeChat and TikTok, and provided them with information on the purpose of the research, research outline, and privacy protection. Simultaneously, we encouraged them to refer eligible friends to take the interview. To be eligible, respondents must have engaged in or studied cultural or creative work or other related work and have lived or worked in Chengdu for more than one year. Furthermore, we considered participants with different educational backgrounds and occupations to understand how different individuals think about the value of cultural heritage at varying levels.

The flexibility inherent in the semi-structured interview allows researchers to go far beyond the limitations of statistical analysis and offers respondents the opportunity to freely interpret ideas and highlight their specific areas of interest and expertise; moreover, it enables interviewees to question certain responses in depth, and, specifically, to probe and address contradictions (Horton et al., 2004).

Robinson (2014) pointed out that in interview studies with specific objectives, researchers should seek a sample size small enough to allow for more targeted information to be obtained. In most studies, a sample size of 7 - 28 is generally acceptable (Zhuang et al., 2019; Kanakis et al., 2019; Sakurai et al., 2011). According to Gill (2014) and Van Manen (1989), the purpose of interviews is to concentrate on the differences in peoples' experiences and provide fundamental knowledge for research through multiple perspectives. Most of our respondents, 18 persons, work in mainstream creative culture fields. They are significant forces in cultural production and export, have mastered a variety of skills, held multiple cultural worker identities, and have had rich practical experience in cross-cultural and cross-professional cooperation. Therefore, we would argue that the current sample size (n = 28) is sufficient to support the final findings.

2.4. Materials

During the interview period, the government had strengthened pandemic prevention and control measures for COVID-19 and called on citizens to assemble as little as possible to minimize the risk of infection. Since remote interviewing is a safe, efficient, and cost-effective method that can be conducted from anywhere, the semi-structured telephone interview method was selected for use in this study. To protect their privacy, respondents were interviewed anonymously and asked for basic information, i.e. age, gender, occupation, and educational background (Table 1). An interview is more than simply an interesting conversation, and the process requires careful pre-planning (Bolderston, 2012). Before conducting the formal interviews, we set a number of key questions and anticipated various reactions to them, to help ensure that the interviews stayed on course thematically and proceeded smoothly (Table 2). Audio recordings of the telephone interviews were preserved with the consent of the interviewees. Interviews

Table 1. Information on anonymous participants.

No.	Age	Gender	Occupation	Education Background
1	29	male	photographer	Bachelor's
2	26	female	urban planner	Master's
3	27	male	landscape architect	Master's
4	32	male	cultural planner	Bachelor's
5	26	male	student (landscape architecture)	Ph.D. Candidate
6	21	female	student (theater & television literature)	Bachelor's
7	26	female	landscape architect	Master's
8	25	male	dancer	Bachelor's
9	37	male	blogger	Bachelor's
10	35	male	we-media maker	Bachelor's
11	34	female	motion graphics designer	Master's
12	26	male	actor	Bachelor's
13	22	male	film and television producer	Bachelor's
14	23	female	student (game plan and design)	Bachelor's
15	20	male	student (director)	High school
16	28	female	design manager	Master's
17	25	female	artist	Bachelor's
18	26	female	marketing editor	Master's
19	42	male	advertising planner	Bachelor's
20	45	female	cultural manager	High school
21	41	male	game designer	Bachelor's
22	33	female	visual designer	Master's
23	37	male	scriptwriter	Master's
24	46	male	product designer	Bachelor's
25	23	female	design assistant	High school
26	37	male	handicraftsman	High school
27	42	female	blogger	Bachelor's
28	30	male	advertising designer	Master's

were conducted in Chinese and translated into English by the researchers. Twenty-eight interviews were conducted, one with each participant and the average duration of each interview was approximately 35 minutes. The time for conducting the interview was proposed by the interviewee and jointly decided upon by the interviewer and interviewee after consultation. Generally, the interviews

Table 2. Interview questions.

No.	Question
1	What do you know about cultural heritages in Chengdu?
2	Are you willing to participate in cultural heritage revitalization through cultural creativity in Chengdu? If so, why?
3	Could you share your practice experience regarding this type of project?
4	How should these problems or barriers be addressed?
5	In terms of cultural creativity, what is your suggestion for Chengdu to develop cultural heritage revitalization in the future?

were scheduled for afternoons and evenings.

3. Results

The respondents affirmed that cultural creativity is significant for the conservation and development of cultural heritage, and they expressed different degrees of willingness to participate. According to our analysis results, the negative factors that mainly affect people's participation can be divided into six themes: inclusion of creative environment, economic investment risk, potential development space, information access channels, and uncertainty of creative product quality and creation level.

