

Research on the Cultural Route Relics of the Qi'ao Ancient Road in Southern China From the Perspective of E-commerce New Media Marketing*

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This study focuses on the protection and revitalization utilization of linear cultural heritage, selecting the Qi'ao Ancient Road in Southern China as a typical case study, a cultural route with both historical depth and practical significance. The paper first systematically reviews four theoretical foundations: “cultural route”, “cultural heritage/relics”, “structural functionality and space”, and “e-commerce new media marketing”, constructing an integrated “function—culture—space” analytical framework. Guided by this framework, the research establishes the investigation path with the Ming and Qing Dynasties as the temporal scope and the Southern and Eastern Main Routes of the Qi'ao Ancient Road as the spatial scope. It comprehensively employs literature research, field surveys, and Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis methods to systematically screen and analyze the value of tangible and intangible cultural relics along the ancient road. The study shows that the Qi'ao Ancient Road was not only a vital land transportation artery between Guangdong and Macao during the Ming and Qing Dynasties and an important overland link for the Maritime Silk Road, but also a witness to the integration of Chinese and Western cultures, the spread of ideas, and social transformations. In response to the current state of its protection and utilization, this paper innovatively proposes an integrated e-commerce new media marketing strategy centered on the “Online Three-in-One” (cross-border e-commerce platforms, independent websites, overseas social media) and “Offline Six-in-One” (museums/cultural centers, cultural/tourism bureaus, scenic areas, universities/research institutions, enterprises, and intangible cultural heritage experience shops). This strategy aims to transform and disseminate the value of the ancient road's cultural relics through modernized, marketized, and experiential means, thereby providing a path reference with both theoretical foresight and practical operability for achieving holistic protection, sustainable utilization, and methodological innovation in linear cultural heritage.

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Research Background and Objectives

The study of linear cultural heritage is a current academic hotspot in the field of historical heritage protection. It transcends the isolated examination of single heritage sites, emphasizing the overall value of corridor-style cultural heritage formed in dynamic historical processes, composed of both tangible and intangible elements. This field inherently possesses interdisciplinary attributes and is a frontier for the intersection of theories and integration of methods from philosophy, archaeology, history, anthropology, geography, and management, among others.

The Southern China Ancient Post Road network is an important spatial carrier of Lingnan's historical culture. Among them, the Qi'ao Ancient Road, connecting Xiangshan (now Zhongshan, Zhuhai) in Guangdong and Macao, is particularly unique. Constructed during the Qing Dynasty, it spans over seventy kilometers and is divided into Eastern and Southern Main Routes. Under the special historical background of the Ming and Qing maritime bans and the "single-port trade" policy, Macao, as a unique window for Sino-Western interaction, elevated the Qi'ao Ancient Road beyond the significance of an ordinary trade route. It was not only the lifeline for commodity trade and personnel movement between Guangdong and Macao and the "golden section" of the Maritime Silk Road extending inland, but also a crucial channel for the dissemination of Western thought, culture, science, and technology, and even democratic systems into the interior, as well as for the incubation and emergence of China's modern reformist and revolutionary ideas. A large number of figures influencing the course of modern Chinese history, such as Hong Xiuquan, Zheng Guanying, Liang Qichao, Kang Youwei, and Sun Yat-sen, have deep connections with this road. Therefore, the Qi'ao Ancient Road can be considered a key to studying the foreign trade history of Guangdong during the Ming and Qing, the role of Macao in modernization, Sino-Western cultural interaction, and social changes in Lingnan.

However, with the evolution of modern transportation systems, the ancient road's original transportation function has faded. Its route has become increasingly blurred, and relics along it face dual threats of natural erosion and human neglect, with its overall value not fully recognized and utilized. How to effectively protect, interpret, and revitalize such linear cultural heritage in the new era has become an urgent issue. At the same time, digital technologies represented by social media, e-commerce, short videos, and live streaming are profoundly changing the patterns of cultural dissemination and consumption, providing unprecedented tools and scenarios for the "creative transformation and innovative development" of cultural heritage.

