

Research on the Development Ways of Private Museums

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Abstract: The development of private museums has certain economic effects and strong social influence. However, these private museums are faced with the dilemma of shortage of funds. The insufficient source of quantity of income and the insufficient amount of revenue limit their sustainable and innovative development. The research focuses on the development model of the linkage between cultural and creative products and brand construction for the purpose of promoting sustainable operation and the development of private museums. With effective and efficient resource integration, mutual supports can be obtained through establishing brands of private museums and the brands of cultural and creative events and products. Stronger brand effects can stimulate further development of cultural and creative products provided by private museums and help to gain more social influence on the sustainable operation. The strategic alliance of the cultural and creative products brands, museum brands and other commercial brands is feasible to release the dilemma of the lack of operating funds and helpful for sustainable development of private museums.

1. Introduction

Historical and cultural heritage carries historical information and retains the cultural roots, while museums play a crucial role in preserving, studying, interpreting, displaying and inheriting various historical and cultural heritage. Although state-owned museums have certain advantages of long and rich history, scale, collections in both quantity and qualities and social influence of their collections, private museums have preserved some cultural relics. Those collections do not attract the attention of state-owned museums, and yet they are worthy to be preserved and be considered as the supplement to the exhibits of state-owned museums. The development of private museums will help to organize and preserve folk cultural relics, which makes contributions to the inheritance, protection, dissemination and promotion of Chinese culture. The further studying in historical and cultural resources can support the scientific education of the masses and provide rich nutrients for the development of China's cultural industry. Therefore, studying the ways of development of private museums can not only help them to improve their economic effects, but also facilitate the inheritance and promotion of regional culture, and bring certain social effects.

2. Current Status of Development of Private Museums

Some scholars believe that various recreational activities, including the operation of private museums, can obtain opportunities for further and stronger development with the rapid growth of Chinese economy. Sihong Zhang pointed out that the development of private museums is the inevitable result of the growth of citizens' spiritual and cultural needs under the background of the sustainable and stable development of China's economy and society. It is essential to mobilize the whole society to participate extensively and jointly build a public cultural service system, which plays the role in promoting cultural prosperity and development and the construction of a harmonious society [1]. China's economic development will drive more appearance of private museums focusing on exploiting features in collections and exhibitions.

A certain number of scholars focus on the development of cultural and creative products in museums. The enthusiasm of the market demand also proves the considerable economic benefits of cultural and creative products. Yingjuan Ma and Ying Dong probed into how to stimulate the reform of traditional industries and transform the urban economy structures through the rapid expansion of cultural and creative industries [2]. The Palace Museum combines artistic and cultural relics with contemporary life to develop practical, daily and scene-oriented cultural and creative products. Well-designed combination of on-line and under-line marketing activities also created good promotion effects [3]. The research of Cheng Zhao provide detailed explanation of application of the Taiwan History Museum to the added value of cultural creativity. Museums can select collections in line with the audiences' aesthetic sense and market values, classify these selected collections based on their development potential as culture and creative products, creative-design and authorize the culture resources with appended collections through brand creation and promotion [4].

Some scholars have studied the branding and development of private museums. Yonghong Zhai stressed that a good museum brand image will help to gain higher social attention, recognition and influence. However, some private museums have defects such as vague positioning and lack of characteristics in the process of brand establishment [5]. The "Guggenheim Model" is to provide franchisees with professional venue design, lending exhibits, assisting in organizing exhibitions, sending professional managers and other related support work to achieve brand output [6]. The brand construction and development of cultural and creative brands of museums have also attracted much attention. Siting Gu and Qinchuan Zhan studied the brand image of Shanxi History Museum in establishing cultural and creative brands with regional cultural characteristics of Shanxi, and put forward the role of regional culture in the formation of museum cultural and creative brand characteristics [7]. Jianling Zheng proposed that the museum's clear brand image, strong product and brand correlation, and good quality perception of cultural and creative products can achieve a win-win result as enhancing museum brand and products brand effects [8].

3. Main Problems in The Development of Private Museums

Private museums' operation funds mainly rely on donation from social individuals and enterprises [9], which is affected by the financial status of the individual donors and the donor enterprises. The sources of income also include ticket sales, sales of food & beverage and other services providing inside the museum, venue space rent, sales of derivatives and cultural and creative products, and revenue from brand authorization. Some private museums will also reduce ticket prices in order to enhance its public welfare and get government political and financial support.

