

## Article

# Unlocking the Creative Potential: A Case Study of Luoyang City's Creative Tourism Development

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**Abstract:** With the demand for high-quality and personalized tourism experiences, creative tourism has flourished as a novel form of tourism activity. However, there is limited knowledge regarding the viewpoint of suppliers and the essential creative elements that support business sustainability. To bridge this research gap, the current study conducted a qualitative study to uncover critical creative elements (CCE) from experienced suppliers. The data were derived from interviews with 20 key informants who were members of a leading creative tourism business. Inclusion of recommendations for destination decision-makers, attraction managers, and aspiring entrepreneurs interested in engaging in the creative tourism industry is provided.

**Keywords:** creative tourism; critical creative elements; industry perspective; sustainable development; Luoyang City



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## 1. Introduction

According to Richards and Raymond's definition [1], creative tourism is a novel form of tourism that provides visitors with opportunities to develop their creative potential through active participation in learning experiences that are distinctive to the holiday destination where they are offered. Richards defines creative tourism as a new type of tourism that merges the cultural and creative industries with the tourism industry to address the needs of tourists who seek to develop their creative potential by engaging deeply with locals [2].

Creative tourism is seen as the logical progression of cultural tourism, transitioning from a service-based economy to an experience-based economy [3]. This transformation has occurred in response to some travelers who are not content with the passive production and consumption linked to traditional cultural tourism. Creative tourism is a promising industry that offers high experiential, participatory, value-added, and cascading effects, creating a richer spiritual experience for visitors. The integration of tourism and cultural elements in a destination can lead to industry revitalization and significantly broaden the scope for industry development. As Richards points out, creative tourism has gained increasing attention over the last decade or so as a catalyst for regional economic growth [4]. In fact, creative tourism has become a crucial aspect of industrial development and a driving force for regional economic growth. Given the demand for innovation and progress in the tourism and cultural sectors, creative tourism, as an extension of traditional cultural tourism, holds significant research significance.

In addition to economic value, the advancement of creative tourism is a part of a broader trend towards creating appealing places for individuals to live, work, and visit [5]. When tourists are potential customers and crucial parties for the sustainable development of this industry, research has demonstrated that creative tourism relies heavily on the active involvement of all stakeholders, as their offerings, investment, participation, interaction,

and value co-creation affect the overall experience. In fact, the definition of creative tourism proposes an active and creative role for both producers and tourists in the context of tourism. Producers are encouraged to utilize their creative resources to provide authentic experiences that are closely tied to the local culture. On the other hand, tourists are expected to actively engage themselves in the creative processes and activities offered by the destination [6].

While it is understood that support from residents, investment from industry and service providers, as well as high level of emotional involvement from customers contribute to the sustainable attachments and appeals [7], the precise understanding of the creative elements that effectively support the longevity of a business remains ambiguous.

The perceptions of senior and managerial individuals in the tourism industry have a substantial impact on its growth and progress due to a variety of factors. Primarily, senior management holds a crucial position in shaping the strategic trajectory of ongoing development efforts [8,9]. Their comprehension of market patterns and capacity to recognize developing possibilities empower them to stay up to date with industry advancements and fulfill customer demands. Their direction assumes a pivotal part in guaranteeing the organization's capacity to stay competitive [10,11] and to meet the requirements of tourists and stakeholders. Furthermore, effective collaboration with a diverse range of stakeholders is of utmost importance in the context of tourism development. The involvement of senior management plays a pivotal role in establishing and maintaining connections between the organization and external stakeholders, including local communities, government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and trade associations [12]. By actively engaging with these stakeholders, senior management can facilitate the cultivation of positive relationships, address concerns, and foster cooperative corporate relations, thereby making significant contributions to the sustainable development of the tourism industry [13]. Moreover, recent advancements have highlighted the significance of mentoring provided by senior management in promoting innovation and adaptability within the realm of tourism development. Through their guidance, senior management encourages a culture of creativity, continuous improvement, and the ability to effectively respond to evolving market dynamics [14]. While additional research on the competitiveness of creative destinations has the potential to provide valuable insights into the realm of creative business [15], there are relatively limited empirical studies on existing travel business that have implementing creative elements for a period of time. This study seeks to examine the distinctive characteristics of the participants in order to explore the following inquiries:

1. What are the various forms of creative tourism products and experiences provided by large creative enterprises?
2. What are the essential creative components found within these sustainable products and experiences?
3. What are some exemplary instances of innovative content that can be derived from the successful practices of prominent creative businesses?

Hence, the primary objective of this research is to utilize a successful case study and the innovative components within the experiences of these creative tourism enterprises to provide valuable insights for creative tourism practitioners and individuals aspiring to enter the industry. To achieve this, the qualitative study employs semi-structure interviews with the creative tourism industry in Luoyang City to uncover creative elements for sustainable business development. The study enriches existing literature through the investigation of creativity and sustainability in an emerging sector of tourism. By illustrating crucial contexts of creative elements through the lens of creative business in major creative tourism city, this study presents theoretical concepts that can be further explored and examined. Additionally, it provides practical insights that can be utilized in the design and planning of creative tourism experiences and products.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. *The Inception of Cultural and Creative Tourism*

Pier Luigi Sacco has categorized the development of cultural tourism in Europe into three distinct periods: Culture 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0. These periods represent the evolution of cultural tourism from shallow mass tourism in the 1980s to the utilization of museums for promoting deeper cultural experiences in later years, and finally the emergence of cultural and creative projects in more recent destinations [16]. Within this context, the sustainability of tourism is being driven by four key social forces: dissatisfaction with existing tourism products, an increased focus on environmental awareness and cultural sensitivity, recognition of the valuable resources and their vulnerability in destination areas, and a shift in attitudes among developers and tourism operators [17]. These forces have influenced the scholarly focus on the transformation of cultural tourism. In the current context, there has been a gradual shift from the traditional concept of ‘culture’ as a primary attraction for tourists to one that emphasizes the role of creativity in generating additional value to attract tourists. This shift can be attributed to the emergence of creative development strategies, which have gained prominence in public policies and academic analysis since the 1990s [4]. The concept of creative tourism was first introduced by Pearce et al. in 1993, who initially defined it as an opportunity for visitors to explore their creative potential through active participation and learning experiences that are based on the unique characteristics of the destination [18]. This marked the first time that creative tourism was presented as a distinct form of tourism. Following this, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [19] has provided a definition for creative tourism, characterizing it as a type of tourism that is participatory, interactive, and experiential in nature. This form of tourism entails engaging in participatory learning activities that focus on the artistic and cultural elements of a particular location, heritage site, or regional identity, as well as establishing connections with the local residents of the destination [19]. As a result, there has been a growing alignment between the realms of tourism, creativity, and regional culture. The literature on creative tourism strongly emphasizes the critical importance of active role in the framing of creative experiences [1,19–21].

