

A study and analysis of a large collection of non-heritage items along the Yellow River based on the Shandong Lot

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ABSTRACT

As an important platform for displaying and inheriting intangible cultural heritage and special products in the Yellow River basin, the Yellow River Bazaar is of great significance in promoting the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation and local cultural and economic development. This paper focuses on the Yellow River Intangible Cultural Heritage Bazaar along the Shandong section, and through in-depth analyses of its current market situation, reveals the characteristics and values in terms of target groups, product types, supply demand and social impact. At the same time, this paper also points out the problems faced by Shandong Yellow River Bazaar in the process of development, such as product homogenisation, lack of supervision, and in-depth excavation of cultural connotations, etc., and puts forward improvement strategies. It is expected that these studies and researches can provide useful references and lessons for the sustainable development of Shandong Yellow River Bazaar, help it to better inherit the Yellow River culture and promote the prosperity of local economy and society in the context of the new era.

KEYWORDS

Yellow river bazaar; Shandong; Cultural heritage; Market analysis; Improvement strategies

1 Introduction

As an important province in the lower reaches of the Yellow River, Shandong has always regarded the protection, inheritance and promotion of the Yellow River culture as its own historical mission, and has actively responded to the national strategy of ecological protection and high-quality development of the Yellow River basin. The Yellow River Bazaar, as an important carrier of the Yellow River culture in folklore, is gradually becoming a unique cultural landscape in Qilu. Shandong integrates the characteristic cultural and tourism resources of the nine cities along the Yellow River, providing rich materials and solid support for the development of the Yellow River Bazaar, and this integration practice fits the new trend of synergistic development of cultural carrier construction and tourism development in the context of the deep integration of culture and tourism^[1]. However, there are still many problems in the process of development of the Yellow River Bazaar, such as insufficient publicity, inadequate supervision mechanism, relatively backward technical means, and unbalanced distribution of resources, etc. These problems not only constrain the development of the Yellow River Bazaar, but also limit the development of the Yellow River Bazaar. These problems not only restrict the further development of the Yellow River Bazaar, but also affect its potential in cultural heritage and economic development. The purpose of this paper is to analyse the market status quo and problems of the Yellow River Bazaar in Shandong, and put forward corresponding innovative suggestions, in order to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for the sustainable development of the Yellow River Bazaar, so that it can better shoulder the important task of inheriting the Yellow River culture and promoting the economic and social development of the local community in the context of the new era.

2 Market analyses

2.1 Market overview

The Yellow River, with its unique geographical location, has nurtured a rich cultural heritage for the coastal areas. Relying on this unique geographical advantage, Shandong Yellow River Bazaar covers Jinan, Zibo, Binzhou, Weifang, Tai'an and other areas as shown in Figure 1. These areas are not only the important birthplace of the Yellow River culture, but also the rich area of traditional skills and folk customs. The Yellow River Bazaar in nine cities along the Yellow River is like a bright pearl, linking up the magnificent necklace of Yellow River culture and becoming a window to show the Yellow River civilisation. Taking Binzhou as an example, as an important part of the Yellow River Delta, it has rich natural resources and deep cultural heritage, and its Yellow River Bazaar has naturally become an important platform for local cultural dissemination and economic exchanges, which provides a typical case of community practice for the construction of non-heritage workshops under the perspective of rural revitalisation^[2].



Figure 1 Map of the nine cities through which the yellow river flows in Shandong province

The target group of the Yellow River Bazaar covers non-genetic inheritors, local residents, government agencies and enterprises, cultural enthusiasts, collectors, housewives and the elderly, as well as many tourists. As the core carrier of culture, the non-heritage bearers, with reverence and love for traditional culture, and by virtue of their exquisite skills and profound cultural understanding, spread the essence of traditional culture in the region to a wider area through the platform of the Bazaar, so that more people can appreciate the unique charm of non-heritage culture. Figure 2 shows how different target groups work together to promote and preserve the culture of the Yellow River Bazaar.