3.1. Inclusion of Creative Environment

If there is ambiguity or error in the content of the products of cultural creativity, it usually causes social controversy, and some negative comments may even be maliciously amplified. Many respondents (36%) said that social participation levels have been relatively high over the years and that the public has a very critical attitude. Stepping into cultural heritage minefields is neither allowed nor forgiven. The interviewee who was studying game planning and design stated that,

This is the bottom line in the creation of cultural and historical related game themes. For instance, we create a building or landscape based on cultural heritage. If its architectural form, surrounding environment, and humanistic atmosphere are different from the world in the perceptions of the public, the product will be criticized, and this can, at worst, cause a fatal blow to the entire derivative industry (Woman, 23, student).

Generally, games can be used as an introduction to understand cultural heritage, which could arouse people's interest concerning history and culture, thereby broadening their desire to acquire knowledge, carry out more in-depth cultural edification, and perhaps expand their understanding of cultural heritage conservation. However, another gaming peer thinks it is not easy to obtain people's understanding, stating that,

Our games based on cultural heritage and related traditional culture (based

on Temple of Marquis and Jinsha Site) were labeled as cultural gimmicks last year, which are considered to be sabotage, misleading, and hype. Finally, [we] received many malicious complaints (Man, 41, game designer).

There is still controversy about the restoration of actual documented history. China's cultural heritage has undergone changes and restorations over many dynasties, and the cultural characteristics of many historical periods have been integrated into the protection and development of such heritage. It is normal that it is different from modern aesthetic standards in form and connotation. One respondent explained that,

In the Disney movie *Mulan*, released in 2020, in the clip of *Mulan* getting married, her makeup was restored one-to-one with reference to ancient documents, but because the audience doesn't understand the historical background of the story [...], it has been criticized by netizens on social media platforms. Frankly speaking, considering the market response to *Mulan*, it is difficult to guarantee that most people will even recognize culturally creative products that relate to cultural heritage (Man, 37, blogger).

Moreover, other respondents (18%) told us that they usually forego cultural heritage with strong regional characteristics to avoid offending the public. They suggested that a relatively safe growth environment for a culturally creative industry could be created within some of the cultural heritage sites that are highly recognized but unclear in terms of cultural image. However, this approach weakens the identifiability of cultural heritage and cannot significantly help to promote the conservation and development of cultural heritage. Rather, it can be of personal benefit to the creator.

3.2. Economic Investment Risk

Some respondents (21%) stated that when cultural creativity is linked to cultural heritage, it could ultimately be difficult to be fair in terms of financial compensation. As one interviewee explained,

We cannot ensure that the data will be completely consistent with the final planning vision and customer needs, and it might be overturned after multiple meetings... Especially in the mode of fast-paced life, once we lose the best opportunity, even if we finally create it, it may be difficult to gain the attention again. For this reason, the trial-and-error cost of this type of cultural creativity will be higher, such as time, money, and manpower (Woman, 28, design manager).

Due to the commercial nature of the current popular fast-food culture, the main consideration involved in content development is attracting followers, and few people are willing to confess to being interested in a less popular cultural heritage. A respondent with 20 million followers on TikTok shared his experience with us, stating that,

Initially, I tried to integrate the Shaocheng Historical Conservation Areas into the production of creative video, but there was no obvious hot spot. Afterwards, we chose to compromise with the market, creating dramatic conflicts in a funny way by combining social hot topic and animation. Compared with the time-consuming and expensive creation of making cultural heritage material, through our compromises, we have achieved big benefits at a small cost (Male, 37, blogger). These respondents also reluctantly acknowledged that despite taking advantage of the dividends of the fast-food culture, defective commercial leadership will only lower the public's taste for cultural appreciation, which is not conducive to the blooming of culture. One of the media professionals expressed concern, stating that, if things go on like this, there may be serious obstacles to the value dissemination of cultural heritage in the future (Man, 42, advertising planner).

3.3. Potential Development Space

In response to questions about revitalizing cultural heritage through cultural creativity in Chengdu, some interviewees (71%) stated that they found some of the cultural heritage content too weak and scattered to support sustainable development. This is mainly attributable to the destruction of the historical texture by wars, social revolutions, and urbanization. One of the interviewees explained this, saying,

Although Chengdu has a lot of cultural heritages, such as temple landscapes, historic conservation areas, memorial parks, and so on, it is quite fragmented in spatial distribution and has poor continuity, resulting in available value and impact range being limited. Hence, it may only arouse extensive discussion for a while, and it is difficult to make new breakthroughs (Woman, 23, student).

