Research Paper

Research on the cultural immersion experience tourism mode of Pingyao Ancient City from the perspective of cultural renaissance

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Abstract

Pingyao Ancient City is known as a "living heritage" as a model of Human-Habitat World Heritage due to its physical and spatial attributes and strong cultural attributes. With the vigorous development of modern tourism and business, the cultural connotation of the ancient city is weakening. Therefore, it is imperative to revive the ancient city's culture. Nowadays, the research o often focuses on the protection of physical space. However, little attention has been paid to the cultural revival and intangible culture of Pingyao Ancient City. This paper uses Pingyao's material space as a carrier to construct the cultural traction mechanism of residents and tourists, trace the culture behind, extract the "living points" such as escort agency and draft bank, and innovatively put forward the "The Five Senses" immersion cultural tourism experience model. And use this model as a prototype to try to build the "subpattern" of the digital Pingyao online tour. The objective is to realize the living protection and cultural renaissance of the ancient city. From the perspective of cultural revival, this paper provides a practical path for the "live protection" of the ancient city through the study of the immersive cultural experience tourism model of the Pingyao Ancient City.

Keywords

"living points", cultural revival, "five senses", Pingyao Ancient City

1. Introduction

Pingyao Ancient City is one of the only two ancient counties in China that has successfully declared the entire ancient city as a world cultural heritage. Pingyao Ancient City is located on the east end extension of the Silk Road formed by the north-south commercial road from Guangzhou to Qaktu and the Han and Tang Dynasties. Because of its superior geographical conditions, commerce has been initially developed since the mid-Ming Dynasty. In the third year of Daoguang in the Qing Dynasty, China's first draft bank "Rishengchang" was established in the ancient city of Pingyao. At this time, Pingyao had become China's largest financial center at that time. Shanxi merchants and local residents began to build ideal urban residences. Under the pursuit and integration of Shanxi merchants culture and traditional Chinese Confucianism, the ancient city already had a basic scale by the end of the Qing Dynasty. The current ancient city of Pingyao Ancient City has almost completely preserved the ancient city layout, courtyard space structure, construction technology and construction materials of the Ming and Qing Dynasties. It also presents to a great extent the outstanding commercial forms, political systems, aesthetic tastes, folk

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culture and culture of the Han people at that time. The traditional way of life and production (UNESCO,2015).

In recent years, with the rapid development of tourism, the extensive tourism development has caused a negative impact on the Pingyao Ancient City. First of all, foreign culture has a severe impact on the physical space environment and the local culture of the ancient city. Secondly, the blindly pleasing tourist-style tourism development has led to the lack of cultural depth of the residents, which made it difficult for tourists to experience the cultural connotation. Day by day, and the cultural connotation of the ancient city was gradually lost. After the outbreak of COVDI-19 at the beginning of 2020, the fragile Pingyao Ancient City and the unity of industrial development and the shortcomings of the existing protection and development methods have become more obvious. Therefore, the tourism development model of the ancient city of Pingyao urgently needs to be revised, and a cultural rejuvenation is imperative. It is time to explore a new dynamic model for the activation and preservation of Pingyao Ancient City.

2. Theoretical connotation and method of cultural revival planning

The concept of cultural revival first originated in the Renaissance movement in Europe，With the development of urban economy, the urban problems are becoming increasingly serious. To address a series of urban problems, some North American countries for the first time mentioned the concept of cultural revival planning in an urban renewal way(Li, 2008). Later, its British urban planning as a representative, British Deputy Prime Minister Prisketter believes, "Urban rejuvenation is to restore the humanity of the old city with sustainable community culture and forward-looking urban planning". At the same time, integrate various elements of modern life to rebuild the vitality of the urban community. The focus is to maintain and continue the historical context of the city and make develop the city into an 'architectural space with accidents'"(Cheng, 2018). Since the 1990s, the relationship between cultural revival and urban planning has been gradually strengthening under the dual influence of the cognitive development of cultural value and the demand of social value. Cultural Oriented Urban revival has gradually occupied an important position in the process of urban planning. There are three main modes of cultural renaissance used in urban planning. The first one is the cultural planning led by North American countries, which first appeared in the United States as a starting point, and its main point is to make the cultural community the main unitary body and focusing on cultural points and elemental points to propose planning solutions (Willim, 2001). Since then, on this basis, Canada has put forward a systematic cultural planning at the macro, meso and micro levels (Wang, 2014). The second model is the concept of a Creative City (Wu, 2021), which mostly appears in the form of interaction between artists and communities, and utilize culture as the engine of urban economy by encouraging creativity and imagination in public space (Wang,2014). The third model is the UK-led urban regeneration (culturally oriented), exemplified by the Sheffield Urban Cultural Regeneration, taking small-scale construction and renewal as the main idea. In addition, new types of cultural renaissance strategies have emerged as a result of social development (Claydon, 2003), such as the concept of "cultural heritage" proposed in the Pompeii plan - where conservation and restoration is no longer the ultimate goal in itself, but a way to achieve close public access to cultural heritage and appreciation of it(Zhang,2019). The concept of "cultural heritage", as proposed in the Pompeii plan, is no longer an end, but an on going effort to bring the public closer to cultural heritage and appreciate it.