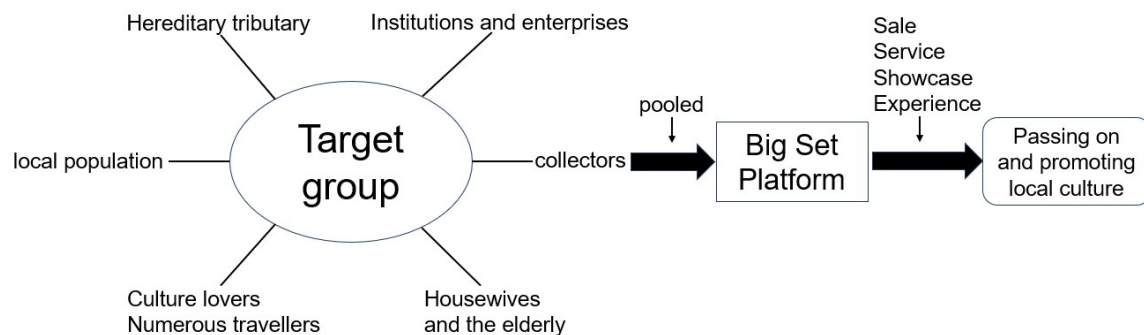


Figure 2 Target audience promoting and passing on the yellow river bazaar

Local residents, on the other hand, have innate deep feelings for the region's non-heritage culture, and by purchasing and displaying non-heritage products, they not only enrich their daily lives, but also pass on and promote the local culture in a subtle way. Government agencies and enterprises and institutions for cultural exchanges, image shaping and business exchanges and other needs, often buy non-heritage products with local characteristics as gifts, this kind of practical and cultural dissemination value of the gifts, while strengthening external ties, but also cleverly local culture to the national and even the world stage. As an important promoter of cultural inheritance, cultural enthusiasts have high cultural literacy and aesthetic ability, and hold a positive and supportive attitude towards the inheritance and development of traditional culture. They travelled to the Yellow River Bazaar, explored those cultural treasures carved by time, and injected vitality into the continuation of non-heritage culture through collection, research and dissemination. Collector groups are fond of non-heritage artworks, they are not only willing to invest money and energy in collecting, but also expect to show their personal taste and cultural cultivation through the act of collecting. Housewives and the elderly in their leisure time, often immersed in the appreciation of non-heritage artworks, these artworks contain rich cultural connotations and historical value, adding a few points of interest to their lives. Table 1 shows the different needs and behaviours of different target groups towards the Yellow River Bazaar.

Table 1 The needs and performance of different target groups

Main part	Demand	Act
local residents	Appreciate culture Strengthen relationships	Purchase display products, enrich your life and promote culture
Institutions and enterprises	Cultural exchange Image building	Selection of gifts with local characteristics and cultural transmission value
Culture lovers	Cultural literacy Aesthetic ability	Collection, research and dissemination of cultural treasures of historical value
Collectors	Personal taste Cultural cultivation	Invested a lot of money and spent a lot of energy collecting non-heritage artefacts
Housewives and the elderly	Adding elegance Enjoy life	Taste and experience non-heritage artefacts through immersion from time to time

In addition, Shandong, as a major tourist province, attracts a large number of tourists every year. With its unique cultural charm, the Yellow River Bazaar has become a popular place for tourists to experience local culture and buy special souvenirs. The bazaar brings together a wide range of traditional handicrafts, a wide range of local specialties, exciting folk cultural products, skilled traditional cultural artworks and creative derivatives of intangible cultural heritage. With its unique artistic style and exquisite handcraft skills, Weifang's ash-painted New Year's Paintings became the star products at the Yellow River Bazaar, attracting the attention of many tourists. These products not only show the beauty of traditional craftsmanship in Shandong's Yellow River region, but also become cultural messengers for tourists to bring back to their hometowns, sowing the seeds of the Yellow River culture to more distant lands.

According to Liu Wei (2025), the Binzhou Yellow River Bazaar attracted about 500,000 tourists in 2024, of which 65 per cent came from within Shandong province and 35 per cent from outside the province. The per capita consumption of the tourists in the bazaar is about 200 RMB, of which 40% are handicrafts, 35% are local specialties and 25% are food, as shown in Table 2. These data show that the Yellow River Bazaar not only has high popularity and attraction in the local area, but also attracts a large number of tourists from outside the province, and becomes an important window to show the Yellow River culture in Shandong ^[3].