In light of this, this study aims to achieve the following objectives: (1) Taking the Qi'ao Ancient Road as a specific object, use "cultural route" theory to clarify its heritage nature and constituent elements; (2) Construct an integrated "function—culture—space" analytical framework to systematically sort out and evaluate the historical, scientific, and artistic value of its relics; (3) Confront the practical dilemmas in protection and utilization, innovatively introduce e-commerce new media marketing concepts and methods, and design a set of integrated online-offline marketing strategies; (4) Through this case study, aim to provide a systematic theoretical framework, actionable planning strategies, and suggestions for safeguard mechanisms for the more universal protection and revitalization of linear cultural heritage, promoting the standardization and efficiency of research in this field.

Research Content and Methods

The main content of this research includes: (1) Theoretical foundation construction: Explain the connotations of cultural route, cultural heritage/relics, structural functionalism and space theory, and the e-commerce new media marketing model, and their logical integration in this study. (2) Heritage ontology research: Relying on historical literature and field surveys, reconstruct the historical context and spatial trajectory of the Qi'ao Ancient Road, and screen and identify key cultural relic nodes along the route (such as post stations, passes, shops, guild halls, temples, former residences of famous figures, etc.). (3) Value assessment and problem diagnosis: Evaluate the multi-dimensional value of the ancient road and its relics from a holistic perspective, and analyze the main problems existing in current protection, management, interpretation, and utilization. (4) Strategy and path construction: Combine the "Online Three-in-One" and "Offline Six-in-One" models of e-commerce new media marketing to propose holistic protection, promotion, and cultural-tourism integration utilization paths for the Qi'ao Ancient Road cultural route.

In terms of research methods, three main methods are adopted: (1) Literature research method: Systematically collect and organize official histories, local gazetteers, archives, literati notes, modern and contemporary research works, and folk documents to sort out the historical evolution and academic history of the ancient road. (2) Field survey method: Conduct on-site inspections of the Qi'ao Ancient Road, obtaining first-hand data on the preservation status of relics, community memory, and utilization practices through participant observation, in-depth interviews (targeting cultural heritage workers, local residents, tourists), and image recording. (3) Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis method: Use GIS technology to digitally reconstruct the ancient road route, employ buffer analysis and other methods to determine the spatial relevance and influence range of relics, and achieve spatial visualization and quantitative analysis of heritage information.

Research Innovations

The innovations of this study are as follows: First, cross-disciplinary innovation in perspective: Combine cultural heritage protection theory with cutting-edge e-commerce new media marketing practices, infusing "heat" and market vitality into "obscure" linear cultural heritage, exploring a new path for the close integration of academic research and practical application. Second, theoretical framework innovation: Propose a dynamic "Function (point)—Culture (line)—Space (area)" analytical framework, organically linking the material function, cultural connotations, and spatial structure of the ancient road, overcoming the limitations of previous point-based, isolated studies or those emphasizing history over theory. Third, strategy model innovation: Design a specific "online + offline" integrated marketing model, connecting the protection, inheritance, dissemination, and consumption links of cultural heritage, providing a replicable and scalable operational blueprint for the sustainable utilization of similar heritage.

Theoretical Foundation: An Integrated Analytical Framework

This study is founded on four mutually supportive foundational theories, which together constitute an integrated analytical framework for examining and revitalizing the Qi'ao Ancient Road cultural route.

"Cultural Route" Theory: Defining the Research Object Scope

The *Charter on Cultural Routes* adopted by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in 2008 provides an authoritative framework for understanding linear cultural heritage. The Charter explicitly states that a "cultural route" is a heritage form emphasizing cultural exchange and dialogue, whose protection

object must possess both tangible and intangible dual heritage elements. It is not merely the physical road itself but the overall cultural landscape formed through historical interactions along the route it connects, including settlements, architecture, facilities, natural environments, and related customs, memories, skills, etc. The term “route” here highlights its profound cultural attribute, indicating that its cross-regional, cross-cultural exchange function is equally important as its natural geographical attribute, emphasizing the comprehensive and holistic protection of the heritage.