3.4. Information Access Channels

According to Kibirige and Depalo, the Internet has opened up the information superhighway, and advanced information technology has greatly increased our efficiency in assessing and processing information (Kibirige & DePalo, 2000; Acar Sesen & Ince, 2010). However, based on the respondent's answers (57%), the acquisition of some important background materials still relies heavily on the support of specialized institutions such as museums and archives. For instance, a photographer we interviewed stated, "I participated in the filming of a documentary on cultural heritage. However, when we got to the local museum and tried to obtain more reliable information about historical sites, some staff members did not cooperate and even drove us away" (Man, 29, photographer).

Several respondents (79%) had the same experience. The department of current cultural heritage management still does not respect and maintain the connection and emotion between people and cultural heritage. Cultural heritage protection and its value remain, to some extent, the preserve of governments

and their associated officials. A literary creator revealed that,

In 2017, the project namely Tea Horse Road, a kind of cultural route, was terminated due to the incompleteness of the materials and in order to avoid bad dissemination of the authenticity of the cultural heritage. But later, participating in relevant projects involving government departments, we have easier access to key information quickly (Man, 37, scriptwriter).

Furthermore, for cultural heritage revitalization and cultural creativity, innovation is a necessary condition. One respondent stated that, “males’ understanding of cultural heritage, and such the creations are essentially recreations of works that have already been presented” (Woman, 21, student).

3.5. Uncertainty of Creative Product Quality

Helping people realize that cultural heritage can achieve specific results or benefits is not the ultimate goal of cultural creativity. Rather, providing broader and stronger public support and richer material guarantees for cultural heritage conservation is the goal. However, many respondents (68%) indicated that cultural heritage is complex and irreproducible, and rash intervention may have a negative impact on it.

In the absence of fair and professional review pathways for cultural export, the value of cultural heritage may be abused by the market’s blindness, thereby affecting the important image and status of cultural heritage in people’s psychology. For instance, a woman believed that,

At present, the cultural creativity development of cultural heritage focuses on evaluating economic benefits and industrial value, and there is a phenomenon of malicious hype attracting attention and shoddy development. This is because cultural heritage is a shared resource, and everyone can express their understanding of it in their respective fields, and this understanding will have different effects due to different personal abilities and creative purposes. It may be positive or negative (Woman, 46, product designer).

3.6. Creation Level

In a broader discussion, some respondents (29%) indicated that different regions and countries could cause inequities in cultural display due to different economic capabilities. The cultural value of all cultural heritage sites is equal and cannot be judged by the length of history and the scale of the space, and all that needs to be conserved. Nevertheless, many respondents pointed out that the economic value of cultural creativity can be quantified. A media person stated that,

It depends on the level of local economic development and the level of professional technology. In underdeveloped areas, there are world-famous cultural heritage sites, but the city is trapped in insufficient basic conditions,

and the attraction of talent is not strong. Cultural creativity may not be able to significantly promote the conservation and development of cultural heritage subjects, and may even become a drag, influencing people's impression and value judgment of cultural heritage, when compared to others. Therefore, in terms of the basic conditions of creation, Chengdu may need to be further strengthened (Man, 30, advertising designer).

4. Discussion and Implication

Revitalizing cultural heritage from the cultural creativity perspective not only plays a specific role in promoting contemporary cultural heritage protection and urban sustainable development, but also contributes to the realization of personal value.

In this study, we conducted semi-structured interviews with people to identify the factors for the low willingness to participate in cultural heritage revitalization through cultural creativity. The inclusion of creative environments has unexpectedly emerged as a key factor. In this era of high levels of social public opinion, such developments make it easier for people to present their creations (Van der Hoeven, 2019). Of course, this also positions them to receive more direct criticism and praise from the public, and they may even be subjected to cyber violence (Cheung, 2009). In fact, this is a very normal phenomenon during cultural exchanges. As some interviewees stated, being misunderstood is the fate of those who express themselves. It is worth noting that this may be related to the government and cultural heritage management agencies not opening important cultural heritage materials to the public.