Table 2 Distribution of visitors to yellow river bazaar, binzhou, 2024

Tourist Sources	Number of tourists as a percentage of	Per capita consumption (yuan)	Distribution of consumption (per cent)
In Shandong Province	65%	200	Handicrafts 40 per cent, local specialties 35 per cent, gastronomy 25 per cent
Outside Shandong Province	35%	200	Handicrafts 40 per cent, local specialties 35 per cent, gastronomy 25 per cent

2.2 Supply analysis

The Yellow River Bazaar shows the richness and diversity of non-heritage resources on the supply side. The Yellow River culture has a long history, and there are many non-legacy projects along the coast, covering folk art, handicrafts, folk culture and other fields. As one of the representatives of local opera in Shandong, Lv Opera in Binzhou has become an important part of the Yellow River culture with its unique artistic style and performance form. It not only carries the emotional memory of the local people, but also is an important embodiment of regional cultural characteristics. As listed in Table 3, the non-heritage projects represented by the nine cities along the Yellow River in Shandong Province are as follows: These non-heritage projects are not only the inheritance of the essence of traditional skills, but also a vivid display of regional customs, providing the market with colourful choices. In terms of the innovation of NH products, the inheritors have actively adapted to the changes of the times and, on the basis of preserving traditional craftsmanship, integrated modern aesthetics and market demand to design innovative products, which echoes the current general trend of exploring digitalisation and innovative inheritance in the field of NH ^[4]. For example, the traditional art of paper-cutting has now been given a new lease of life and vitality by the ingenious hands of the inheritors with the incorporation of modern elements. Exquisite paper-cutting works not only appear in the decoration of traditional festivals, but also into the modern home decoration, fashion design and other fields, attracting the attention of more young consumers. This kind of innovation not only makes non-heritage products more competitive in the market, but also injects fresh blood into the inheritance of traditional culture.

Table 3 Representative intangible cultural heritage along the yellow river as it flows through nine cities in shandong province

City	Representative Intangible Cultural Heritage Programme
Heze	Juye brushwork peonies, Caozhou noodles, Caozhou carved porcelain, Lu brocade
Jining	Qufu Nishan Inkstone, Regular Wood Carving
Taian	Taishan shadow puppets, Feicheng mahogany carving, Nie's bronze casting techniques
Liaocheng	Dongchang Gourd Carving, Linqing Tribute Brick, Chiping Paper Cutting, Woodblock Printing, Langzhuang Noodle Moulding
Jinan	Laiwu tin carving, Lu embroidery, Zhangqiu iron pot, Drum rice-planting song, Point silver pot, Clay rabbit king
Dezhou	Qihe Black Pottery, Gold Silk Coloured Paste, Woodcut Knife and Brush Painting and Calligraphy
Zibo	Ceramic Firing Technique, Glaze Firing Technique, Zhoucun Bakery, Zhoucun Silk Weaving and Dyeing, Lu Pai Inner Painting
Binzhou	Folk Paper Cutting, Boxing Straw Weaving, Velvet Embroidery Fan, Zhanhua Fish Drum Opera
Dongying	Zhonghua Qi Pen, Huanghekou Straw Weaving, Huanghekou Tie Carving, Le'an Reed Weaving

In terms of supply structure, the Yellow River Bazaar realises the organic combination of physical supply and experiential supply. Exquisite handicrafts, speciality food and other physical products meet the material needs of consumers; while non-heritage performances, interactive experience and other experiential supply bring spiritual enjoyment and cultural nourishment to consumers. In the bazaar, visitors can taste the traditional food, enjoy the wonderful performance of folk artists, and also participate in the production process of handicrafts. This diversified supply structure greatly enriches the level of consumer experience and meets the diversified needs of different consumer groups. At the same time, the bazaar focuses on the hierarchy of supply, providing different levels of non-heritage products for different consumer groups, making the market full of vigour and vitality. From ordinary handicrafts for the general public to fine arts for the high-end market, the Yellow River Bazaar provides a wealth of choices for all kinds of consumers, so that everyone can find their favourite cultural products here.

According to Cheng Xiaoying's (2024) study, there is a rich variety of non-heritage products in the Yellow River Bazaar, and the 2024 statistics show that handicrafts account for 35 per cent, local specialties for 25 per cent, folklore cultural products for 20 per cent, traditional cultural artwork for 15 per cent, and derivatives of non-heritage products for 5 per cent as shown in Figure 3. These data show that the Yellow River Bazaar has a high degree of diversity and hierarchy in the supply of products, and is able to meet the needs of different consumers ^[5].