Compared with foreign cultural revival planning, China's exploration of cultural revival planning has matured relatively late, and it is still in the initial stage of exploration. Taking the cultural revival planning from the community perspective, Huang Ling and Zhou Meng proposed the renewal strategy of "cultural repair, community repair"(Huang,2018). Secondly, many domestic cultural renaissance plans are dominated by different cultural types (resource type culture, art type culture, international culture,

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science and technology type culture and Ecological Culture), such as Shanghai Xintiandi revival, and Beijing 798 factory area's City Renaissance, etc., so as to promote the city's revival with regional projects (Qin,2016).

Comparing the development and the practical value of cultural renaissance planning at home and abroad, we find that there are different reference significance in solving China ' s urban problems. For the ancient city of Pingyao, the complex value endowed by heritage brings some planning difficulties. It is more realistic to analyze the ancient city of Pingyao from the perspective of its native community, and it is more appropriate as a starting point. In the later planning, the complex urban systems need better integrating of foreign cultural renaissance planning means in order to implement successfully. Thus, combining the social value, the significance of the times and the practical significance of the development of ancient cities.

3. Analysis on the Current Situation of Tourism Development in Pingyao Ancient City

3.1. Conflict between "human--land"

"Human-land relationship" is the interaction and feedback between human and nature(Wang ,2016). It is often used in planning disciplines to explore changes in human activity and lifestyle, as well as the resources and environment on which they depend for survival (Li, 2016). The relationship between the two always revolves around human's dependence and initiative on "land". Pingyao Ancient City has a history of more than 2,700 years. Before the liberation of China, the integrity of the ancient city has not been destroyed, whether it was during regional conflicts or political turmoil. After the liberation, Pingyao Ancient City has achieved unprecedented development, and at the same time it has also brought about conflicts in the "human-land relationship". The traditional spatial functions in the ancient city have also changed as population in the ancient city continues to grow. Due to the construction restrictions of the ancient city, the population needs of Pingyao cannot be met. The urban space of the new area has expanded and spread. Pingyao Ancient City has shown a spatial development model of "separation between the new and the old". The population in the ancient city moved out of the new city, while the public infrastructure such as medical care, education, and culture in the ancient city also moved out. The supply system of Pingyao Ancient City serving local residents was cut off, which seemed to provide more material space conditions for local tourism development and commerce, but the living space of the aborigines was constantly being squeezed, and the residential function of Pingyao Ancient City gradually weakened. Fragmented "Human-land" affected the continuation of the relationship between the historical context of the original inhabitants of the land no longer live within their own cultural identity, they no longer have an emotional attachment to the land (Qi,2014). Tourism development has brought a huge impact on local culture. "Second-generation residents" mostly believe that economic benefits out weight persecution benefits, and traditional cultural inheritance gaps have begun to appear, eventually leading to the awkward situation of separation of human and land（Li, 2014）. This also indirectly leads to the problem of insufficient cultural endogenous motivation for the development of tourism in the ancient city, and it is difficult to develop high-quality tourism.