### 2.2. *The Growth and Establishment of the Cultural and Creative Tourism Sector*

With the advancement of society and the growth of tourism, the tourism market has become more diverse, and the preferences of travelers have changed significantly. There is now a greater emphasis on the cultural aspects of tourism, including both tangible and intangible cultural experiences. This shift has led to the emergence of creative tourism, which combines various creative elements and engages with creative lifestyles [22]. Cultural and creative tourism, which better meets the experiential needs of people, has become a popular area of tourism development, and continues to expand. Additionally, the concept of sustainability has been introduced and applied in the development of cultural tourism, influencing the creativity of future tourism endeavors [23]. The integration and collaboration between tourism and the cultural and creative industries offer a more innovative tourism experience for travelers who are seeking alternatives to the traditional approach. For repeat visitors who have already explored the main cultural attractions, creative and cultural tourism provides an opportunity to establish a deeper connection with the local area through interactive, cultural, experiential, and authentic experiences. Cultural and creative tourism consumers are no longer passive observers of the destination; they desire a more unique and genuine experience, often referred to as ‘learning by doing’ tourism.

The current research has provided an explanation of the focus and significance of cultural and creative tourism development. This development has been influenced by the rise of the creative industries, which gained momentum after the publication of Richard Florida’s book “The Rise of the Creative Class” in 2002. Florida argued that attracting creative individuals to cities would lead to higher economic growth [24]. Cultural and creative tourism, as it is called in Mainland China, represents a new industry that caters to the fragmented content of cultural tourism, adapting to the post-modern lifestyle

of tourists. It also marks the end of an era of trade that has stimulated the development of cultural markets, serving as a driving force for cultural demand in the market. The experiences offered by creative tourism not only have economic value but also have the potential to stimulate the development of new ideas, products, and services, especially when people are looking for new activities that foster their sense of place [25,26]. Unlike mass tourism, creative tourism is characterized by its individualized and small-scale nature, providing an alternative to the development of mass cultural tourism. According to research conducted by the United Nations World Tourism Organization [27], 81% of National Tourism Administrations consider “contemporary culture and creativity” as part of cultural tourism. The creative industries have become a driving force behind the symbolic economy, while also supporting national and regional distinctiveness.

### *2.3. Strategies aimed at Fostering the Growth and Advancement of the Cultural and Creative Tourism Industry*

While some academics have argued that the growth of creative tourism may not be ideal for cultural attractions and destinations, there is a growing trend of integrating culture and creativity into tourism development. This integration is driven by factors such as scarcity, timeliness, sustainability, and flexibility [2]. The decision to pursue this development is a result of carefully considering the interests and perspectives of various stakeholders. Freeman [28] introduced the concept of stakeholders, highlighting the significance of groups or individuals who have the ability to influence or be influenced by the achievement of behavioral goals. In the context of tourism service providers, creativity has emerged as a strategy that not only generates profit but also fosters innovation and personal skill development [29]. For destination policymakers, integrating creativity with cultural and historical resources can offer a unique competitive advantage for the city [30]. Similarly, for destination businesses, rapid innovation can enhance their competitiveness in terms of services or products, leading to increased visitor intention to return to a specific place and amplifying the positive impact of repeat visitors [30–34].

Influenced by sustainable development policies, the utilization of creative resources has become more environmentally friendly and sustainable for attraction managers [35]. The concept of creativity has also become highly adaptable [21], as art performances and artworks can now be produced in various locations without the need for dedicated infrastructure. Consequently, creative resources are frequently employed to establish unique identities [14], thereby offering a symbolic advantage to regions and cities in an increasingly competitive marketplace. The traditional notion of the tourist gaze, characterized by passive observation, has evolved into a reflexive gesture. This new perspective positions the tourist as both the source and object of the gaze, assuming roles as both consumer and producer, as well as audience and performer [36].

According to Jelincic et al., tourists desire a comprehensive tourism experience that encompasses all senses and leads to a deeper cultural understanding. In order to promote the growth of cultural and creative tourism, corporations should actively guide and create conditions that align with market demands and regional resources, thereby achieving incremental improvements. It is important to recognize that demand drives behavior, and successful innovation relies on the collaboration and interplay of various stakeholders [37]. Therefore, in order to effectively manage and plan for new tourism initiatives, it is crucial to identify the unique characteristics of the industry’s products and understand the market demand that arises from industry development. By adopting a demand-oriented approach, macro-level planning and micro-level adjustments can be implemented to generate benefits and enhance the industry’s competitiveness.

### *2.4. Research Area*

The city of Luoyang, also referred to as Luo Yi and Luo Jing, is situated in the western region of Henan Province (Figure 1). It holds significant importance as a prominent birthplace of Chinese civilization and the culture of the Central Plains. Additionally, it

served as the eastern starting point of the Silk Road, the focal point of the Grand Canal during the Sui and Tang Dynasties, and the host city for the national peony cultural event. With a history of being the capital for 13 dynasties [38], Luoyang stands as the oldest, longest-lasting, and most influential historical capital in Chinese history. According to the Statistical Bulletin of National Economic and Social Development of Luoyang City in 2021, the city boasted 152 art performance groups, 17 cultural centers, 18 public libraries, and 102 museums by the end of the year. Furthermore, it housed 51 national key cultural heritage protection units and 115 provincial cultural heritage protection units [38]. The city also had the privilege of being home to nine national intangible cultural heritage sites, showcasing its abundance of historical resources and rich historical and cultural heritage.



**Figure 1.** The map of map of Henan province, People’s Republic of China. Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ChinaHenanLuoyang.png> (accessed on 10 October 2023). Reorganized by authors.

Throughout the year, a significant increase of 25.7% in the number of domestic and foreign tourists was observed, with a total of 117 million visitors. This growth also resulted in a 16.1% increase in total tourism revenue, reaching CNY 92.348 billion. According to the “Tourist Attractions Quality Level Management Measures” issued by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People’s Republic of China, the quality level of tourist attractions is categorized into five levels, ranging from the lowest to the highest as 1A, 2A, 3A, 4A, and 5A. The year concluded with a total of 63 A-class tourist attractions, including 5 5A-grade scenic spots, 28 4A-grade scenic spots, and 25 3A-grade scenic spots in Luoyang. Additionally, there were 44 star-rated hotels and 100 international and domestic travel agencies by the end of the year [39].