In the Chinese context, the concept of “cultural route” focuses more on referring to transportation routes that carried unique and profound significance during major historical events or transformations. The Qi’ao Ancient Road perfectly fits this definition: It was not only a channel for commodity circulation but also a “conductor” for the collision of modern Chinese and Western civilizations, the blending of Macanese-Luso and Cantonese cultures, and the dissemination of China’s early modernization ideas. Therefore, defining it as a “cultural route” accurately summarizes its historical status and serves as the logical starting point for this study, mandating that we treat the ancient road as an organic living entity rather than a scattered collection of relic sites.

Discernment Between “Cultural Heritage” and “Cultural Relics”: Clarifying the Specific Research Objects

“Cultural heritage” is a macro, abstract conceptual system of values, referring to inherited objects with outstanding universal historical, artistic, or scientific value in human society. “Cultural relics” are the specific tangible or intangible manifestations of cultural heritage, the entities or practices that carry those values. In this study, the “Qi’ao Ancient Road cultural route” is a value concept (cultural heritage), while the individual ancient bridges, stone inscriptions, shop site ruins, stories, and legends scattered along the ancient road are the specific “cultural relics”.

Focusing research on “relics” means our work will begin with specific, tangible points. For example, by investigating the “Yongmo” village along the ancient road, exploring the reformist ideas contained in Zheng Guanying’s former residence; by surveying the teahouse ruins at “Qianlong”, reconstructing the scenes of merchants resting and social information dissemination. Deep descriptions of these isolated “relic points” ultimately aim to piece together and restore the overall historical picture and cultural context of the “cultural route”, answering how this road influenced and shaped the social and cultural ideological changes and historical evolution logic along its route and even in broader regions.

Structural Functionalism and Space Production Theory: Constructing the “Function—Culture—Space” Path

The construction of ancient post roads was primarily driven by clear functional needs: military control, transmission of government decrees, commercial exchange, population migration. The structural functionalist perspective reminds us that each relic point along the ancient road (such as express courier stations, checkpoints, docks) was initially established to serve the overall transportation and communication function of the “route”. Ancient people examining these relics valued their contribution to the overall effectiveness of the road system.

However, with modern transportation alternatives, the ancient road’s original function has “faded”. Today’s research needs to shift from “functional research” to “spatial structure” research. Henri Lefebvre’s “production of space” theory posits that space is not merely a container but a product of social relations and a site for their reproduction. The space of the Qi’ao Ancient Road was continuously “produced” and reconstituted over centuries by people of different eras through walking, trading, dwelling, fighting, worshipping, and other means.

This study proposes a “function—culture—space” analytical path (see Table 1). Among them, “culture” serves as the key mediating variable: The original function (military, commercial) of the ancient road, during long-term cultural exchange and integration processes (such as Sino-Western convergence, idea dissemination), shaped and changed the form and meaning of its space. Original military strongholds may have evolved into trade markets and then transformed into historical districts carrying nostalgic memories today. Our process of inventorying relics and reconstructing the spatial structure is precisely the process of interpreting the functional evolution and cultural accumulation on this “cultural route”. Each relic point along the ancient road is a “cultural space”. These point-like spaces are connected into linear spaces and together interweave into a networked “area” space reflecting regional history and culture.

Table 1

Function—Culture—Space Structural Analysis Path

Functional relics (point)	Cultural theme (line)
Post stations, road markers, bridges, ancient trees	Transportation and logistical support
Passes, city walls, forts, barracks	Political and military strategy
Temples, churches, schools, former residences of famous figures	Religion, ethnicity, and historical memory
Docks, guild halls, markets, workshop sites	Commodity trade and production
Spatial structure (area)	
Transportation hubs, post station systems, land-water transport relics	
Coastal defense systems, administrative strongholds, military settlements	
Religious building complexes, historical districts, cultural-educational nodes	
Commercial districts, handicraft skill inheritance sites, historical industrial landscapes	

E-commerce New Media Marketing Model: Proposing a Revitalization Utilization Tool

In the era of the digital economy, the revitalization of cultural heritage must embrace new dissemination and consumption models. This study draws on and develops a set of integrated e-commerce new media marketing models targeting intangible cultural heritage (extendable to cultural heritage) as practical tools to promote the “breakout” of the Qi’ao Ancient Road.

