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Research on the Cultural Heritage Value Background of Shangdu Site Museum's Cultural Products Design and Promotion

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Abstract: As the earliest capital remains of the Shang Dynasty, the Shangdu Site embodies the core developmental values of early urban civilization in China. Serving as a pivotal platform for cultural inheritance and publicity of the relics, Shangdu Site Museum develops cultural and creative commodities that act as vital carriers for the dynamic inheritance and innovative dissemination of cultural heritage. Taking Shangdu Site Museum as the research subject, this study proceeds from the perspective of cultural heritage value transformation. It systematically sorts out the resource advantages of the museum's cultural and creative development and summarizes the practical bottlenecks restricting its industrial progress. Targeted development strategies are proposed from three core dimensions, including design innovation, brand communication, and operational guarantee. The research aims to facilitate the contemporary interpretation and innovative transformation of Shang cultural symbols, while enhancing the cultural dissemination influence and sustainable developmental capacity of heritage museums.

Keywords: Shangdu Site; Shangdu Site Museum; Cultural and creative product design; Cultural heritage value; Promotion strategy

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1. Introduction

China's museum industry is undergoing a critical transformation from the traditional object-oriented collection and display mode to a people-centered public cultural service system. In this context, cultural and creative products have become a key bridge connecting museums, cultural heritage and the general public. As the location of the early Shang Dynasty capital city, Zhengzhou boasts the Shang Palace Ruins, which serve as the core cultural symbol of urban civilization and a key research carrier for exploring the origin of Chinese civilization. Officially opened to the public in 2022, Shangdu Site Museum has made steady progress in site protection, cultural exhibition and heritage popularization. Nevertheless, its cultural and creative industry

development lags far behind the overall construction and operational progress of the museum. How to deeply explore the intrinsic value of local cultural heritage and build a sound cultural and creative system that balances cultural identity and market competitiveness has become an urgent practical problem to be solved for the sustainable development of Shangdu Site Museum.

2. Cultural heritage value foundation and cultural and creative development context of Shangdu Site Museum

2.1. Core cultural heritage value of Zhengzhou Shangdu Site

Situated in the hinterland of the Central Plains, Zhengzhou functioned as a crucial political, economic and cultural hub in ancient China. Endowed with abundant cultural heritage resources, the city ranks among the top regions in China in terms of the quantity and scale of historical relics and sites. As a significant archaeological discovery in Chinese academic circles, Zhengzhou Shangdu Site represents a large-scale urban relic of early Chinese civilization with profound historical and cultural significance [1]. Dating back approximately 3,600 years, the early Shang capital ruins clarify the developmental origin of the Yin Ruins civilization of the late Shang Dynasty, provide critical chronological and spatial coordinates for the research of Xia culture, and fill the academic gap in the study of early urban civilization in China. In terms of relic layout, the Shangdu Site retains a complete three-layer city wall structure, with clearly divided functional zones including palace areas, handicraft workshop clusters and residential districts, reflecting the advanced urban planning concepts of the early Shang period. A large number of precious cultural relics have been unearthed from the site, such as bronze square tripods with beast face patterns, primitive porcelain wares, oracle bone inscriptions and pottery inscriptions marked with the character “Bo”. These relics comprehensively witness the mature bronze civilization, sophisticated handicraft techniques and primitive writing system of the early Shang Dynasty. Cultural heritage not only serves as tangible historical evidence, but also constitutes the core connotation of Zhengzhou’s Shang cultural identity and the fundamental support for urban cultural construction. Since 2017, the Zhengzhou Municipal Government has designated the Shangdu Historical and Cultural Zone as a key urban cultural functional area, promoting the integrated development of large-scale heritage protection and urban construction, and providing solid policy support and spatial guarantee for the prosperity of local cultural and creative industries.