3.2. Conflict between "resident--tourist"

One of the values of the Pingyao Ancient City as a model of Human-Habitat World Heritage is that it completely preserves the living place of a certain group of people, and the life of residents is the core element of this type of heritage (Bian,2009). The stakeholders, after discovering that the tourism industry has brought huge dividends to the ancient city, prioritized tourism development. Everything is premised on the needs of tourists, antagonizing the relationship between inhabitant and tourists, resulting in

intensified conflicts (Zhang,2017). " resident -- tourists " conflicts are exposed in many ways: In order to make more space for tourists, most of the infrastructure serving the daily lives of residents moved out of the ancient city. The living conditions in the ancient city declined, which accelerated the loss of indigenous residents；Commercial facilities no longer have the atmosphere of life, and now the commerce in the ancient city is monotonous. The ubiquitous homestays and cookie-cutter souvenir shops have replaced commercial facilities such as barber shops, tofu shops, vegetable markets, repair shops, etc., which were originally full of life in the ancient city. The quality of commercial formats is uneven, and residents' daily lives are no longer convenient；The privacy of residents' lives has been violated, and tourists generally hope to experience the local life state during the tour and experience the local culture in depth. However, in the tourism development of the ancient city, the in-depth cultural tourism needs of tourists were not taken into consideration, which resulted in tourists often breaking into the private areas of residents；Some deviations appear in residents' perceptions and tourist needs. Some residents lose confidence in their own culture, excessively pursue short-term economic returns, and are indifferent to the cultural identity. However, tourists' demand for the ancient city tourism model has long changed from simple sightseeing to in-depth culture experience. The above conflicts severely restricted the healthy and sustainable development of cultural tourism in Pingyao Ancient City.

3.3. Conflict between yield and vulnerability

At the beginning of the 20th century, the ancient city of Pingyao completed a comprehensive industrial transformation. According to the data in the Pingyao Government Work Report in 2020, the ancient city received 17.68 million tourists in 2019, and the total tourism revenue reached 20.97 billion yuan. During the Spring Festival in 2019 alone, the total number of tourists received reached 453,900 and the revenue was 403 million yuan. Tourism has become a pillar industry in Pingyao. At the beginning of 2020, China was affected by the COVDI-19, and the domestic tourism industry was hit to varying degrees. The number of domestic tourists decreased by 3,022 million from the same period last year, down 52.1%, and the revenue from tourism decreased by 61.1% (Ministry,2021). The ancient city of Pingyao was closed on January 23. Cancellation rate was as high as 90%, and more than 80% of hotels and homestays were closed. The interior of the ancient city is completely gone (Fig. 1), and the tourism industry of the Pingyao Ancient City has been strongly affected. This exposes the drawbacks of Pingyao Ancient City's excessive reliance on a single offline tourism industry. The loss of the ancient city is losing its original complexity and habitability, resulting in insufficient resilience and insufficient dynamics. When faced with the impact of external disasters, it is difficult to respond to risks through its own dynamic adjustments.
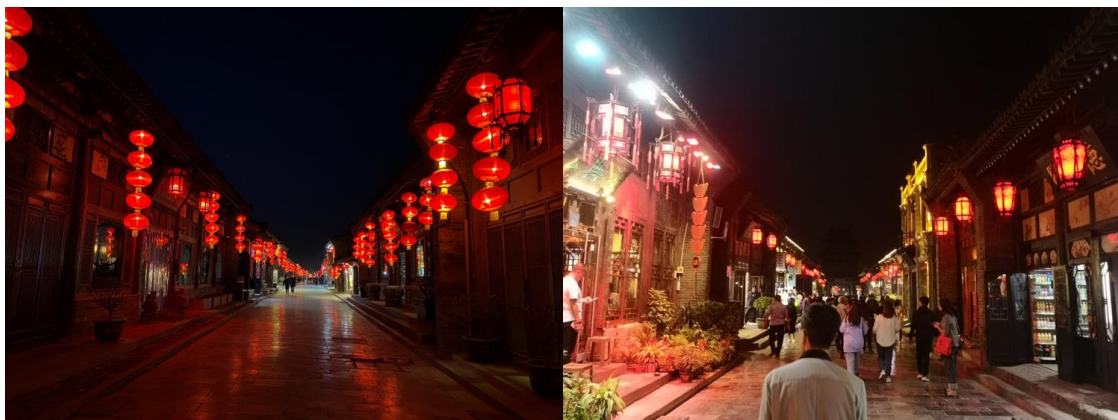

Figure 1. Comparison of streets before and after the outbreak of COVID-19 in Pingyao Ancient. Source: Author.