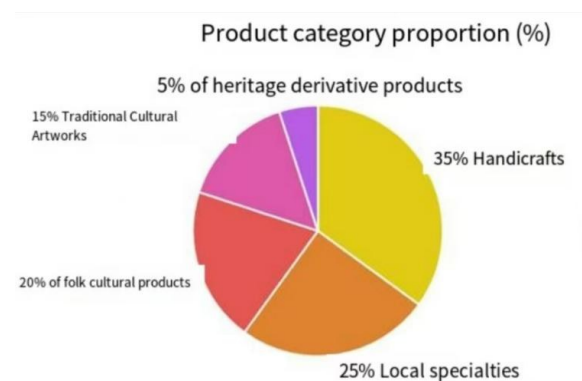


Figure 3 Distribution of product category share of yellow river bazaar in 2024

2.3 Needs analysis

With the development of society and economy, people's knowledge and appreciation of traditional culture have been improving, and the pursuit of quality life has become more and more intense. Consumers are no longer satisfied with uniform products, but are eager to get unique cultural experience and spiritual enjoyment in the process of consumption. The Yellow River Bazaar satisfies people's love for traditional culture and pursuit of quality life with rich non-heritage products and experience activities. Consumers can choose handicrafts with deep cultural heritage and feel the unique charm of traditional skills in the bazaar; At the same time, they can also deeply understand the stories and spiritual connotations behind the non-heritage culture by participating in various experiential activities. This mode of combining material consumption and cultural experience has won wide market recognition for the Yellow River Bazaar, fully proving the core value of regional characteristic culture in satisfying consumers' deep experience needs and shaping unique tourism attraction ^[6].

According to Li et al. (2024), a consumer satisfaction survey of the Yellow River Bazaar showed that 85 per cent of consumers were satisfied with the non-heritage products at the bazaar, and 75 per cent believed that participation in the experiential activities enriched their cultural knowledge as shown in Figure 4. These data indicate that the Yellow River Bazaar has significant advantages in meeting the material and spiritual needs of consumers ^[7].



Figure 4 Consumer satisfaction survey for yellow river strike, 2024

2.4 Market environment

In terms of policy environment, the government has issued a series of policies to support the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, which provides a solid policy guarantee for the development of the Yellow River Bazaar. The implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Intangible Cultural Heritage has laid a legal foundation for the protection and inheritance of the Yellow River intangible cultural heritage projects and ensured the legitimate rights and interests of the intangible cultural heritage projects. In addition, the government actively promotes the in-depth integration of culture and tourism, and encourages the development of cultural tourism activities with local characteristics, which is highly consistent with the exploration of the path of cultural tourism transformation and upgrading by local governments in the context of high-quality development of the Yellow River Basin ^[8]. At the local level, the government has provided venue support, capital subsidies, tax incentives and other measures to help organise the Yellow River Bazaar. For example, local governments have attracted more tourists and participants by improving infrastructure and enhancing publicity and promotion. Meanwhile, the promotion of innovation and digitalisation policies has provided opportunities for the digital transformation of the Yellow River Bazaar. The government encourages the use of digital means to protect and pass on non-legacy culture, establish non-legacy databases, develop digital content, etc., which provides technical support for the innovative development of the Yellow River Bazaar.

3 The existing shortfall of the Shandong yellow river bazaar

Shandong Yellow River Bazaar product homogeneity, like a nightmare that is difficult to escape, tightly wound around each participant. On the stalls, the types of goods seem to be the same, the quality is difficult to distinguish between them, and the design is also the same. Agricultural products such as apples and pears are difficult to distinguish in terms of variety and quality, and consumers are often confused when faced with a wide range of products that are all the same. Handicrafts, although exquisite craftsmanship, but due to a lack of innovation and difficult to stand out. In Binzhou's Yellow River Bazaar, those traditional hand-woven products, although carrying the essence of the Yellow River culture, but because of the conservative and single design, it is difficult to meet the modern consumers on the pursuit of personalisation and fashion sense. The homogenisation of services has become another bottleneck restricting the development of the big market. Service content of a single and obsolete, like a pool of stagnant water, not the slightest ripple. Between the stalls, shopping services become the absolute protagonist, cultural explanation and interactive experience and other in-depth services are rare. The solidification of the service mode, like an invisible shackle, binding the exchange between businesses and consumers. Oral introduction and product display, these traditional service means in the Yellow River Bazaar was repeatedly used, but due to the lack of innovation and difficult to stimulate consumer interest. The uneven quality of service is like a reef lurking in all aspects of the bazaar. In order to cut costs in the fierce competition, merchants often sacrifice the quality of service, resulting in shoddy packaging, lack of after-sales service, the consumer shopping experience greatly reduced. The homogenisation of the industry is like an impenetrable net covering the whole Yellow River Market. The business model is highly similar to the merchants, a single channel of purchase, sales methods are old, as mechanical reproduction, making the whole industry in the innovation and differentiation of the road is difficult to walk. The convergence of market strategies has intensified competition in the industry. Merchants in the promotion of products, advertising words and means of publicity are the same. In the Yellow River Bazaar in Jinan, the stalls selling handicrafts, although each with its own characteristics, are no different in market strategies, all taking price competition as a means, ignoring brand building and cultural connotation of excavation, the convergence of such strategies precisely reflects the lack of awareness of differentiated positioning and shaping of the city's brand image, which is common in the current NGT ^[9]. Figure 5 summarises the main shortcomings of the existing Shandong Yellow River Bazaar.

