

# Study on Yellow River Cultural Tourism Development in Zhengzhou based on SWOT Analysis

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## Abstract

**As the provincial capital of Henan Province, Zhengzhou is one of the eight ancient capitals of China and an important node city in the Yellow River Basin, with profound historical deposits and rich cultural resources. SWOT analysis method was used to sort out the practical basis of Yellow River cultural tourism in Zhengzhou, and the current situation of its development advantages, basic conditions and development demands to discuss the current situation of Yellow River cultural tourism in Zhengzhou.**

## Keywords

**SWOT; Cultural Tourism; Development Status; Zhengzhou City.**

## 1. Introduction

With the arrival of the new economic era, the cultural industry and tourism industry of China continue to be integrated and developed, and the country's cultural soft power and Chinese cultural influence are increasing day by day. The integrated development of cultural tourism not only includes the spiritual pursuit of poetry and distance, but also has gradually become a "normal" and "rigid need" of the people's way of life. The development of cultural tourism has reached a moment of outbreak. "A history of Henan, half Chinese history", China has eight ancient capitals and Henan Province accounts for four. In particular, the 2021 Henan Spring Festival Gala "Tang Palace Banquet" and the wonderful Lantern Festival quickly became popular, which was sought after by the whole Internet. Henan TV's "China Festival" series repeatedly went out of the circle, setting off a "phenomenal" attention boom sweeping the whole country, which also shows that the integration and development of Henan culture and tourism has a great future.

The Yellow River culture is the symbol of the Chinese culture, is the embodiment of the Chinese spirit, is the root and soul of the Chinese nation. In September 2019, the ecological protection and high-quality development of the Yellow River Basin became a major national strategy. It is crucial to give full play to Henan's unique advantages of China in the Yellow River Basin and call it the name card of the Yellow River culture. In January 2020, when presiding over the sixth meeting of the Financial and Economic Commission of the CPC Central Committee, General Secretary, the CPC Central Committee stressed the need to build a Yellow River cultural and tourism belt with international influence. In October 2021, the CPC Central Committee and The State Council issued the Outline for the Ecological Protection and High-quality Development in the Yellow River Basin. Therefore, in the face of the new strategy of ecological protection and high-quality development in the Yellow River Basin, the cultural tourism industry in the Yellow River Basin should inherit the historical context and highlight the cultural characteristics.

As the provincial capital of Henan Province, Zhengzhou is an important node city in the Yellow River Basin. It has profound history, rich cultural resources and numerous types. It is the root of the Yellow River culture and the soul of Chinese civilization. Zhengzhou has its own uniqueness in the difficulties, the promotion path and the guarantee mechanism in the process of promoting the high-quality development of the Yellow River culture and tourism industry.

Based on this, it is of great significance to reasonably analyze the development situation of Zhengzhou Yellow River cultural tourism for adhering to the strategic positioning of building the main landmark historical and cultural city of the Yellow River and building a new pattern of cultural development of the Yellow River in Zhengzhou.

## 2. Literature Review

The research on the Yellow River cultural tourism has a long history and is roughly divided into three stages:(1) Before the 21st century, for the initial stage, the research content focused on the Yellow River culture, involving the natural general situation, historical changes, the Yellow River civilization and other aspects of the Yellow River.(2) After 2000, with the rise of tourism, research began to cover, including the protection and development of the Yellow River, the utilization and development of resources.In this stage, many famous scenic spots have been developed in the Yellow River Basin, and the development trend of cultural and tourism integration is also reflected in the literature research.(3) After 2018, with the establishment of The National Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the ecological protection and high-quality development of the Yellow River rising to the national strategic level, the policy measures have effectively promoted the relevant research of the Yellow River cultural and tourism industry.

In terms of the research content, the research theme of the Yellow River cultural tourism mainly focuses on three aspects: First, the excavation of the Yellow River cultural connotation.Zhang Xinbin put forward the idea [1]and idea of the main theme of the Yellow River culture, believing that the root, stem and soul are the Henan endowment of the Yellow River culture[2].Wang Naiyue excavated eight cultural connotations of the Yellow River, including ecological philosophy and struggle spirit.Second, the high-quality development of the Yellow River basin, including ecological protection, environmental governance, economic and culture and other aspects [4-5].At last but not least, a large number of research was carried out around the high-quality development strategy, development suggestions, research and path research of the Yellow River cultural tourism, mostly on case studies [6-7]. There is more literature in this regard, but not many high-quality journals, and more of it is published in some newspapers expressing their own views [8-9].