Private museums have weakness in construction scale of venue, the quantity and quality of collections and the overall social influence such as media attention since the "congenital shortage" of the scarcity and precious of collections in private museums caused by limited amount of social

donations and private capital investment. This directly leads to the lack of attraction of private museums to audiences, and the difficulty in improving ticket sales and other consumption in the venue. The revenue from venue rental is also extremely unstable because venue rental would be restricted by the original design and function of the venue space. In order to obtain operating funds, some private museums have to sell some of its collections. Even some hybrid space layout appeared including both exhibition and selling areas. The consequence of mixing the collection exhibition and product display would lead to the uneven quality of collections in private museums and the lack of purpose and behavior towards public welfare.

In recent years, with the growing popularity of cultural and creative products provided by the Palace Museum, the gradual formation of brand characteristics and personality, and the continuous expansion of brand influence have inspired and provided some experience for private museums for their own survival and development. Social organizations, including private museums, began to explore a suitable field of cultural and creative product development. However, the number of popular cultural and creative products is limited, and most cultural and creative products are still in the extensive stage of simply adding some cultural elements to the items. Due to the lack of creativity, private museums have problems of serious homogenization. Moreover, they also face the difficulty in quality control and shortage of systematic development [10]. These problems also plague private museums that try to improve their difficult operations through the development of cultural and creative products.

4. Mutual Development between Cultural & Creative Products and Brand Building

The model of “mutual development between cultural and creative products and brand construction” shows the internal logic of private museums to promote development with cultural and creative products, brand mutual promotion and resource integration as the core (see Figure 1).

The model aims to alleviate or solve the problem of insufficient funds and resources of the private museums, strengthen the integration of internal and external resources and promote cultural and creative products and brand construction, form a brand alliance to promote mutual development, and then obtain more resources to regurgitation-feeding the development of private museums, which help to achieve a virtuous cycle of resource accumulation.