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3.4. Conflict in the management of Pingyao Ancient City

The Pingyao Ancient City, as a human settlement world heritage, is characterized by integrity and dynamics. In recent years, due to the rapid development of tourism, the dynamic changes are more frequent and more complicated. This also makes its management and supervision more challenging (Zhang, 1999). The problems in the management of the ancient city are mainly reflected in the following ways: First of all, the existing protection supervision is in the blueprint type of protection, and the several versions of the protection plan are also static protection. The management philosophy stays at the principle of "cultural relic protection" and does not carry out the dynamic supervision of the ancient city in the temporal domain (Lv, 2014). Secondly, the ancient city has always experienced the phenomenon of unclear regulatory authorities and unclear management responsibilities. Although the Ministry of Culture issued the "Management Measures for the Protection of World Cultural Heritage" in 2006, it was clear that the ancient city of Pingyao should be managed by the State Administration of Cultural Heritage as a world cultural heritage. But it is also the second batch of national historical and cultural cities named by the State Council of China, and its construction is subject to supervision by the housing construction department. Therefore, in the process of tourism development in Pingyao Ancient City, responsibilities between government departments have been shifted from each other, coordination between multiple departments is difficult, and it lacks targeted and favorable supervision. All these make the current ancient city management unable to meet the requirements of the integrity and dynamic protection of Pingyao Ancient City and the needs of tourism development.

4. Principles of tourism development in Pingyao Ancient City

Based on the attributes of the ancient city of Pingyao and the dilemma of tourism development, the living protection and tourism development of the ancient city of Pingyao should be carried out in accordance with the following principles:

(1) Protect the life and heritage attributes of Pingyao Ancient City

Clearly define the unique values of Pingyao Ancient City. Pingyao has both the heritage and life attributes of the Human-Habitat World Heritage. In strict accordance with the rigid protection principles of world cultural heritage and historical and cultural towns, that is, strictly protecting the authenticity and integrity of cultural heritage.

(2) Respect the cultural connotation and cultural value of the ancient city of Pingyao Ancient City

All development is based on the premise that it does not affect the cultural value of the ancient city, and cannot blindly pursue economic benefits, which leads to neglect of the cultural construction of Pingyao Ancient City. Tourism development should dig deeper into the cultural heritage and pay attention to the guidance of the cultural values of residents and tourists, so that residents can regain their cultural confidence and tourists can experience a deeper cultural richness.

(3) Clarify the renewal and developmental requirements of the residents

Clarify the important role of residents in the heritage protection and development of the ancient city of Pingyao. As an important part of the Human-Habitat World Heritage, residents are not only the creators of the ancient city's heritage, but also the most important participants in protecting the heritage of the ancient city. They will always interact with the material space of the ancient city as the main characters. Therefore, improving the living environment of the residents and ensuring the basic life of the residents is the foundation of the protection and development of the Human-Habitat World Heritage.

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5. Construction of the Immersive Cultural Experience Tourism Mode in Pingyao Ancient City

In order to solve the problem of the current situation of tourism development in the ancient city of Pingyao, the study takes the cultural revival of the ancient city as the perspective, and takes the southeast area of the ancient city as a pilot, to build a dual-subject cultural traction mechanism, and innovatively propose the "five senses" immersive cultural experience model, which is in the realization of digital heritage protection. At the same time, the cultural driving force is activated to break the development dilemma(Fig.2).
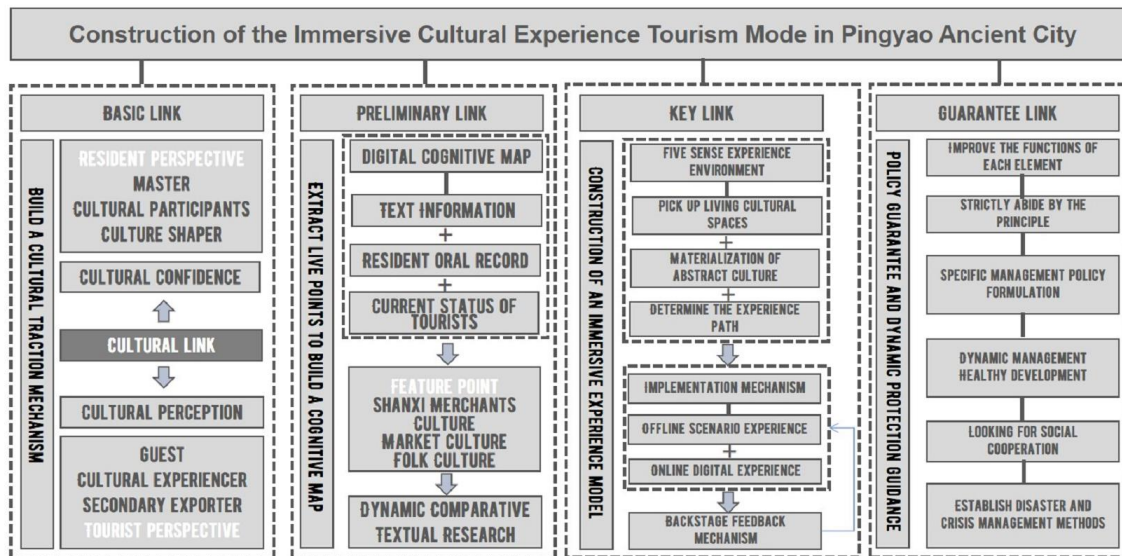