Research methods have both qualitative and quantitative.For example, Zhou Wei used qualitative research methods to explore the connotation of the coordinated governance of local governments in the ecological protection of the Yellow River Basin[10];Sun Jianguo and others discussed scientific and technological innovation and ecological economy research in the Yellow River Basin based on the Super-SBM model and the PVAR model[11].Research perspectives are also more diversified.For example, Xu Hui et al. explored the measure of high-quality development level and its spatial and temporal evolution of the Yellow River Basin based on the geographical perspective[12];Jin Fengjun and others explored the stress diagnosis of industrial development on the ecological environment of the Yellow River Basin through the industrial perspective, and put forward the relevant optimization path [13].

## 3. Study Regions and Methods

### 3.1. The Study Area

Zhengzhou has profound historical deposits, rich cultural resources and many types. Yellow Emperor, Commercial capital, Yellow River, Songshan and kung fu culture have a long history.The east-west section of the Yellow River in Zhengzhou is more than 160 kilometers east and west, and is located in the junction between the Loess Plateau and the Yellow-Huai Plain. Xingyang Taohua Valley is the dividing line between the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River.It is known as a bright pearl on the Yellow River.A series of unique geographical

features, such as the dividing line between the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River, form a broad, magnificent, magnificent and beautiful natural landscape. Around 5,300 years ago, an important archaeological discovery of the double locust tree site, the middle and late giant settlement site, is a key to explore the origin of civilization in the Yellow River Basin, which is known as "the embryo of the early Chinese civilization" by experts and scholars. Important sites along the Yellow River, such as Hanwang Erqi City, Qingtai Site, Xishan Ancient City, XiaoShuangqiao Site, Xingyang Old City, and Zhengzhou section of the Grand Canal Tongji Canal, systematically display the main line of Yellow River cultural development in the Central Plains. Zhengzhou will adhere to the strategic positioning of building the main landmark city of the history and culture of the Yellow River, and build a new pattern of Zhengzhou cultural tourism development with "the source of Chinese civilization and the soul of the Yellow River culture".

### **3.2. Research Methods**

#### **3.2.1. The Dedication Analysis Method**

The introduction of literature research method in the research is a systematic combing of the historical development status of Zhengzhou, existing plans and government documents on the basis of the massive collection of relevant information, so as to lay a solid foundation for clarifying the research ideas and formulating a scientific research framework.

#### **3.2.2. Interviewing Method**

In the implementation process, for the relevant government departments, enterprises, industry associations or relevant responsible persons, the interview method is adopted to understand the current development ideas, existing problems and suggestions of Zhengzhou, so as to understand the development demands of the government and industry departments.

## **4. Development Analysis of Yellow River Cultural Tourism in Zhengzhou based on SWOT Analysis**

SWOT analysis was used to comprehensively analyze the basic conditions of the Yellow River cultural tourism development in Zhengzhou.

### **4.1. Development Advantages**

#### **4.1.1. Tourism Resources have Obvious Advantages, Both Superimposed and Complementary**

First, tourism resources are highly attractive. Its unique geographical environment and a long history give Zhengzhou a unique tourism resource endowment. There are many tourism resources, high quality and full types in the region. There are not only various natural tourism resources such as Songshan and other world Geo-parks, but also heavy historical and cultural resources such as Yellow River culture, kung fu culture and imperial culture. Tourism resources have a strong attraction in Henan Province and even the whole country. Second, the spatial and temporal distribution of tourism resources is reasonable. In terms of spatial layout, the tourism resources of Zhengzhou are distributed in "belt" and "circle", and the distribution of various tourism resources is relatively balanced. In terms of time layout, the distribution of natural and cultural tourism resources can not only seize the passenger flow of holidays, but also avoid the vicious competition between regions.