2.2 Exhibition system and cultural resource endowment of Shangdu Site Museum

Shangdu Site Museum is a specialized thematic museum constructed based on the Shangdu Site, and it also acts as the core cultural landmark of Zhengzhou Shangdu National Archaeological Site Park. Established for the protection and display of Shang Dynasty relics, the museum is a core component of the national archaeological park, undertaking the important function of displaying the historical charm and cultural connotation of Shangdu Site in an all-round manner [2]. Officially launched in July 2022, the museum covers an exhibition area of about 5,500 square meters, with seven themed exhibition sections, namely the Cradle of Civilization, Birds Breeding the Shang Dynasty, Majestic Shangdu, Grand Shang Capital, Center of the Four Directions, Eternal Heritage, and Heritage Protection. The museum collects and displays more than 1,000 cultural relics covering bronze wares, jade artifacts, bone crafts and pottery wares. In terms of exhibition methods, the museum abandons the single display mode of traditional museums and adopts diversified presentation means including scene restoration, sand table models and multimedia audio-visual technologies.

These innovative methods vividly reproduce the urban spatial layout, handicraft production scenarios, social operation modes, and sacrificial rituals of the early Shang capital, enabling visitors to gain an immersive experience of ancient Shang civilization. The three-dimensional and diversified exhibition system lays a rich material foundation for cultural and creative product development. Diverse cultural elements can be extracted from museum resources, including the beast face decorative patterns on the Du Ling Square Tripod, the legendary totem of bird-origin Shang culture, rammed earth textures of ancient city walls, pictographic pottery inscriptions, and primitive porcelain glaze colors. All these distinctive cultural symbols can be transformed into innovative design inspirations for cultural and creative products. In addition, the museum is located in the core urban area of Zhengzhou, integrating with residents' daily living spaces. With an average annual passenger flow of over 10 million person-times, it possesses superior natural market conditions for the popularization and consumption of cultural and creative products.

3. Current dilemmas and root causes of cultural and creative product development of Shangdu Site Museum

3.1. Supply-side deficiencies: Single product category and superficial cultural interpretation

The existing cultural and creative products of Shangdu Site Museum face prominent problems of homogeneous design and shallow cultural expression. In terms of product categories, commodities with exclusive Shangdu cultural attributes are limited to a small number of types such as printed cushions, canvas bags, scarves and decorative ornaments. More than half of the on-sale products belong to universal cultural commodities without unique site cultural symbols, resulting in weak cultural recognition. From the perspective of design logic, most products merely adopt simple pattern printing and element splicing techniques. Developers fail to deeply explore and refine the core cultural symbols of Shang civilization, and lack innovative transformation of the aesthetic characteristics of representative cultural relics such as Du Ling Square Tripod and primitive porcelain. Meanwhile, the historical stories and cultural connotations behind classic legends, including the bird-origin Shang founding and the establishment of Bo Capital, have not been fully integrated into product design. Outdated design languages and insufficient aesthetic expression greatly reduce the competitiveness of museum cultural and creative products. This predicament stems from two main aspects. On the one hand, the museum's cultural and creative industry started late with insufficient capital investment, failing to form a systematic and standardized industrial development system. On the other hand, the depth of cultural interpretation in the design process is inadequate. Most design practices only copy superficial visual symbols mechanically, without combining contemporary life scenarios for secondary innovation and creative upgrading. Such problems lead to a lack of unique cultural memory points in products, which cannot meet the diversified aesthetic demands and practical usage needs of modern consumers.

3.2. Brand communication defects: Low public recognition and narrow channel coverage

In terms of brand construction, although Shangdu Site Museum has an independent official logo, it has not yet built a unified visual identification system for cultural and creative products. Inconsistent design styles and packaging specifications of different product lines make it difficult for consumers to form stable and unified brand cognition. Compared with mature IP operation cases of domestic top museums, the brand

influence and public recognition of Shangdu cultural and creative products remain at a relatively low level. The museum has not developed core communicable cultural symbols and market-popular products, resulting in the absence of a scalable brand effect. In terms of marketing channels, the sales of cultural and creative products mainly rely on offline physical stores inside the museum, with consumer groups limited to on-site visitors. The single-channel layout and narrow coverage restrict the market promotion and popularization of Shangdu cultural and creative products, severely hindering the sustainable development of the museum's cultural and creative industry.