The interview data show that cultural creativity expression that lacks key information will lead to a negative impact on the authenticity of cultural heritage, and the repetitive creation in content and form cannot generate effective value. Cultural heritage directly reflects the important process of the development of human society, with specific historical, social, technological, economic, and aesthetic values, and it is indispensable material evidence for social development (Cerisola, 2019). This means that all kinds of behaviors related to it will attract a high level of social attention. To defend the status and significance of cultural heritage, the public will inevitably criticize the cultural creativity products and hold those that have existing problems to higher standards. As much as possible, creators should try to express their thinking on cultural heritage through cultural creativity as learners. This involves equal communication rather than overbearing authority. Historical and cultural managers and organizations need to actively respond to people's demands for legitimate access to heritage materials through formal procedures, encouraging all people to participate in the protection and development of cultural heritage, and making it a truly public undertaking that society cares about and supports.

For historic cities, lack of potential development space may be another important factor. According to literature analysis, this is because of frequent social

turmoil and weak awareness of protection, resulting in the destruction and disappearance of a large number of cultural heritages in Chengdu. With the deepening of cultural heritage protection awareness (Table 3), an increasing number of cultural heritage artifacts are being gradually incorporated into the protection system and are receiving attention. The release of the Plan at the end of 2021 was based on the characteristics of resource space, and a new conservation system

Table 3. The development of cultural heritage conservation's conception (1964-2011).

Year	File	Conception cognition
1964	Venice Charter	“the concept of a historic monument embraces not only the single architectural work but also the urban or rural setting in which is found the evidence of a particular civilization, a significant development or a historic event. This applies not only to great works of art but also to more modest works of the past which have acquired cultural significance with the passing of time” (ICOMOS, 1964)
1972	Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage	“ended one-sided conservation understanding and the promulgation of this convention encouraged to pay more attention to the mixed heritage compatible with culture and nature” (UNESCO, 1972)
1994	Expert Meeting on the Global Strategy and Thematic Studies for a Representative World Heritage List	“the need for a transition from static conservation to dynamic and living conservation” (UNESCO, 1994)
2005	Xi'an Declaration	“emphasized the tangible and intangible cultural heritage” (ICOMOS, 2005)
2008	Chapter on Cultural Routes	“the direction of conservation of cultural heritage groups such as large-scale and linear cultural heritage formed by the correlation between history and nature, such as cultural routes and serial heritage” (ICOMOS, 2008)
2011	Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape	“this wider context includes notably the site's topography, geomorphology, hydrology and natural features, its built environment, both historic and contemporary, its infrastructures above and below ground, its open spaces and gardens, its land use patterns and spatial organization, perceptions and visual relationships, as well as all other elements of the urban structure. It also includes social and cultural practices and values, economic processes and the intangible dimensions of heritage as related to diversity and identity” (UNESCO, 2011)

will be constructed by adopting the method of “layering + grading + classifying” (Chengdu Municipal Bureau of Planning and Natural Resources, n.d.b). However, an interpretation of the Plan shows that, “Connecting various historical and cultural resources forms an organically connected spatial network. It focuses on displaying the features of the ancient Shu culture, the culture of the city’s streets and carrier of the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage” (Chengdu Municipal Bureau of Planning and Natural Resources, n.d.b). The purpose of collecting historical and cultural resources of the same category is to display cultural heritage in multiple directions through the narrative relationship formed by expanding the scale of space; however, it did not produce any new discoveries or in-depth cultural content. Therefore, due to the evaluation of the development prospects, revitalizing cultural heritage via cultural creativity in Chengdu has not been supported by many people at present.

Notably, at the creation level, cultural creativity seems to require more attention. The analysis of the results shows that the regional economy, technology and talents will generate cultural creativity of different value levels. Since cultural creativity may cause an unequal competitive relationship, its commercial nature is expected to have a substantial impact on cultural heritage. As such, a great way to promote cross-border and cross-cultural cooperation and exchanges is through technical tools and creative ideas. In addition, paying attention to the construction of a city’s infrastructure, the upgrading of its economic structure, the enhancement of its attractiveness to talent, and the accumulation of talent reserves are all equally important. With the improvement of the quality of the cultural creativity, the city will be further driven to develop in a comprehensive direction, improve the protection and development system for cultural heritage, and form a virtuous economic cycle.