#### **4.1.2. Regional Comprehensive Advantages, Strong Economic Strength**

In terms of the perspective of geographical location, Zhengzhou is located in the hinterland of the Central Plains. It plays a role in the city of connecting the east to the west and connecting the south and the north, and is the central link connecting "Belt and Road". Taohua Valley in Zhengzhou is the boundary of the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River Basin. The

valley in the middle reaches of the Yellow River and the underground suspension landscape in the lower Yellow River gather here, forming a high-known scenic spot represented by the Yellow River Cultural National Park. From the perspective of economic location, Zhengzhou City is the "backbone" and "growth pole" of the economic development of Henan Province and even the Central Plains urban agglomeration. In recent years, the economic aggregate of Zhengzhou has grown rapidly, and its consumption capacity has remained in the forefront of the central and western regions.

#### **4.1.3. Transportation Advantages are Obvious, with Strong Cultural and Tourism Infrastructure Support**

Zhengzhou is located on the Eurasian Continental Bridge, which is an important traffic channel connecting north and south and east and west. The aviation, railway and highway trunk lines connecting the whole country meet here, which is an extremely important comprehensive transportation hub center in China. The crisscross water system and open plains provide convenient conditions for land and water traffic. Firstly, in terms of air transportation, Xinzheng International Airport is an important air hub in Henan Province. In 2017, in the civil aviation airport throughput ranking, it ranked first in the six central provinces. Secondly, in terms of railway transportation, Zhengzhou is known as the "heart of the railway", with convenient contact with Beijing railway hub, Jinan railway hub and other major railway hubs. Thirdly, in terms of highway transportation, Henan expressway opening mileage ranks first in China, Zhengzhou is in the core area, the expressways reach in all directions, the transportation is very convenient. At last, in terms of new infrastructure, we accelerated the construction of new infrastructure, such as 5G networks and data centers. At the same time, a tourism public information service system based on the tourism public information service platform and high-definition real-time video viewing platform, touch terminal, mobile application software as the media. It has promoted the application of interactive experience technology, mobile information technology and Internet of Things technology in the tourism industry. Accelerate the integration of online and offline services, and provide tourists with timely tourism public information services such as tourism information inquiry, product recommendation, travel planning, ticket and hotel booking, scenic tour guides, virtual tourism, and tourism maps.

## **4.2. Development Disadvantage**

### **4.2.1. Cultural Tourism Product Structure is Single, and the Industrial Chain Needs to be Improved Urgently**

Zhengzhou cultural tourism products are generally small in scale, low in grade and low in added value, there are structural and time-period shortage, and a whole-region, whole-time and whole-season tourism product supply system has not been formed. In terms of product types, traditional tourism, leisure and vacation products are the main ones, the development of new forms of tourism is slow, and the lack of high-end tourism products and characteristic tourism products such as cultural tourism, ice and snow tourism, high-end tourism, exhibition tourism and golf tourism; In the product supply time, night view, night shopping, night food, night tour, night entertainment, night show, night reading and other "moonlight economy" theme products are relatively scarce; In the product supply season, the light and peak season is obvious, the winter tourism product structure is single, the winter serious shortage of tourism projects. At the same time, the extension degree of the cultural tourism industry chain in Zhengzhou is low, and most of them are at the end of the industrial chain and the low end of the value chain. There is no closed loop and a large space for in-depth development. For example, many scenic spots are limited to the low-end sightseeing needs of tourists, and do not pay attention to their participation, interaction and experience needs; They focus on the "ticket economy", are lack of secondary consumption, ignore the creative design and production and sales of tourism products, and its research and development ability of cultural tourism products is weak.

#### **4.2.2. Regional Tourism Development is Unbalanced, and the Tourist Source Structure is Unreasonable**

The problem of "scattered, weak and small" cultural tourism enterprises is prominent, and there is a certain gap in the cultivation of market entities. Among the top 20 national tourism groups, Zhengzhou is on the list, and the top 100 national travel agencies, only one company is on the list. The leading leadership is seriously insufficient, and the cultural and tourism industry main body in the three cities is not strong enough. As Zhengzhou, there are very few local cultural and tourism brands with independent innovation ability. Some influential enterprise brands basically rely on the introduction, such as Zhengzhou Fangte, Haichang Ocean Park, Jianye Huayi Brothers Film Town, Yellow Emperor, etc.