3.3. Operational support shortcomings: Inadequate resource integration and marketization capacity

The development of cultural and creative industries requires interdisciplinary resource integration and professional market operation capabilities, which are the main weaknesses of Shangdu Site Museum's industrial construction. In terms of talent allocation, the museum's existing team is dominated by professionals engaged in archaeology and cultural heritage protection, lacking professional talents in creative design, brand planning, market promotion and e-commerce operation. The unbalanced talent structure cannot support the high-quality and systematic development of cultural and creative businesses. In terms of resource docking, the museum has not established in-depth cooperative relationships with local design colleges, cultural tourism enterprises and cultural and creative institutions. A mature operation mode integrating museum-campus cooperation and government-enterprise linkage has not been formed, leading to low utilization efficiency of external social resources. In terms of operational mechanism, the cultural and creative business still adheres to the traditional public institution operation mode with a low degree of marketization. The lack of flexible incentive systems and profit feedback mechanisms results in weak independent innovation and iterative upgrading capacity of the cultural and creative industry.From the perspective of long-term heritage protection, cultural and creative development is not a simple commercial behavior. Qualified cultural and creative products can integrate Shang civilization into modern public life, help the public understand the historical value of Zhengzhou Shangdu Site, and effectively improve citizens' cultural heritage protection awareness and cultural literacy [3]. Therefore, optimizing the museum's operational support system is not only an essential requirement for industrial upgrading, but also an inevitable choice for the inheritance and revitalization of Shang cultural heritage.

4. Heritage value-oriented innovative design and promotion paths for Shangdu Site Museum's cultural products

4.1. Deep heritage embedding: Innovative upgrade of cultural and creative product design

The core of museum cultural and creative design lies in the contemporary innovative transformation of traditional cultural symbols, which needs to retain the spiritual connotation of cultural heritage while adapting to modern aesthetic concepts and daily usage scenarios. Shangdu Site Museum should first establish a standardized and systematic Shang cultural symbol database by extracting core elements from three dimensions, including museum collections, site spatial forms, and historical cultural connotations. Specifically, decorative elements cover beast face patterns on bronze tripods and hollow carvings on bronze axes; spatial elements include rammed earth textures of city walls and square capital urban layout; cultural

elements involve bird totems, “Bo” character pottery inscriptions and Shang Dynasty divination and sacrificial cultural symbols. All extracted cultural elements should be simplified and modernized through flat design processing to form reusable standardized design materials, avoiding random and blind element application. In terms of product system construction, hierarchical and categorized development strategies should be adopted to meet the consumption needs of different groups. First, collection-oriented high-end products are designed for cultural enthusiasts and collectors, including high-precision cultural relic replicas and limited-edition artistic derivatives made by traditional craftsmanship, with both artistic appreciation value and collection value. Second, daily practical products target ordinary consumer groups, integrating Shang cultural symbols into stationery, home supplies, accessories and digital peripheral products to realize the organic integration of traditional culture and modern daily life. Third, trendy youth-oriented products focus on young consumer groups, developing themed figurines, archaeological surprise boxes and other popular commodities. Referencing the mature operation experience of Henan Museum’s archaeological blind boxes, the study designs innovative products based on Shang bronze ritual vessels, pottery and primitive porcelain, matched with professional cultural explanation cards, enabling consumers to acquire cultural knowledge and experience archaeological fun in the consumption process. In terms of design concepts, the rigid and heavy expression of historical culture should be abandoned, and lightweight and modern design languages should be adopted to interpret Shang civilization. Complex bronze beast face patterns can be decomposed into minimalist geometric patterns for application in clothing and home products; “Bo” character pottery inscriptions can be optimized through calligraphy design to build distinctive text IP. Meanwhile, product material innovation should be emphasized. The adoption of environmentally friendly new materials and advanced production technologies can effectively improve product texture, realizing the unified integration of culturality, practicality and aesthetics, and creating distinctive Shangdu cultural and creative products with contemporary aesthetic characteristics.