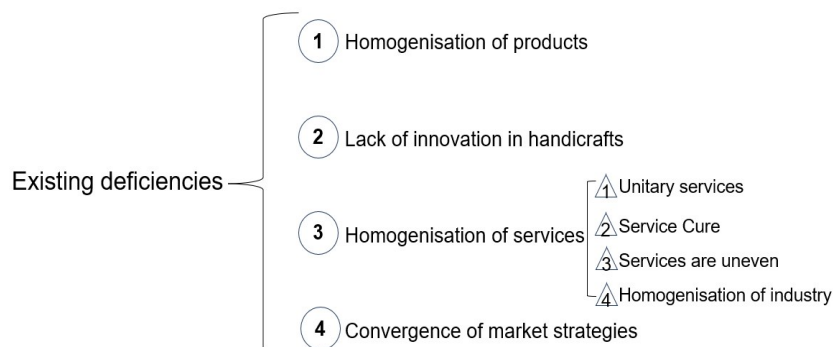


Figure 5 Main shortcomings of the existing Shandong yellow river bazaar

4 Strategies for improvement

In the digital wave sweeping the world today, Shandong Yellow River Bazaar needs to take advantage of the Internet to start an all-round journey of change. This requires us to deeply apply digital technology to build a more effective non-heritage protection and dissemination system^[10]. The shortcomings of online publicity and promotion are just like a gold mine to be tapped, which contains huge potential. The Yellow River Bazaar should broaden the online publicity map, no longer limited to the official website and a few social media platforms, but should extend its tentacles to short video platforms such as Jittery, Shutterbug, and so on, to weave an all-around publicity network with diversified channels. On these platforms, in a way that is popular with the younger generation, the traditional customs and handicrafts of the Yellow River Bazaar are displayed, so that the light of the non-heritage culture can penetrate the screen and reach the hearts of young people. At the same time, the online publicity content needs to keep pace with the times and maintain timeliness and interactivity with a high-speed updating rhythm. The official website should be the hub of real-time information, and social media should attract netizens' active participation through interactive activities, such as online lucky draws and topic discussions. In terms of visual presentation, the Yellow River Bazaar should use innovation as the pen and attraction as the ink to carefully sculpt the online promotional materials. Poster design should integrate tradition and modernity, actively explore the application of cutting-edge technology such as generative art in the design of non-heritage patterns^[11], and attract the audience's attention with unique creativity and strong visual impact; video materials should be filmed and edited with high quality to tell the moving story behind the Yellow River Bazaar, so that the audience can deeply understand the charm of the Yellow River culture in the double enjoyment of vision and emotion.

5 Conclusions

Shandong Yellow River Bazaar, as an important carrier of Yellow River culture, is like a bridge connecting history and modernity, carrying the important task of inheriting the millennium civilisation and showing the charm of the Yellow River. It deeply integrates the traditional village bazaar with cultural experience, e-commerce live broadcast and other innovative elements, which not only becomes an event of cultural inheritance, but also greatly promotes the consumption and economic development, proving the effective path of activation and utilisation of cultural resources under the concept of new public service^[12]. Through four seasons of thematic activities, the Yellow River Bazaar enriches the spiritual and cultural life of the masses, broadens the sales channels of agricultural products, and promotes farmers' income. At the same time, it also builds a bridge between urban and rural cultural exchanges, promotes the development of rural tourism, and becomes an important force for rural revitalisation. In the future, Shandong Yellow River Bazaar is expected to continue to innovate and upgrade, create a more influential brand, and inject new vitality into the ecological protection and high-quality development of the Yellow River Basin. Therefore, we strongly promote the development of non-legacy products in the Yellow River Bazaar. In the wave of commercialisation and marketisation, the protection and inheritance of non-fraditional culture can be realised, and it also brings far-reaching and positive impacts on many fields such as social economy, culture and education.

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