Luoyang, a city located in central China, witnessed a significant increase in tourism in 1983 following the establishment of a national festival dedicated to the peony flower and its cultural significance. This event, known as the Peony Blossom Festival, contributed to the city’s popularity as a tourist destination. Additionally, attractions such as the Longmen Grottoes, recognized by UNESCO, and the White Horse Temple, the first Buddhist temple in China, have further enhanced Luoyang’s appeal to visitors. The city’s rapid economic growth and urbanization processes have led to the expansion of municipal facilities and the municipal government’s aspiration to transform Luoyang into an international tourist destination [40].

For example, a significant portion of Luoyang’s recently developed “New District” has been designated for the establishment of tourism resorts and recreational facilities, including a sports center, the Tang Dynasties Relics Park, museums, riverside parks, as well as supplementary amenities such as visitor centers, hotels, restaurants, and shopping



establishments. In light of the decline in popularity of Henan's national wind culture since the previous year, Luoyang, renowned as the ancient capital of 13 dynasties, has also garnered considerable attention, thereby fueling the enthusiasm for local cultural and creative tourism. Notably, the performances of "Luo Shen Shui Fu" and the nominations of "Glory is Back" and "Luoyang" as top 10 national IPs in 2021 have contributed to this trend. At the Luoyang Museum, visitors have the opportunity to engage in a "Millennium Dialogue" with cultural artifacts through online interaction. The museum's live-action role-playing (LARP) games and other activities cater to a diverse audience and fulfill their various interests. By donning Tang costumes, savoring Tang tea, ascending the Que Tower, and accompanying actors in their homage to Emperor Wu, visitors to the Yingtianmen Heritage Museum of the Sui and Tang Dynasties can immerse themselves in an interactive experience set in a realistic and ancient environment, effectively transporting themselves to the Tang Dynasty. This experiential approach has been well-received by visitors.

Furthermore, the concept of the "archaeological blind box" has garnered interest among younger visitors, leading to an increasing number of individuals opting to acquire innovative products as mementos during their travels. These products range from basic replicas of cultural artifacts to items such as mobile phone cases, key chains, and fridge stickers. Additionally, enterprises associated with cultural and creative tourism have begun to compile and combine available resources, elements, and technologies, with the aim of integrating and advancing them. This includes the development of creative archaeological blind boxes and digital collections of cultural and museum artifacts.

### *2.5. Cultural and Creative Tourism Offerings in Luoyang City, China*

Since the integration and restructuring of the former Ministry of Culture and the National Tourism Administration in 2018, the concept of "cultural tourism integration" has gained widespread acceptance as a fundamental strategic and market consensus in China's cultural tourism industry. Against this backdrop, the Henan Provincial Committee introduced the "cultural tourism, cultural and creative integration development strategy" in 2021, providing a clear direction for the transformation and upgrading of Luoyang's cultural tourism industry. This development has created an unprecedented national strategic and policy opportunity for the growth of cultural and creative tourism. On 26 October 2021, the 4th Hailuo Culture and Tourism Festival concluded successfully.

According to statistical data [41], the 2021 River Luo Cultural Tourism Festival in Luoyang City attracted a significant number of visitors, with a total of 13,575,300 attendees. This influx of tourists resulted in a substantial tourism income of CNY 10,531 million. To effectively promote the festival, various media platforms, including newspaper, TV stations, web pages, micro-blogs, client full media platforms, and communication channels, were utilized. Additionally, emerging media platforms, including Headline, Jieyin, Baidu, Bilibili, Tencent, and Express, were strategically leveraged to enhance publicity efforts. Activities such as net red picking and live events were organized to capitalize on the influence of online personalities and expand the festival's reach. Notably, the creative campaign titled "National Style and Ancient Ideas in Search of Luoyang" garnered significant attention on Weibo, accumulating over 110 million reads [41]. Furthermore, the five sets of captivating images showcasing the beauty of Luoyang received over 200 million views across various online platforms. These promotional endeavors effectively showcased the city's youthful and vibrant atmosphere. The fourth Central Plains International Cultural Tourism Industry Expo proved to be a fruitful event, generating a total transaction value of CNY 83.5 million. Moreover, the investment and financing forum held during the expo facilitated the signing of 18 major cultural tourism projects, with a combined investment of CNY 12.6 billion [41]. These developments indicate a flourishing cultural tourism industry in Luoyang. During the National Day holiday, Luoyang emerged as one of the top 20 popular tourist destinations, further highlighting the thriving cultural tourism market in the city.

According to the findings of the Xinhua-Luoyang Cultural Tourism Integration Development Index Report 2021 [42], the integration of cultural tourism in Luoyang has

demonstrated resilience and a consistent positive trajectory. In 2020, the index recorded a score of 129.80, representing a significant increase of 29.80% compared to the base period. The results of a corresponding questionnaire survey indicate that the cultural confidence of Luoyang residents reached an impressive 88.96%. This can be attributed to the city's abundant historical heritage and its innovative approach to expressing cultural significance, which have fostered a favorable social environment for the harmonious development of local culture and tourism. In recent years, Luoyang has effectively organized and utilized its cultural resources, resulting in the creation of several distinctive cultural and tourism projects that reflect the city's urban characteristics. Furthermore, the number of scenic spots, national key cultural heritage protection units, and museums with a 4A rating or higher has continued to rise, indicating a continuous enhancement in the quality of these attractions.

The development of city pleasure gardens and city study rooms in Luoyang has been consistently promoted, resulting in the creation of a favorable leisure environment and a vibrant cultural atmosphere. This has led to an increase in the overall well-being of the residents and a stronger sense of cultural confidence. The Cultural Tourism Integration Driving Force Index [41], which measures the progress of integrating culture and tourism, reached 112.56 points, indicating a continuous growth in investment in this area. The implementation of "online + offline" promotional strategies has yielded positive outcomes. In the first half of 2021, Luoyang emerged as a popular destination for night tourism in China, receiving praise for its diverse and immersive nighttime experiences. The report on the index reveals that young tourists, characterized by their distinct personalities, desire for freedom, and willingness to explore, constitute the main demographic visiting Luoyang, with 35.83% of them falling between the ages of 18 and 30. According to Sun Yunlong, deputy director of the Department of Tourism at Fudan University, the integration model of culture and tourism in Luoyang has been initially established and is currently progressing in an organized manner.