Although most of the existing studies have covered how cultural heritage can achieve historical protection and sustainable cultural and economic development through cultural creativity, the studies and practices regarding individual participation are still limited, and the reasons affecting willingness also need to be revealed and analyzed further. However, their findings seem consistent with our study. For instance, He and Zhang (2022) believed that stimulating creativity and strengthening policy and technical support from the inside out could promote the effective development and protection of cultural heritage. Nevertheless, no explanation is provided for the bottom-up practice and its challenges, resulting in a lack of obvious innovation in current works. Liang et al. (2022) claimed that the possibility of adopting bottom-up suggestions and cohesion with the residents’ interests are the most important factors in promoting the integrated management of cultural heritage. The authors attribute this to the fact that collaboration between different educational and professional backgrounds can promote a wider understanding of cultural heritage, but no direct evidence exists to analyze further the cohesion between cultural heritage values, personal interests and cultural heritage conservation, as well as the reasons for weakening people’s wil-

lingness to participate. To some extent, this study further supplements and expands on this.

Thus, we suggest that governments as well as historical and cultural organizations focus more attention on cultural heritage, follow UNESCO and ICOMOS guidelines, and protect cultural heritage, with the government in the lead role, while providing a good cultural creativity environment for the public. In the current situation, it is necessary to strengthen the connection between cultural heritage and the public, promote the cultural diversity and sustainable development of the cultural economy through creativity derived from different cognitive perspectives, and realize the unity of both the economic and cultural value of cultural heritage.

Regarding future cultural heritage protection and cultural economy development, most respondents said that cultural heritage had been passed down to the present day, proving that it conforms to the laws of historical development and is a cultural mainstream. At the same time, a 2015 study by Solík and Klementis demonstrates that the mainstream is a space that allows for the creation of new ideas, concepts, and stories. In general, productions based on nostalgic elements increase people's sense of comfort, thereby providing them with new experiences while simultaneously ensuring social stability and persistence (Solík & Klementis, 2015). As creators, they should deeply dig and understand the content of cultural heritage, analyze their characteristic value, and minimize the risk of economic investment and damage to cultural heritage. Furthermore, there is also a need for a "leader" (including government, organizations and individuals) to transform the culture as a whole in terms of aesthetics and trend orientation, in order to attract more people to interact with cultural heritage, so that people are reminded of the importance and contemporary value of cultural heritage. Currently, some urban decision-makers still do not regard cultural heritage as a contemporary cultural resource and development power, but rather, a burden that affects urban construction and economic development. Governments should notice these indications, highlight the value and significance of cultural heritage, and create motives for all to engage in cultural heritage conservation.

Our study has some limitations. Although the 28 participants included people with different educational backgrounds and cultural work identities, the research results can reflect the main factors affecting their willingness to participate to a certain extent. However, a lot of quantitative analysis will be needed regarding this issue to obtain a more comprehensive understanding in the future, especially to determine the influencing factors that most people believe. Besides, cultural intellectual property has currently become a hot topic, and cultural creativity is the core support of cultural intellectual property. Some studies show that developing cultural intellectual property allows not only for the retention of its cultural value but also for the increase of its commercial value. However, the research in this field is still limited. In the future, the relationship between cultural intellectual property, cultural heritage, and cultural creativity should be further

discussed.

5. Conclusion

Through semi-structured interviews, this study reveals what affects the public's willingness to participate in the revitalization of cultural heritage through cultural creativity. According to the experience, understanding, and willingness of 28 respondents, the significance of cultural creativity in the conservation and development of cultural heritage is summarized. The main findings are as follows. First, cultural creativity expression cannot be separated from the authenticity of cultural heritage. Second, cultural content is not only the core pillar of cultural heritage, but also the cornerstone of its innovation. Only with a certain breadth and depth of knowledge can more possibilities of cultural heritage be explored. Third, sometimes commercial development of cultural creativity will hinder the sustainable development of cultural heritage. Fourth, the development gap within cultural creativity will cause prejudice among people regarding the subject of cultural heritage. Fifth, cultural creativity development needs to combine the perspectives of multi-stakeholders and employ cross-border cooperation to provide sustainable development conditions for the protection, awareness, and value promotion of cultural heritage. Sixth, only by determining the core value of cultural heritage and the relevant elements that constitute this value can we ensure more effective protection of cultural heritage.

Understanding these findings is clearly necessary for future management of cultural heritage, diversified expression of cultural creativity, and urban sustainability. Simultaneously, the results of the study can also provide some recommendations and references for city managers to address similar topics in the future. Lastly, the study will contribute to our understanding of cultural heritage such as guiding people to reasonably protect and utilize historical and cultural resources and will, hopefully, lead to better emotional experience and spiritual life for people in the future by integrating cultural heritage into cultural creativity.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

Ethical review and approval were waived for this study as no individual identification information was recorded, and all participants were anonymous.

Informed Consent Statement

Oral consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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