4.2. Scenario-based full coverage: Construction of integrated brand promotion system

The cultural communication influence of cultural and creative products relies on unified brand positioning and comprehensive three-dimensional promotion networks. Shangdu Site Museum should build an exclusive “Shangdu Cultural Creativity” independent brand and form a complete visual identity system. It is necessary to unify brand logos, standard colors, auxiliary graphics and product packaging styles, and integrate core cultural symbols such as bird totems and Du Ling Square Tripod into all product design and promotion links, forming unique brand memory points. Meanwhile, the museum can develop serialized cultural content including short video programs of “Shangdu Relics Interpretation” and illustrated story albums of bird-origin Shang culture, enriching brand cultural connotation and strengthening emotional connection between the brand and the public. In terms of offline channels, a three-level sales network covering museum flagship stores, site scenic outlets and urban cooperative terminals should be established. First, optimize the internal cultural and creative stores of the museum, set up themed cultural and creative zones corresponding to exhibition halls, build bronze culture experience areas beside bronze exhibition areas, and arrange blind box interactive experience areas in archaeological exhibition zones, realizing seamless connection between exhibition viewing and cultural consumption. Second, arrange self-service vending machines and mini sales points at key scenic nodes of Shangdu Site to meet the consumption needs of mobile tourist groups. Third, expand urban scenario coverage by cooperating with Zhengzhou’s commercial districts, bookstores, hotels,

and railway stations, setting up special sales counters for Shangdu cultural and creative products to realize full coverage of urban consumption scenarios. In terms of online communication, build a diversified matrix covering e-commerce platforms and social media, carry out precise online promotion and sales, and expand the brand's online influence and market coverage.

4.3. Multi-subject collaboration: Construction of diversified operational guarantee mechanism

The sustainable development of museum cultural and creative industries requires sound operational mechanisms and diversified resource support. Shangdu Site Museum needs to break the restriction of internal single resources and build an open and collaborative industrial operation mode. In terms of talent training and industry cooperation, the museum should deepen school-local integration and government-enterprise linkage. Cooperate with local art and design colleges to build a cultural heritage R&D base, hold special cultural and creative design competitions, and attract young professional designers to participate in product innovation. Meanwhile, introduce professional cultural and creative operation teams through cooperation with market-oriented enterprises, undertake professional work such as brand planning, channel expansion and e-commerce operation, and make up for the shortage of internal professional talents. In terms of cultural tourism integration, strengthen cooperation with tourism management departments and tourism enterprises, incorporate Shangdu Site Museum into Zhengzhou's core cultural tourism routes, and launch characteristic tourism products integrating heritage viewing and cultural and creative experience. Rely on tourist passenger flow to drive product sales and brand popularization. In terms of operational mechanism, adhere to the development principle of "public welfare orientation and market-oriented operation". Classify cultural and creative products according to public welfare attributes and market attributes: popular cultural popularization products maintain break-even operation to ensure the public service nature of museum culture; limited-edition collection products and co-branded products adopt market-oriented pricing strategies. The operating profits are fed back into cultural and creative R&D and heritage protection work, forming a virtuous cycle of cultural inheritance and industrial development. In addition, the museum needs to establish a standardized IP management system, standardize the commercial authorization of cultural symbols, protect brand intellectual property rights, and avoid excessive commercialization and vulgarization of cultural heritage. A strict product review mechanism should be implemented to conduct multi-dimensional inspection of product cultural authenticity, production quality, and safety standards before launch, so as to maintain the professional credibility and cultural authority of the museum's cultural and creative products.

5. Conclusion

The cultural and creative development of Shangdu Site Museum essentially realizes the innovative transformation of 3,600-year-old Shang civilization from static museum display to dynamic public cultural experience. From in-depth exploration of heritage cultural connotation and innovative product design to multi-scenario brand communication and full-channel market promotion, the upgrading of Shangdu cultural and creative industries not only provides sustainable economic support for museum operation and heritage protection, but also activates the contemporary vitality of traditional cultural heritage. In future development, the museum should always balance heritage protection and innovative development, continuously explore a distinctive development path suitable for archaeological site museums, realize the long-term inheritance

and contemporary revitalization of Shang civilization, and enrich the profound cultural connotation of urban cultural construction.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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