Luoyang has prioritized the establishment of the "Museum Capital of the East" as a catalyst for its efforts to become an international cultural tourism city and a center for international cultural exchange. Leveraging its abundant historical and cultural resources, the city has focused on preserving and promoting Chinese history and culture. This has involved enhancing digital exhibitions and immersive experiences, as well as fostering the development of the national immersive cultural tourism creative industry. The cultural and creative industry in Luoyang has evolved from its initial stages ("1.0") to its current state ("4.0"). Additionally, the Luoyang Museum has released a limited series of digital collectibles called "Luoyi in Full Bloom," which are based on significant artifacts from the museum's collection, such as the stone evil-spirits and pottery incense burner from the Eastern Han Dynasty, the Tri-colored pottery camels from the Tang Dynasty, and the female terracotta warriors from the Northern Dynasty. These collectibles were quickly sold out within three days, highlighting their popularity and demand. The manager of the Luoyang Cultural Tourism Bureau emphasized that the emergence of "4.0" cultural and creative products, including digital collections, has contributed to the city's cultural and creative industry's growth and its ability to effectively convey the story of Luoyang. This flourishing cultural and creative tourism industry in Luoyang is experiencing significant advancements in various aspects, ranging from policy guidance to product development.

### 3. Methodology

In this study, a qualitative research method was utilized. Qualitative research involves generating findings that are not obtained through quantification. This approach is typically employed when the researcher aims to identify variables that will later be tested quantitatively or when quantitative measures are insufficient in describing or interpreting a particular situation. While quantitative studies provide valuable data and statistical analysis, qualitative methods offer a more profound comprehension of experiences, motivations, and perceptions [43]. These methodologies enable the gathering of comprehensive and intricate information that may be overlooked by quantitative surveys. For example,

interviews have the potential to uncover tourists' emotional attachments to particular cultural landmarks or their unique understandings of artistic encounters [44]. Therefore, in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the creative tourism industry, the researchers in this study opted to conduct a thorough analysis of creative elements in successful creative tourism products by engaging with suppliers, one of the key stakeholders in the creative tourism sector. While a variety of qualitative data collection methods can be employed, semi-structured techniques are particularly suitable for this purpose, as they align with the research objectives and offer valuable insights into sustainable effects of creative tourism [45]. The creative exploitation of tourism production is inherent to the nature of tourism itself, as companies in this sector are compelled to constantly develop new sources of value and create profitable opportunities due to increasing competition. Given the exploratory nature of the industry, this research employed semi-structured interviews to allow the interviewees to discuss in detail the obstacles and opportunities they encounter in their respective fields.

In order to conduct the study, data were collected through in-depth face-to-face interviews with key informants in the cultural and creative tourism industry. Given the study's utilization of purposive sampling, data were collected through semi-structured interviews from 5A and 4A attractions and their direct creative product/experience suppliers. As suggested, purposive sampling improves the consistency and accuracy of data and findings in a research study by aligning the sample with the study's initial objectives and goals [46]. The participants were selected from various organizations, including Luoyang Historical and Cultural Preservation and Utilization Development Group Co., Luoyang Tang Dynasty Royal Porcelain Co., Luoyang Museum, Luoyang Tri-Color Art Ceramics Co., the Longmen Grottoes Tourism Bureau, etc. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with top management in the organization. The questions provided in the interview were strictly based on the relevant literature to match the nature of the research, and a specific portion of the space was provided for interviewers to present open-ended responses, ensuring the authenticity, randomness, and reliability of the data. The purpose of these interviews was to gain insights into the current state of development of their respective enterprises and to explore the characteristics of the industry from a multi-stakeholder perspective. The demographic information of the respondents can be found in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Profile of the respondents.

No.	Gender	Nature	Position	Duration of Work
B1	F	Government	Middle-level Manager	5 years
B2	F		Middle-level Manager	5 years
B3	M		Senior Executives	11 years
B4	F		Middle-level Manager	8 years
B5	F		Administrative manager	5 years
G1	F	Government	Administrative manager	5 years
B6	F		Middle-level Manager	7 years
B7	F		Administrative manager	5 years
G2	M		Administrative manager	9 years
B8	M		Senior Executives	8 years
B9	M	Government	Middle-level Manager	5 years
G3	F		Middle-level Manager	7 years
B10	M		Middle-level Manager	6 years
B11	M		Senior Executives	10 years
B12	F		Administrative manager	8 years
G4	F	Government	Middle-level Manager	5 years
G5	M	Government	Administrative manager	7 years
B13	F	Government	Senior Executives	12 years
B14	M		Middle-level Manager	5 years
B15	F		Administrative manager	8 years

B-Private enterprise; G-Government agency; Source: Organized by the Authors.



The data collection process consisted of three distinct steps. First, interviewees were invited to discuss their projects and highlight representative cultural and creative elements. By integrating and defining the industrial characteristics of cultural and creative tourism, and drawing on existing research as theoretical support, the current creative elements generated by demand in this niche industry were compiled. Second, the interviews were transcribed to provide textual material for content analysis. Initial content analysis involved examining the transcripts and notes, and then ranking the frequency of critical creative elements mentioned by the interviewees. This was achieved by classifying and identifying the different features of cultural and creative tourism, from those mentioned most frequently to those mentioned least frequently. Due to the restricted pool of primary sources available for interviews in this specific case, a manual coding methodology was deemed more suitable than utilizing software programs. This decision was made based on the ease of managing the material through manual analysis and interpretation [47]. Last, the industrial characteristics of cultural and creative tourism were integrated based on the content classification. This process aligns with the fundamental principles of qualitative research and analysis and is highly practical in nature.

The collected data were classified by selecting representative data materials. This involved combining the research questions, research objectives, and content, and analyzing the content of interviews conducted with respondents from various industries. The aim was to identify subordinate features by identifying similarities in the content. The purpose of this study was to ensure the representativeness of the data and meet the requirements of the initial step. Additionally, the study aimed to conceptually extract, classify, and supplement the content of the first step based on existing theoretical claims, in accordance with the needs of the second step. Furthermore, the study aimed to summarize the characteristics of the industry based on its current development, aligning with the third step of the proposition.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Features of Cultural and Creative Tourism

By conducting an analysis and synthesis of interview data and existing scholarly concepts in the field, this study initially identified 11 innovative aspects of cultural and creative tourism products in Luoyang City. Similar innovative aspects were then combined and processed to identify industrial features, such as the integration of research and development, integration of elements, and innovative technology, which were categorized under the broader label of “innovative content”.

Following this, a total of six primary critical creative components, specifically innovation, co-creation, interaction, personalization, sustainability, and exploration, were identified and incorporated based on the frequency of relevant keywords found in the data. These findings are presented in Table 2, where the numbers in the first column (e.g., 16, 9) indicate the frequency of respondents who mentioned the importance of each element in the context of creative tourism. The elements are listed in descending order based on their occurrence frequency.