Figure 2. The mode of immersive cultural experience tourism. Source: Author.

5.1. Build a cultural traction mechanism

Building a cultural traction mechanism is the basis for building a culturally immersive experience tourism model. As the soul of the ancient city of Pingyao, culture has always been the embodiment of core competitiveness in the development of the ancient city of Pingyao, and it is also the fundamental link between residents and tourists. The existing methods of cultural dissemination have not yielded good results. Through the analysis of the material and spiritual needs of each value subject and the status quo of cultural understanding, it is concluded that the cultural inclination and empathy of all parties depend on the form of cultural communication and the setting of roles.

Residents, as the masters of the ancient city, are the main participants in the ancient city culture, and they are also the shapers of the ancient city culture. Residents become the exporters of the ancient city culture after having a full understanding of the ancient city culture and generating cultural confidence. Tourists, as guests of the ancient city, are the main experiencer of the culture and the absorber of the ancient city culture. After in-depth cultural tour and perception of the ancient city culture, the tourists will take the initiative to share online or offline to become the secondary exporter. The cultural connotation serves as a link to the cultural traction mechanism, so that the ancient city's culture and tourism needs can be developed in harmony (Fig.3).
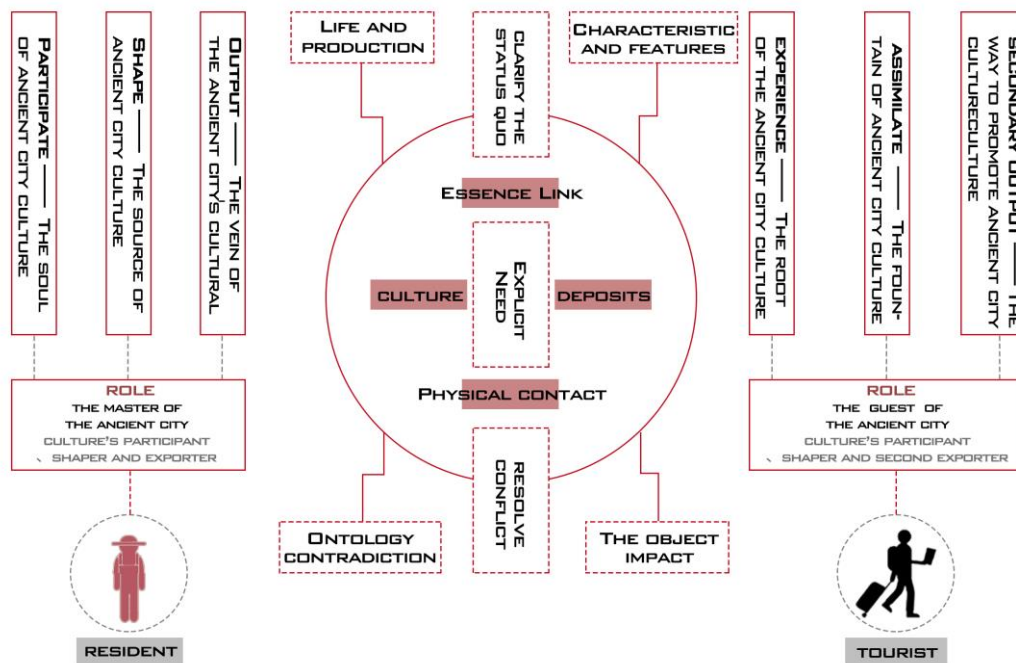
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Figure 3. The cultural traction mechanism of residents and tourists. Source: Author.