#### **4.2.3. Cultural and Creative Level is Low, Tourism Marketing Means are not Novel**

With the popularity of all kinds of cultural and creative products online and offline, the serious and mysterious elements in traditional culture have entered the public life with a lively image. "Henan tour discipline, hometown gifts, impression of the Central Plains", can be regarded as the top representative of Henan's cultural and creative circles. However, compared with those in Chengdu, there is still a large space for improvement in the content creation and development of cultural IP, the material selection, processing skills compatibility and the construction of product framework system. In the current trend of the rise of the national tide, Zhengzhou has heavy cultural connotation and rich treasure to be excavated, and has a great potential in the cultural and creative industry. It is the responsibility and mission entrusted by The Times to seize the opportunities, make use of its rich cultural resources to extract the cultural elements with the characteristics of the Central Plains, attract more market capital and resources, boost the great development of the cultural and creative industry, and jointly strengthen the cultural and creative industry in Henan by The Times.

According to the 2020 TikTok Data Report, the daily active TikTok users exceed 600 million, making it the most popular short video production and communication platform in China. However, Zhengzhou ranked ninth in the TOP10 list with the highest thumb up, compared with a big gap with Chengdu (ranked third), also the new national central city. Zhengzhou neither lacks the overall marketing of cross-regional destination brands, nor does it make full use of short video, new live streaming marketing platforms and means such as TikTok, Kuaishou and Bilibili for marketing. The all-media tourism destination marketing system has not yet been built.

### **4.3. Development Opportunity**

#### **4.3.1. The Arrival of Mass Tourism Era, All-region Tourism Era and National Leisure Era Brings Great Opportunities for the Development of Yellow River Cultural Tourism in Zhengzhou**

The era of mass tourism has come. Tourism has been transformed from traditional tourism and scenic spots to all-region tourism and tourism society. The explosive growth of the demand of the tourism market has quickly ignited the passion and vitality of the whole tourism industry, and will bring new opportunities and strong impetus to the development of Zhengzhou cultural and tourism market. At the same time, tourism consumption is becoming unprecedented complex, new demand is accumulating, and residents' leisure and business travel began to blend with sightseeing tourism and turn into a new contemporary tourism market. Although the COVID-19 epidemic in 2020 has basically suspended the tourism industry, the epidemic will eventually pass, and as long as the people needs, the market has the foundation and the local motivation, the tourism industry will eventually revitalize. This general environment provides a driving force for the sustainable and strong development of the Yellow River cultural and tourism industry in Zhengzhou, and creates a better foundation and environment for development.

### **4.3.2. The Integration of Cultural and Tourism and Digital Empowerment Give Zhengzhou New Drivers for the Development of Cultural and Tourism**

Culture is the soul of tourism, and tourism is the cultural load. With the arrival of the era of mass tourism, the integrated development of culture and tourism is the trend of The Times, which affects the people's yearning for a better life. For example, Shopping+ tourism, science and technology + tourism, education + tourism, sports + tourism, and new forms of transportation + tourism, are all possible and feasible. In recent years, the digital creative industry to maintain rapid growth, AR, VR, big data, artificial intelligence and other hot words frequently, especially during the COVID-19 epidemic period, webcast, short video, cloud exhibition, cloud tourism culture and tourism online service performance bright eye, with digital content as the core of digital brigade industry rise, uptrend, digital creative industry and tourism industry combined more closely. "Digital technology + culture + tourism" will reconstruct the industrial pattern, drive the innovation of product and business forms, such as the high-tech cultural experience hall in scenic spots, the virtual tourism forms created using VR technology, and the online virtual travel agency forms built through panoramic shooting. The rapid development of cultural tourism digital cultural tourism will give Zhengzhou new drivers of the Yellow River development.