**Table 2.** Critical creative elements and sample quotes.

CCE *	Innovative Content	Sample Quote
Innovation (16)	Cross-over and fusion of Elements	Our company and the Grand Canal Museum have jointly developed porcelain ornaments (B6) Our craft teacher’s peony porcelain and ancient famous paintings combined, to create the fourth generation of peony porcelain (B3)
	Innovative technology	More and more people like to customize 3D-printed ceramic ornaments for business contacts (B5)

Table 2. Cont.

CCE *	Innovative Content	Sample Quote
Co-creation (9)	Intellectual Property collaboration	Design by Luoyang Boli for Jiannanchun Group (B2) Our T-shirts and backpacks jointly launched with the museum are the most basic cultural and creative products (B10)
	Cooperate with other industries (such as film and TV series, reality show)	Luoyang Cultural Protection Group, Luoyang Radio and Television Media Group and iQIYI jointly create the “Glory is Back” Panoramic Humanities Exploration Program (B1) The CCTV Mid-Autumn Festival Gala recorded in Yingtianmen in 2020 also gave us great cultural confidence (G11)
Interaction (9)	Immersive experience	In Luoyang Museum and other scenic spots, there is 3D projection technology, with lighting and sound as the medium for ancient and modern dialogue (G1) We have developed a historical script to kill, a real game (B13)
	Intellectual Property blind box	The sales volume of archaeological blind boxes on our official website has always been high, and people prefer such interactive consumption (B15)
Personalization (9)	Customized product/service	The brand has also cooperated with many museums and attractions in Luoyang to customize products, such as the Sui-Tang Dynasties Grand Canal Cultural Museum (B6) Customers can according to their own needs, ask the tricolor ceramic art master Guo Aihe to personally design works (B6) We can set different courses for enrolled children (B12)
Sustainability (8)	Reuse of cultural resources	The scenic area represents the grotto culture in terms of stage plays and short videos. (G5) We reintegrate the peony with Luoyang traditional culture to develop new products (B3)
Exploration (7)	Research experience	We have set up Guo Aihe’s tri-color art research course in Innovation Park (B7). Now, the research and development direction are mainly research. Recently, we have been discussing with an education agency about the cooperation of research courses (B15)

\* CCE = Critical creative elements, (N) indicates occurrence frequency. Source: Organized by the Authors.

#### 4.1.1. Innovation

According to Richards and Wilson [6], the data reveal that a significant proportion of individuals acknowledge the industry’s capacity for innovation. Cultural and creative tourism, as defined in a literal sense, involves the integration of traditional culture as a framework with various industrial products, resulting in the creation of novel entities. This process of creativity, which entails the introduction of new elements to existing cultural products, serves as a crucial driver of innovation. In the realm of tourism, innovation often stems from product innovation. For instance, the creators of peony porcelain combined flowers with porcelain clay to develop a remarkable product that captivated global attention. The initial generation of peony porcelain closely resembled real flowers, but due to their overly realistic appearance and lack of vibrant colors, they gradually lost popularity in the market. Subsequent generations of peony porcelain not only introduced innovations in terms of color, but also incorporated 3D printing technology to apply a painting process onto the porcelain, which was previously unsuitable for mass production.

The successful implementation of design ideas has been made possible through the creative combination of traditional craftsmanship and modern techniques, as well as the transformation of the production process. An example of this can be seen in the adaptation

of Wang Ximeng's "A Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains" from the Northern Song Dynasty, where modern technology was used to top-print the design onto porcelain, resulting in a peony porcelain plate. This approach significantly reduced production time and cost compared to the traditional hand-painting process, making the product more competitive in terms of price and value.

Another instance of the integration of cultural elements and innovative technologies in the development of cultural and creative tourism products is demonstrated by Luoyang Bo Li, a subsidiary of Luoyang Historical and Cultural Preservation and Utilization Development Group Limited. They designed a cultural and creative ice cream inspired by the Yingtian Gate, and also unveiled a beautifully restored fan from the painting "The Nymph of the Luo River" during the "Glory is Back" event. These examples showcase the industry's new vitality and highlight the potential of combining cultural elements with innovative technologies. However, it is worth noting that due to the underdeveloped light industry in northern China, some enterprises in Luoyang have to design new products and outsource their production to specialized manufacturers in southern China, particularly in cities like Yiwu and Guangzhou. This allows for the creation of more intricate and refined traditional craft products.

#### 4.1.2. Co-Creation

In 2021, the Luoyang Cultural Preservation Group, the Luoyang Radio and Television Media Group, and iQIYI collaborated to produce a comprehensive humanities exploration program titled "Glory is Back". This program aimed to showcase the historical and cultural significance of Luoyang's 13 ancient capitals by delving into various themes in each episode. The performers involved in the program wore specially designed cultural and artistic shirts as well as trendy clothing, not only highlighting the new cultural and creative products of Luoyang but also inspiring viewers to develop an appreciation for this ancient capital. Furthermore, this collaborative effort extends beyond the realm of television, encompassing various aspects of the tourism industry [6,48,49]. The synergistic development of cultural and creative tourism will be primarily supported by various strategies such as optimized development features, Intellectual Property co-branding, and industrial cooperation. For instance, the collaboration between Luoyang Boli and JNC (Jiannanchun Group) in designing a cultural co-branded gift box exemplifies the potential of such partnerships. Further, cross border co-creation among regional cities can also offer a novel experience to tourists [50]. Through multi-pronged approaches, deep bundling, and the co-creation of experiences between the tourism and cultural industries, the growth and success of cultural and creative tourism will be facilitated.

#### 4.1.3. Interaction

According to the product developers at Loyang Boli, the most successful and profitable product in their online flagship shop is the archaeological blind box, which was developed in 2021. This particular product alone generates earnings that are equivalent to the combined earnings of all other products on the platform throughout the entire year. This trend indicates that consumers are placing greater emphasis on accessibility, participation, and experiential aspects when purchasing cultural and creative products. The development of cultural and creative tourism products caters to these consumer preferences, making them particularly prominent in the era of mass tourism. In a study conducted by Islam and Rahman [51], it was found that customer engagement on Facebook brand communities leads to increased trust in the brand's products and services. Additionally, Sashi [52] explained that customer engagement fosters trust between customers and brands by facilitating emotional connections in the exchange relationship.