5.2. Extract live points to build a cognitive map

After the construction of the dual-subject cultural traction mechanism, the ancient city's cultural genetic elements are deeply identified and judged. The cultural genetic elements of the ancient city of Pingyao are complex and diverse. How to extract cultural vitality points and form a cultural cognitive map of the ancient city of Pingyao is an important part in the process of this research. The research refers to the digital practice method of the historical landscape of Ballarat, Australia, Using computer technology to create electronic archives or documents expressing the live points of heritage to support the protection and management of cultural heritage, forming a unique cognitive map of digital cultural heritage with the characteristics of Pingyao Ancient City. Its foundation mainly comes from three aspects: the first are historical text, local chronicles, county chronicles, genealogy, ancient books and so on，the second is residents interview, oral historical events, spatial memory, folk culture，the third are visitor survey, cultural awareness enhancement point, grasp the network data evaluation point of interest (POI), heat map acquisition. After that, it was classified into elements of Shanxi merchants culture, market culture, and folk culture, and implemented the elements hierarchically on the materialized space of the ancient city of Pingyao(Fig. 4). Finally, research on the urban morphology of different periods, overlay them into the database, and ensure that the periodic dynamic correction of the database.
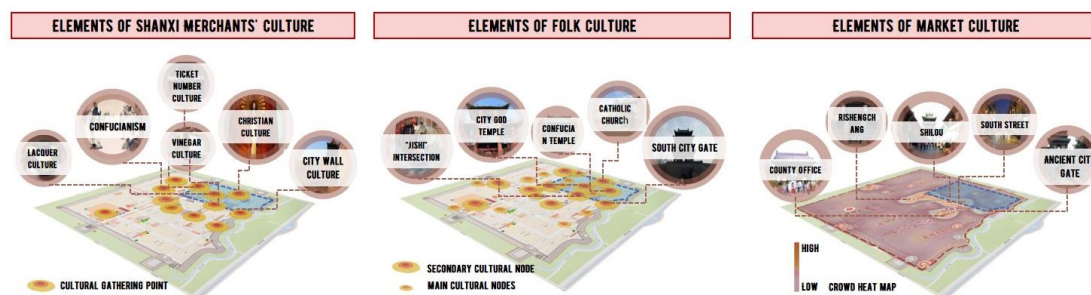

Figure 4. "Live Points" on the Cognitive Map. Source: Author.

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Based on the superposition and assignment of different levels of elements, and through the real-time dynamic feedback of tourists and residents, extract "living points" such as "Rishengchang", "Shilou", "Nanchengmen", "Chenghuang Temple", Confucian Temple, "Jishikou", etc. in the southeast area of Pingyao Ancient City. The cognitive map of the cultural heritage creates a multi-modality window, and the main tourist can participate in the feedback to the cognitive map through the window, and the "living points" with a better sense of cultural experience will be evaluated. The demand window of the residents is closely connected with the planning Department's, and they participate in the adjustment and planning of the "living point", thereby providing the basic guarantee for the development of the ancient city.