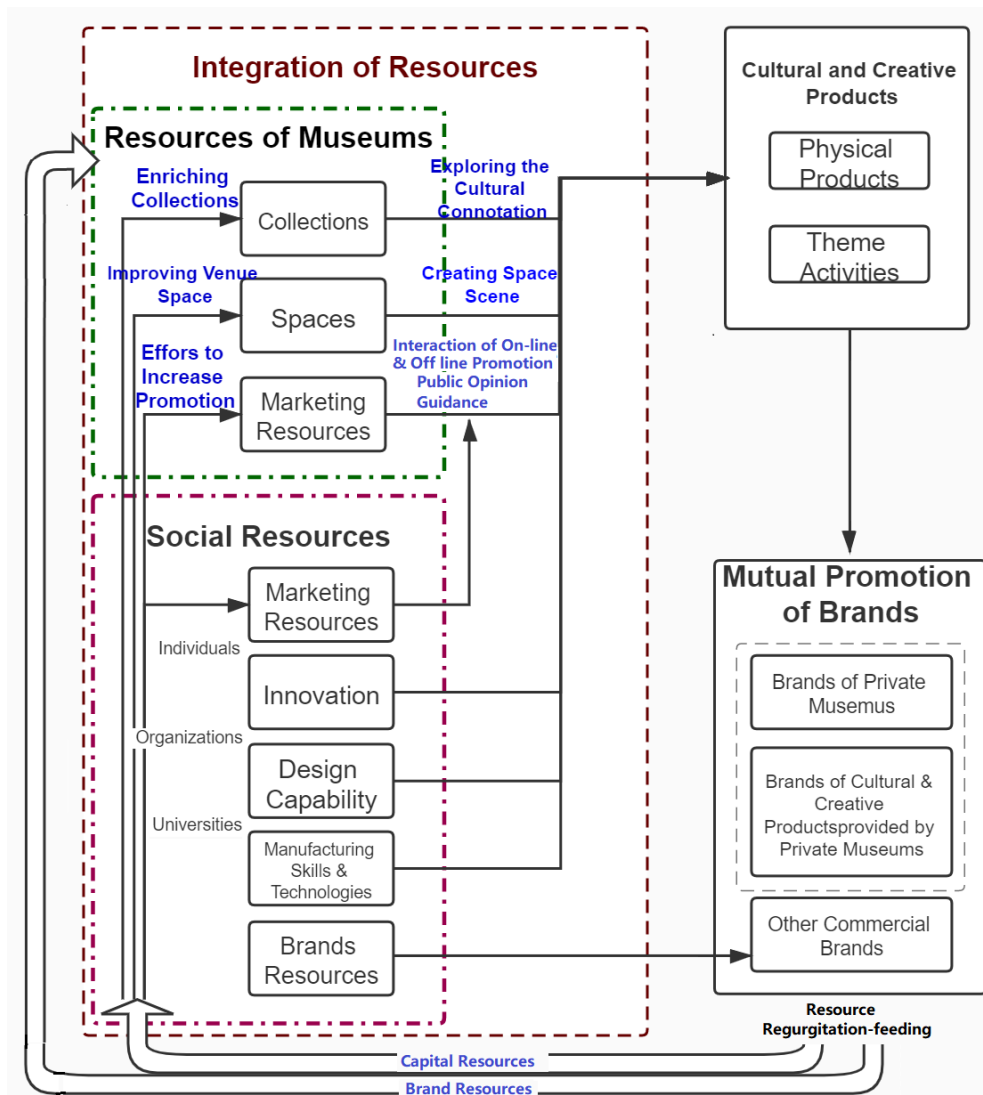


Figure 1: The model of mutual development between cultural and creative products and brand construction.

Cultural and creative products include physical products and series of theme activities. Expanding social influence with a series of physical products and cultural and creative theme activities, and establishing cultural and museum brands would be useful to increase income sources and profitability. The cases as hot cultural and creative products provided by the Palace Museum [11] and the creative activity of the "National Tide Pavilion" organized by People's Daily [12], also show the positive role of cultural and creative products in improving producer profitability to a certain extent.

It is vital for a private museum to integrate internal and external resources effectively, to launch cultural and creative products successfully and to enhance the overall brand effect and keep sustainable operation and development. Private museums should systematically sort out their own collections, discover different kinds and levels of cultural connotations of different collections. When and what kinds of cultural connotations can be extracted for the development of cultural and creative products should be planned and pre-designed according to their own development stages and characteristics. Successful cultural and creative products need to obtain sufficient investment and support in cultural connotation exploration, creative design, product manufacturing skills and

technology, event management and marketing, etc. It is difficult for private museums to satisfy the previous requirements by themselves. Talents of design may have shortcomings in their ability to grasp the cultural connotation, while the researchers with a more accurate grasp of the cultural content lack an understanding of the artistic presentation methods and material selection.

Meanwhile, the lack of information in market demand, production and business operation will lead to some other problems in market positioning, production and marketing cost control [13]. In response to the lack of its own resources, Guoshuai Fu proposed a model that combine the social forces with cultural and creative works [14] which is worthy of private museums reference. Private museums can carry out multi-directional cooperation with non-genetic inheritors, collectors, enterprises, universities and so on, to solve the defects of their own development [4]. The space resources of the venue can not only create an adaptation scene and foil an atmosphere for the cultural and creative products to enhance the audience experience and cultural perception, but also increase the attraction and bargaining power for the site leasing. In addition, in response to the weakness of the lack of marketing resources, private museums should make good use of the brand alliance, introduce or use the marketing resources of the partners.

Museum brands with certain popularity and good reputation can try conducting brand authorization, or incorporate cultural content into the value chain in manufacturing to enhance added value of the products or create certain kinds of new value [15]. Conducting more types and wider ranges of brand strategy alliances as cross-border cooperation could help to achieve joint marketing and brand branding [4].

The improvement of profitability enables private museums to have more resources to enrich their collections and improve collections' quality. The proper exhibition and preservation of the collections, and the cultural promotion and publicity of cultural and creative activities themselves have a strong positive externality. High quality and high cultural value collections can be further used by museums for the excavation of cultural resources and the design and development of cultural creation activities. It then enriches and deepens the museum connotation of the brand, and expands brand effect, so as to encourage social resources into the cultural industry, participate in public cultural service system construction, improve the level of regional culture opening. In line with the Third Plenary Meeting of The Eighteenth Central Committee of the Chinese communist party which focuses on the social benefits, consolidation of social and economic benefits. Stimulating the whole national cultural creativity serves as the central link thus deepening the reform of the cultural system.

5. Conclusion

Private museums are currently in an economic environment conducive to their development. Opportunities and difficulties coexist. Although a certain number of private museums are faced with the difficulties of capital access and lack of funds restricting their development, they can still take the advantage of inside and outside social resources integration to develop profitable cultural and creative events and products to relieve the financial pressure in operation. Successful cultural and creative products are conducive to promoting the establishment of cultural and creative brands and museum brands, and laying a foundation for private museums to further realize brand strategy alliance, brand authorization and other activities that help to enhance profitability.

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