Marketing scholars have posited that customer trust and loyalty can be enhanced through increased customer interaction, leading to a strong and ongoing psychological connection [53]. In the realm of cultural consumption, modern immersive experiences such as 3D projection and virtual experiences offer visitors the opportunity to engage

in a dialogue between the past and the present. These experiences serve as a bridge, allowing individuals to connect with history, heritage, and monuments across dimensions. Unlike traditional cultural tourism, creative tourism emphasizes the reflective interaction of tourists rather than passive observation. This distinction is significant as it implies a more direct interaction between tourists and residents, as opposed to relying solely on expert guides to convey cultural information [6].

#### 4.1.4. Personalization

With the rise of mass production in the industrial era, there has been a growing demand for personalized tourism and products that offer unique and creative experiences. This trend is encapsulated by the concept of the “experience economy,” which emphasizes the need for tourism and leisure providers to offer more interactive and engaging experiences [54]. In response to this demand, traditional tourist attractions and cultural heritage sites are increasingly collaborating with cultural and creative companies. For example, the Sui-Tang Dynasties Grand Canal Cultural Museum in Luoyang and the China Tri-Color Art Museum have joined forces to create the “Grand Canal Cultural and Tri-Color Art” brand. This collaboration has resulted in the creation of personalized Tri-Color Glazed Ceramics, porcelain parts within the museum, and Tri-Color glazed paintings inspired by the Sui Tang Grand Canal. These products have gained popularity among many visitors.

In addition to the “Grand Canal Cultural and Tri-Color Art” initiative, the enterprise has established collaborations with various museums and attractions in Luoyang, such as Li Jing Men, to introduce ceramic works with diverse themes. Customers have the opportunity to request personalized designs from Chinese ceramic art master Guo Aihe, thereby presenting a fusion of literary and historical treasures with customer preferences through the medium of traditional art.

#### 4.1.5. Sustainability

The emergence and growth of cultural and creative tourism in recent years aims to promote the sustainable development of modern tourism. This involves leveraging traditional cultural resources and the existing tourism industry to generate new ideas, facilitate industrial transformation, and embrace progressive approaches. This shift towards cultural and creative tourism is considered the prevailing trend, as it is rooted in intangible resources and offers greater sustainability compared to conventional forms of cultural or heritage tourism [55]. Cultural and creative tourism is regarded as a more sustainable form of tourism due to its emphasis on renewable creative resources, innovative adaptations of tangible cultural assets (such as the Sui-Tang Dynasties Grand Canal Cultural Museum), modern technological presentations of historical sites, and the ability to leverage a single resource to drive sustainable development across multiple stakeholder industries, thereby ensuring the longevity of cultural heritage.

In contrast to conventional cultural tourism, which primarily centers on fixed and tangible heritage, creative tourism places emphasis on active engagement with the living culture, involving participation in local life, experiencing intangible cultural elements, and acquiring new insights and experiences. To facilitate this, theatrical performances and immersive live-action role-playing (LARP) games are employed as means to involve visitors, immerse them in the essence of the culture, and leave a lasting impression. This approach extends beyond intangible cultural resources, encompassing intangible cultural heritage and other related aspects.

#### 4.1.6. Exploration

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in cultural tourism and ethnic tourism, leading to a preference among tourists for exploratory tourism products. Richards and Raymond [1] define ‘creative tourism’ as a form of tourism that allows visitors to tap into their creative potential by actively participating in courses and learning experiences that are characteristic of the destination. This concept aligns with the desires of the ‘creative

class', who seek tourism activities that provide opportunities to learn about local skills, expertise, traditions, and unique qualities of the places they visit [6]. In the conducted interviews, the study found that the most representative study products facilitate the integration and development of creative courses, local culture, and tourism resources. This integration allows visitors to gain a deeper understanding of cultural and creative tourism. For instance, the study highlighted the development of Sancai Art study courses, which not only provide insights into the process of Tang Tri-Color Glazed Ceramics but also encourage participants to explore new production methods and inject their creativity. This approach enriches the variety of Tang Tri-Color Glazed Ceramics and transforms traditional handicrafts into trendy items through practical exploration and positive interaction. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that in order to fully harness the benefits of creative tourism, managers should actively engage in the creative process. This involvement should extend beyond product innovation and also involve recognizing the creative potential of visitors [6].

#### 4.2. Market Demand

In the current era of tourism, there is a growing demand for meaningful experiences, prompting tourists to seek out travel opportunities that are both memorable and culturally enriching [56,57]. One way to achieve this is by actively participating in tourism activities that allow tourists to learn about and experience the unique culture of their destination, thereby stimulating their creative potential [1]. The cultural and creative tourism market places a strong emphasis on the imagination and creativity associated with cultural heritage [4]. Visitors who wish to immerse themselves in a cultural and creative tourism project often seek to gain a deeper understanding of the history, customs, cuisine, and inhabitants of the country they are visiting, while also enjoying a relaxing time. Additionally, they aim to foster intercultural dialogue, experience cultural diversity, and engage in informal environmental learning through their participation in cultural and creative tourism.

Visitors have the opportunity to enhance and expand their travel experience by participating in various thematic and related activities, such as festivals, conferences, exhibitions, poetry evenings, concerts, theatre performances, fairs, and workshops. According to Pine and Gilmore [58], the economy has shifted from the production of goods to the provision of services, with experiences now being recognized as the primary source of value creation. They argue that experiential consumption is a unique form of economic service that caters to the needs of a new type of consumer. Furthermore, they emphasize that although the experience is a service, it must be carefully orchestrated to actively engage the customer in order to create a memorable activity. Thus, based on these discussions, this study has analyzed the creative tourism market intensively, and after identifying the critical factors affecting the development, a significant demand for a segment of the market has been confirmed.

In a study conducted by Hung et al. [59], a positive correlation was discovered between creative experiences and memorability in the context of other creative tourism experiences. Another study by Tan et al. [44] focused on classifying creative tourists into different groups. They identified five distinct categories: novelty-seekers, knowledge and skills learners, individuals who prioritize the growth of their travel partners, those who are environmentally conscious, and individuals seeking relaxation and leisure. The findings of this study revealed variations in how individuals perceive creativity, as well as differences in their values and concerns related to creative experiences. Consequently, it is suggested that the development of creative experiences should be tailored to the specific needs and resources of visitors and destinations, with industry and companies taking an individualized approach [60]. In this study, critical factors for the growth of the industry are further explored after summarizing and applying the above findings. Bridging the gap in the development of sustainable innovation elements from a supplier's perspective.