5.3. Construction of an immersive experience model

The "five-senses" immersive experience is the core content of this research model. The traditional cultural tourism experience mode mainly relies on two to three senses. In our case, the ancient city of Pingyao, which is a huge cultural complex with strong system and complex connectivity, it is obviously inadequate. When people experience the cultural multi-dimensional body of living changes, they must inevitably need coordination and cooperation of all the "five senses" --sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch to fully perceive the full extent of culture. Based on the cultural traction mechanism, the idea of immersive five-senses experience design is proposed, that is, relying on the repair of cultural space, determining the appropriate tour route, combining with the cognitive map (Fig. 5), providing a historical contextual experience script that can be participated, through the exchanges between tourists and residents, as well as the cultural immersion experience and understanding of different "live points", truly realize the benign cultural exchanges.
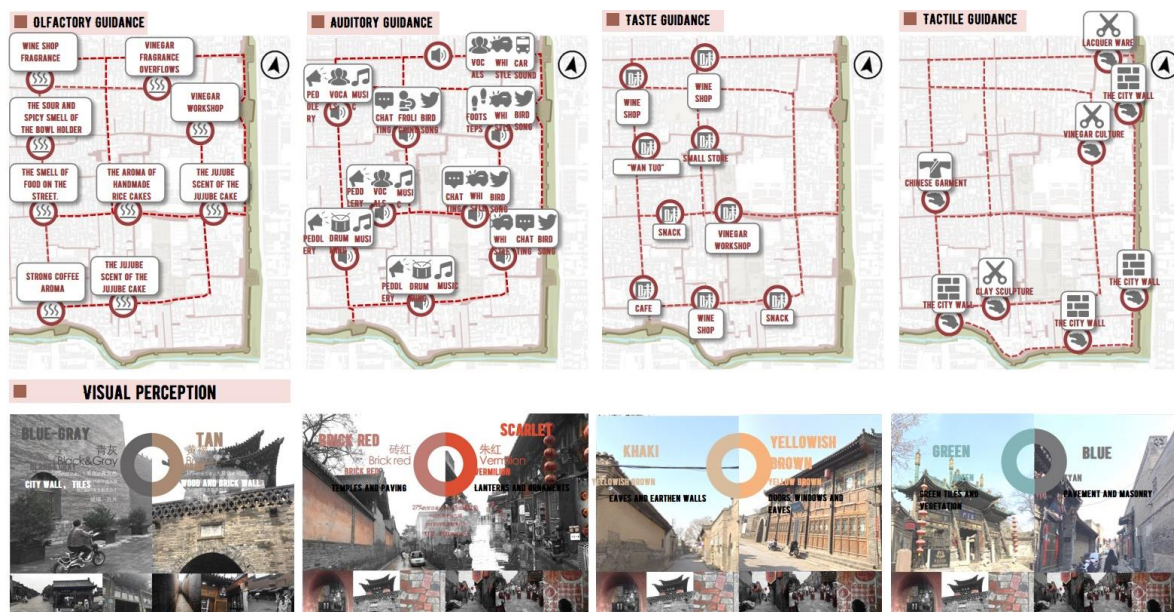

Figure 5. "Five senses" experience in cognitive map. Source: Author.

The five-sense immersive experience model mainly relies on preexisting scenario script. First determine the available live cultural points, based on the cognitive map database, refine the narrative cultural space of main streets and alleys, screen out the "live points" against superposition, and carry out cultural repair and update. The methods of cultural repair and renewal mainly include: vivid material entities--Restore the culture of Shanxi merchants by restoring the historical scenes, namely the historical process of ticket number, guard board, homestead and family inheritance；Abstract cultural concretization--Through participation in performances, such as seeing the Pingyao Theater showcase real historical stories, or transforming the stage to the entire ancient city, reflecting the most authentic folk customs and market culture, etc；Clarification of the experience path--According to different experience themes and styles,