### **4.3.3. The Implementation of the National Strategy of Ecological Protection and High-quality Development in the Yellow River Basin Points out the Direction for the Development of the Yellow River Cultural Tourism in Zhengzhou**

The ecological protection and high-quality development strategy in the Yellow River Basin is a major national strategy as planned and deployed by Xi Jinping. He twice discussed the ecological protection and high-quality development strategy of the Yellow River Basin, emphasizing the need to strengthen the driving role of Zhengzhou as a national central city, and promote the high-quality development of central cities and urban agglomerations along the Yellow River region. We will carry out the project to protect the Yellow River cultural heritage system, build a Yellow River cultural and tourism belt with international influence, carry out the publicity of the Yellow River culture, and protect, inherit and carry forward the Yellow River culture. It has pointed out the direction for the development of the Yellow River cultural tourism in Zhengzhou, taking Zhengzhou as the "core" as the breakthrough point and the "Yellow River culture" as the starting point to comprehensively promote the integration construction of the cultural tourism industry in Zhengzhou.

## **4.4. Development Challenges**

### **4.4.1. The Cities Joint Efforts Along the Yellow River Tourism, the Homogenization of the Competition is Intensifying**

Driven by the ecological protection and high-quality development strategy of the Yellow River Basin, the nine provinces along the Yellow River took this opportunity to accelerate the development of the Yellow River and formulate relevant policies for the development of Yellow River tourism. Except for Sichuan Province, the other eight provinces have put forward the strategic idea of building the Yellow River tourism belt. These nine provinces have a certain homogeneity in the Yellow River tourism resource endowment, an amazing similarity in the Yellow River tourism development strategy, and some provinces along the Yellow River have a good momentum of development. So, how to find the right positioning and create a differentiated high-quality cultural tourism route, to stand out from the fierce competition, and to form the famous IP, is a major difficulty in the development of the Yellow River culture and tourism in Zhengzhou.

#### **4.4.2. Tourism Radiation and Driving Role is Weak, and Infrastructure Construction is Relatively Lagging Behind**

Zhengzhou, as the core city of the Central Plains city cluster, has a prominent leading position, but as a pillar industry of modern service industry, tourism is not strong radiation on the province and even surrounding provinces and regions, and the driving role is not obvious. According to the CEIC database, the National Bureau of Statistics, the National Tourism Administration, and the Municipal Statistical Bulletin of the National Economic and Social Development, Zhengzhou ranked 29th in the 2019 China Tourist Cities List, down five precedence compared with 2018; Ranked the last in the tourism performance of nine national central cities; Compared with Chengdu, Hangzhou, Xi'an, Changsha and other provincial capitals, Zhengzhou has a large gap in its total tourism revenue, the annual total number of received tourists and the annual number of received foreign tourists.

So far, Zhengzhou has not yet built a tourism distribution center integrating "service management, tourist distribution, commodity distribution, information platform and market supervision". As a result, the current situation of tourism distribution is far from meeting the needs to adapt to the rapid development of tourism. The absence of core elements in the construction of public service system, the serious lack of tourism consulting centers, domestic and foreign tourist transportation distribution, and cultural tourism publicity and promotion information platforms, leads to a serious shortage of elements in the overall tourism service chain, and insufficient efforts in the supervision of the tourism industry.

#### **4.4.3. Cultural and Tourism Industry Iteration, and Market Restructuring has been Accelerated**

The transformation of society will inevitably bring about the transformation of tourism development. In recent years, tourism consumption has shown the characteristics of the universal basic customer group, the quality of tourism demand, the normal leisure experience, and the comprehensive tourism of scenic spots, followed by the transformation and upgrading of tourism consumption. The new demand has promoted the rise and development of new forms such as health tourism, leisure tourism, research and study tourism and low-altitude tourism. Faced this, how to make good use of "tourism +" "Internet +" and how to improve service and customer experience in Zhengzhou is the key to promote the transformation and upgrading of the tourism industry.

### **5. Research Conclusion**

The research shows: Overall, under the background of the integration of cultural and tourism era, Zhengzhou has resource advantages, location advantages, economic advantages and transportation advantages, and with the strong support of policies at all levels, Zhengzhou has initially carried out the Yellow River cultural tourism attempt, including a series of development plans, the construction of major projects, the construction of the Yellow River historical and cultural landmark of the Yellow River etc. However, there are still many problems such as slow iteration and upgrading of the tourism industry, insufficient improvement and expansion of the industrial chain, not obvious tourism image identification of the Yellow River, and lagging marketing means. At the same time, it is also facing new tests such as homogenization competition, weak radiation and driving role, and accelerated market reconstruction.

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