Experiences are subjective and therefore unique to each individual, making it impossible for two people to have the exact same experience. However, research conducted



by domestic scholars suggests that cultural creative tourism is a form of tourism that is rooted in culture, characterized by high quality and flexibility. This type of tourism is centered around a specific cultural value proposition and offers visitors the opportunity to engage with and appreciate cultural materials. For instance, tourists can witness the mastery of Chinese stone carving art at the Longmen Grottoes or draw inspiration for artistic creation at the Tri-Color Art Study Base. These destinations provide visitors with an idealized and innovative cultural tourism experience. The primary demand of cultural and creative tourism is not a particular product, but rather a novel and progressive exploration that holds transformative significance and fosters creative pursuits. This type of tourism caters to individuals' higher-level spiritual needs, offers them ideal life experiences, and contributes to their overall sense of well-being.

## 5. Conclusions and Discussion

Despite the growing interest in cultural and creative tourism, there is a lack of quantitative research on this topic, particularly in relation to the critical creative aspects that can contribute to sustainable development [61]. The models proposed by Sacco and Blessi, as well as Bucci et al., emphasize the significance of local enterprises in the development of creative tourism [62,63]. However, further research is needed to substantiate and define these important elements. Although there has been increasing attention towards the development of cultural and creative tourism in recent years, there is a lack of quantitative research on this topic, particularly in relation to the critical creative elements of cultural and creative tourism. This study aims to address this gap by examining the perspectives of industry management, thereby contributing to the field of tourism research and practice. Using a qualitative research design, we conducted interviews with 20 individuals in industry management. The findings of this study highlight six critical elements that are crucial for the sustainable development of creative tourism: innovation, co-creation, interaction, personalization, sustainability, and exploration.

The results of the study suggest that the integration of critical creative elements and innovative content is compatible [64]. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of co-creation in the development of creative tourism [65], as well as the significance of interaction with the destination in attracting tourists [66] and promoting the industry's growth. The study also demonstrates that personalization [67] and sustainability [61] are key factors in the industry's development, providing examples to support these academic hypotheses. Furthermore, the study identifies the exploration aspect of creative tourism as a critical creative element that has a significant impact on performance, which has been overlooked in previous research.

Furthermore, the research has identified a compelling justification for promoting extensive collaboration among enterprises operating in the cultural and creative tourism sector across various regions. However, there exist certain obstacles to such cooperation, particularly between enterprises in the Southern and Northern regions. The considerable geographical distances between these regions result in substantial communication and transportation costs, which have been further exacerbated by the recent pandemic. It is worth noting that cultural and creative products originating from the North are manufactured in the South and subsequently transported back to local attractions for sale, resulting in a product premium. This has caused significant dissatisfaction among consumers who find the excessive price tags of these products to be unfavorable. Consequently, the industry must still make internal and external adjustments to accommodate its development.

### 5.1. Theoretical Implications

To the best of the authors' knowledge, this study represents pioneering research on cultural and creative tourism, specifically focusing on successful enterprises and empirically examining the concept of critical creative elements. This unique perspective offers valuable insights into the industry's importance and its long-term sustainability, which has not been extensively explored in existing literature. Previous research has primarily focused on

the consumer perspective [6] and the market's demand for creative aspects in tourism. In contrast, this study takes a more pluralistic approach by considering the development of cultural and creative tourism from the viewpoint of industry managers. It views creative tourism as a novel form of tourism that involves collaboration between tourists and local communities in the co-creation of tourism products and services [64]. The success of enterprises in this context plays a crucial role in determining the future development of creative tourism. Therefore, it is essential to examine the critical elements in creative tourism using this theoretical concept and perspective, as they are closely intertwined. The emergence and growth of creative industries are particularly significant for the development of tourism destinations. This pioneering empirical research identifies the key elements that enterprises prioritize when developing creative tourism in destinations. It not only offers new perspectives and a valuable framework for studying creative industries and destinations but also enhances our understanding of the significant contribution that the experience economy makes to the tourism industry's shift towards creativity [65].

This research aims to empirically investigate the successful experiences of enterprises operating in the creative tourism and experience economy environment. The study seeks to expand and enhance the elements and contents of creative products, thereby contributing to the enrichment of the "creativity" element. By introducing critical creative elements as a significant area of focus in creative tourism research, this research contributes to the development of the field. Additionally, this study addresses the lack of clarity in the definition of "creative" within the context of creative tourism, despite suggestions that producers should leverage their creative resources to offer authentic experiences rooted in local culture [6,14,27,66]. In response to a call by Richards et al., this study explores how industry-specific resources can be utilized to foster creative tourism and provides empirical evidence to elucidate the crucial role of critical creative elements in the growth of enterprises and destinations.

## 5.2. Managerial Implications

The findings of this project offer valuable information for creative tourism businesses and managers on how to effectively use creative resources and improve the management of important creative aspects.

### 5.2.1. Micro-Level Adjustments

First, it is important to integrate the existing resources of the enterprise in the context of cultural and creative tourism. This form of tourism is deeply rooted in cultural resources and also generates new cultural materials. While the development of cultural and creative tourism may deplete existing cultural resources, it also involves the integration of contemporary cultural resources, allowing for the reproduction of lifestyles that can be consumed. The process of resource restructuring aims to stimulate the production of new content for cultural and creative tourism, such as innovative product development, content material, and cultural symbols. This integration occurs through the interaction between regional cultural resources, the existing cultural environment of enterprises, and the willingness of tourists to consume. Therefore, in the development of creative tourism, corporations should recognize that creativity should be present not only in the production process but also in the process of attracting consumers to participate in tourism activities through the use of creative products. This approach ultimately creates value for all stakeholders involved [6].

Simultaneously, in light of the flourishing tourism industry and the increasingly diverse demands of tourists, it is imperative to align with market demand and the marketing characteristics of cultural and creative tourism. This entails integrating internal resources, fostering the development of market-oriented products, leveraging available resources, and aligning with the prevailing conditions of tourism resource distribution and market supply and demand. It is crucial to consolidate and package existing cultural and creative elements and implement a strategy that emphasizes differentiation. This strategy necessi-

tates providing visitors with compelling reasons to engage in specific creative activities in a particular destination [6]. Consequently, destination development requires more than just offering programs or educational activities; it demands creativity. In this process, tourists are regarded as active participants in the creative process rather than mere consumers of experiences. By thoroughly exploring existing resources, we can highlight the unique features of each product line, thereby achieving differentiation in competition, promoting coordinated development, and ultimately attaining sustainable enterprise growth.