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choose different experience paths (Fig.6). Finally, clarify the roles of tourists and residents. Resident subjects mainly appear as local residents, businesses, and performers in the immersive experience mode. Tourists are the integrators of experience, perception, and learning, and they can play different roles in the script. At the same time, using offline tourism as the foundation, try to build a digital Pingyao network online tour "sub-pattern" which is utilize the cognitive map database and relying on information technology, cloud technology, mobile technology, artificial intelligence technology, etc. Finally, through live broadcast, panoramic web browsing, smart wear experience, mobile app creation, etc., break through the time and space constraints of the ancient city, realizing the purpose of in-depth cultural experience tourism various terminal devices. And tourists can realize the tourism requirements of multiple attributes such as sightseeing, experience, shopping, sports, games, etc. online, and residents can also realize interaction with tourists through this mode. The online and offline dual cultural experience model makes the tourism development of the ancient city of Pingyao more resilient, and more people can participate in tourism and experience the cultural connotation of the ancient city of Pingyao, thereby promoting the cultural revival of the ancient city and realizing the intelligent and sustainable development of the ancient city.
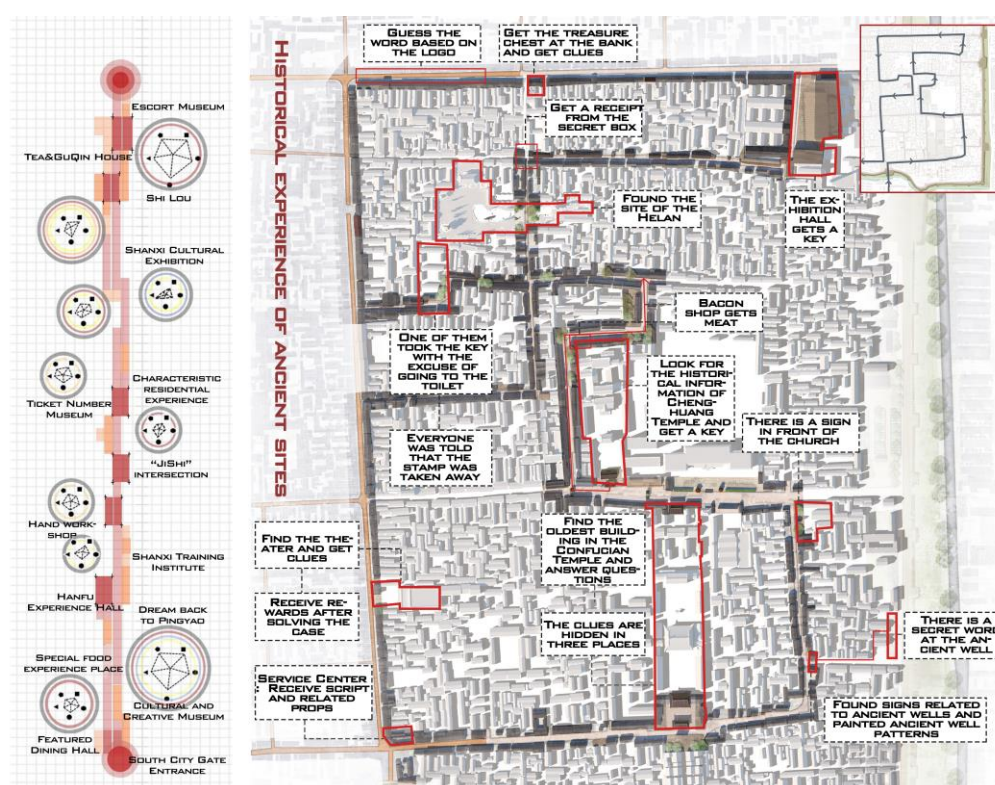

Figure 6. "Five senses" immersive experience path. Source: Author.

5.4. Policy guarantee and dynamic protection guidance

The implementation of the experience mode requires government policy guarantee and related guidance, mainly including the following aspects. First, clarify the functions of the relevant rights departments, establish the Pingyao Ancient City Protection and Tourism Development Working Group to carry out specific work, adhere to the principle of entering the ancient city, break the previous "dismemberment" management method, and strictly meet the "integrity" of cultural heritage, "Authenticity" protection needs. Second, the formulation of management policies is specific, and different management measures are formulated for different management objects. The management of material cultural heritage is mainly repair and maintenance management, and the management of intangible cultural heritage is "tangible and humanistic" internal management; Third, the implementation of management is based on

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the clear protection of the bottom line, dynamic supervision of tourism development, adjustment of the management model according to development and demand at any given time, regular inspection, correction and maintenance, supervision and feedback, and ensuring the sound development of the tourism industry; Fourth, the government needs to gather social cooperation, establish a good development cooperation relationship, and provide corresponding financial and technical support continuously for the tourism development of the ancient city; Finally, the establishment of disaster prevention and crisis management methods to ensure that the ancient city can still meet its basic operational need in the event of extreme events or natural disasters.

6. Conclusions

As an outstanding representative of the Human-Habitat World Heritage, Pingyao Ancient City has profound cultural connotations. While tourism development has brought unprecedented modernization to the ancient city of Pingyao, it has also weakened its cultural connotation. Based on the analysis of the current situation of tourism development in the ancient city of Pingyao, this research takes cultural revival as the longitudinal connotation of the research, and the dual-subject cultural traction mechanism as its base, actively responding to the current situation , and proposing an immersive travel experience model of "five senses". It is of significance to Pingyao Ancient City's cultural heritage protection and tourism development.

The research is still in the preliminary stage of exploration. The "five-senses" immersive experience model and the construction of the online digital tourism "sub-pattern" are still in theoretical research phase, and there is no relevant practical implementation timeline. Therefore, there are still many aspects of this model that need to be improved. However, this research still hopes to provide a fresh model for Pingyao's cultural revival and tourism development.

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