Furthermore, in areas where there is sufficient strength and resources, it is recommended that cultural tourism enterprises actively diversify their operations by expanding their industrial chains. This can be achieved by increasing the added value of their capital and establishing cultural and creative industrial parks that encompass various tourism service functions such as hotels, attractions, catering, shopping, and entertainment. These parks can serve as a platform for the integration of innovative content elements. The creation of new elements in cultural and creative tourism is contingent upon the integration of important resource elements, the fusion of diverse cultural and creative elements, and the incorporation of new ideas that are characteristic of corporate cultural and creative tourism. This process involves challenging existing perceptions and promoting the upgrading of product quality, resulting in the development of high-quality cultural and creative products and tourism services. It is crucial to prioritize the implementation of high-quality projects and enhance the visibility of cultural and creative endeavors. As creative tourists engage in self-development, they gradually progress to the next stage of value creation, known as the “transformation” stage [58]. This transformation should be facilitated by developers enriching the connotations of their products, allowing visitors to willingly partake in unique cultural and creative tourism experiences. Additionally, enterprises can innovate conceptual elements by incorporating well-known elements, expanding their elemental libraries, and ultimately enhancing the core competitiveness of the cultural and creative tourism industry.

Finally, the organization arranges training programs for research and development specialists in order to keep the staff updated on industry advancements and to provide guidance in establishing new development concepts. By combining popular products in the market, we develop and design cultural and creative tourism products that align with current trends. Simultaneously, we enhance the professional competence of individuals and infuse dynamism into the enterprise through continuous learning. The development of cultural and creative tourism necessitates a significant number of skilled professionals who possess not only creative thinking but also a deep understanding of local culture, history, and humanities. In terms of talent development, enterprises can establish deep collaborations with universities and tourism-related departments to train competent R&D professionals, while also focusing on nurturing local talents in the creative field. This can be achieved by establishing craft culture streets and art studios in collaboration with local artisans or non-genetic inheritors, allowing visitors to either visit the site or engage in experiential learning. This approach not only promotes and safeguards traditional folk crafts but also serves the purpose of attracting tourists.

### 5.2.2. Micro-Level Planning

First, it is important to enhance the connection and collaboration between different sectors in order to facilitate horizontal development. The convergence of tourism and the creative industries has become increasingly evident, as evidenced by the rising number of scholars who are studying tourism as a creative industry. This integration has even led to the identification of a specific type of tourism known as ‘creative tourism’, which emphasizes active participation and co-creation [4]. In the development of cultural and creative tourism, it is crucial to not only foster cooperation and design collaboration among major cultural intellectual properties, but also to encourage cross-industry integration in various aspects such as film and television, new media, clothing, and food. This integration

will help promote regional culture and break down rigid industry boundaries, leading to the emergence of new forms of industry and the realization of industrial growth.

In the advancement of cultural and creative tourism, it is essential to foster the collaboration and design integration of significant cultural intellectual properties, as well as the cross-industry amalgamation of various sectors such as film and television, new media, fashion, and gastronomy. This concerted effort aims to effectively promote regional culture in diverse aspects. To achieve this, it is crucial to transcend rigid industrial boundaries and establish new forms of industry that embrace multiple fusion, cross penetration, and reorganization. Furthermore, breaking down the compartmentalization of enterprises in cooperative marketing is of utmost importance, as it allows for the unrestricted flow of production factors within the operational scope and facilitates the establishment of a seamless cooperative mechanism.

Simultaneously, it is crucial to cultivate a positive public perception and endeavor to ensure that each co-branded product achieves widespread popularity and strong consumer appeal. The implementation of cultural and creative tourism, as an innovative approach, transcends the inherent limitations of traditional tourism and progressively integrates into the broader framework of coordinated development within the industrial system. This integration facilitates the permeation of various elements, the reorganization of resources, and the co-creation of value. It is imperative to dismantle the barriers between enterprises in cooperative marketing, allowing for the unrestricted flow of production factors within the operational scope, thereby establishing an optimal cooperative mechanism. Additionally, efforts should be made to enhance the public image and strive for the high consumer desirability of each co-branded product. The adoption of cultural and creative tourism practices not only disrupts the conventional tourism ecosystem but also gradually assimilates into the larger macro ecosystem of coordinated industrial development, thereby facilitating the penetration of various elements, the reorganization of resources, and the co-creation of value.

According to Andersson and Thomsen [67], the integration of culture and business, along with the emphasis on the experience economy, are significant phenomena that reflect the “creative” turn. This shift involves using culture as a tool for growth and development [4]. As a result, tourism has become a key driver of economic growth in the cultural and creative sphere. The integration of cultural and creative tourism across borders has given rise to a new form of economy known as the creative industry. This industry is centered around cultural and creative products and services and encompasses various industrial and value chains, including cultural, creative, historical, social, and economic behaviors. Consequently, cultural and creative tourism destinations are expected to not only cater to the participation needs of visitors and create unique creative scenarios but also provide opportunities for visitors to engage with tourism products and enjoy the consumption of services. This, in turn, leads to the creation of new forms of tourism experiences.

Furthermore, it is essential for macro market research in industries such as tourism and cultural and creative sectors to not operate in isolation. The development of cultural resource management should be integrated with the operations and growth of multiple industries. This entails staying updated on domestic and international industrial trends and competition, promptly revising relevant policies, understanding market demand, and actively adapting to changes in the market environment. Additionally, it is crucial to enhance the talent training mechanism and cultivate high-quality employees to support enterprise development. Collaboration between different regions should also be strengthened to leverage their respective advantages and collectively create more advanced creative products. The pursuit of creative experiences and market-oriented transformations by tourists, the promotion of cultural and creative tourism destinations, and the deep integration of various industries necessitate macro market supervision and guidance. This will enhance the industry’s added value, foster innovation in industrial activities, promptly update macro data, and make necessary adjustments based on market demand.

### 5.3. Limitations and Future Research

Some limitations that need attention should be raised. First, this study conducted interviews with a limited sample size of 20 top management individuals from creative businesses in Luoyang. Despite their significance in the creative tourism industry, the researchers encountered common challenges in accessing and obtaining responses from these participants due to their lack of willingness [15]. Therefore, caution should be exercised when interpreting the results of this study. Second, while the research uncovers crucial creative elements to facilitate the sustainable development of creative tourism industry by providing a comprehensive discussion from interview results of existing business management, it has not adequately addressed the issue of how each elements affect creative experience. Quantitative approach can be employed in the future to explore further. Additionally, this study adopted a qualitative research approach using an urban destination in China and designed semi-structured interviews to explore in depth the critical creative elements for the sustainable development of creative tourism. However, given that the research area is only one specific city within part of the wider tourism destinations, future research could apply the theoretical definitions proposed in this study to other regions. This might include exploring destinations in different geographic regions, such as South China, or studying the concept in different countries to confirm whether the critical creative elements are similar, thereby generalizing the findings. Additionally, exploration with regards to the investment of each creative elements and its relation to business success and sustainability would also enrich business that want to join the creative tourism industry.

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