- **Online Three-in-One:** The project constructs a triangular matrix comprising cross-border e-commerce platforms (e.g., Amazon and eBay), independent brand websites, and overseas social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube). It uses social media platforms for content promotion by releasing historical and cultural short videos about the ancient road, conducting immersive live explorations, and presenting a series of stories about historical figures, thereby stimulating global interest. It then directs traffic to e-commerce platforms or independent websites to facilitate transactions involving cultural derivative products, such as cultural and creative products, digital collectibles, and study courses. The entire online process integrates elements of the ancient road’s culture in depth, thereby achieving a virtuous cycle of cultural dissemination and commercial returns.

- **Offline Six-in-One:** This model creates an on-site collaborative network comprising a Museum or Cultural Center, a Cultural or Tourism Bureau or Heritage Bureau, a Scenic Tourist Area, a University or Research Institution, an Enterprise specializing in cultural tourism, and a Shop such as an intangible cultural heritage experience shop or a cultural creative shop. These offline entities serve as the foundation of cultural experience. Through cooperation with various parties, this model develops ancient road-themed study tour routes, cultural and creative products, immersive theatrical performances, themed homestays, and catering services, thereby making cultural heritage

visible, tangible, purchasable, and learnable. It truly realizes the vision of “seeing people, seeing objects, and seeing life,” successfully integrating cultural heritage into contemporary everyday life.

Internal Logic of the Theoretical Framework

In summary, the four foundational theories of this study form a closed loop: Cultural route theory defines the macro research object and value orientation. The discernment between cultural heritage/relics breaks down the macro object into operable micro research units. Structural functionalism and space theory provide the tools and methods for analyzing how these units dynamically relate and form an overall spatial structure; and the e-commerce new media marketing model is the practical strategy and tool pointing to the future, aimed at solving the problem of revitalization utilization after completing value cognition and problem diagnosis. The four are interlinked, jointly supporting a complete research endeavor from theoretical understanding to practical operation.

Historical Context and Spatial Scope of the Qi'ao Ancient Road Cultural Route

Historical Clues: From Folk Trade Route to Land Link of the Maritime Silk Road

The prototype of the Qi'ao Ancient Road can be traced back to the late Ming and early Qing Dynasties, initially being a folk trade route for Xiangshan people traveling to and from Macao. With Macao's opening as a port in the mid-Ming and its rapid development as an international trade port, especially after the Qing Dynasty implemented the “single-port trade” policy in Guangzhou, Macao became an important base for foreigners residing and trading in China, causing the status of this land route to rise sharply. By the Qianlong period at the latest, it had developed into a formal official road shared by government and civilians, becoming the “last mile” overland connecting Guangzhou's foreign trade system to Macao's outward-facing port.

The Qi'ao Ancient Road reached its peak in the mid-to-late Qing Dynasty. It served not only as a channel for transporting silk, tea, and porcelain from the interior to Macao for export and for importing overseas silver, spices, and handicrafts into the interior but also played the role of an information and idea dissemination corridor. Western missionaries, merchants, and explorers entered the interior via this road, while Chinese gentry, compradors, and revolutionaries also went to the world and encountered new knowledge through this road. It thus became one of the important windows for modern China to “open its eyes to the world”. The Xiangshan area it passed through consequently became one of the cradles of modern ideological culture and democratic revolution. Archaeological excavations in 2015 further provided material evidence for the specific route and relics of the ancient road, offering a solid material foundation for research.

Spatial Scope: Southern and Eastern Main Routes

The spatial scope focused on in this study, based on historical records such as the Qing Dynasty's *Xiangshan County Gazetteer*, is clearly defined as the two main routes of the Qi'ao Ancient Road (see Table 2):

- Southern main route (main line): Starts from the South Gate Bridge of Xiangshan County Town, passes through Jingding, Yongmo, Tangchang, Qianlong, Guhe, Jiechong, Cuiwei, and other places, ultimately entering Macao via the Barrier Gate. This route is relatively direct and was the primary channel for trade and personnel movement.
- Eastern main route: Starts from the East Gate of Xiangshan County Town, passes through Beiya and then splits into northern and southern branches. The northern branch passes through Haotou, Zhangjiabian, Nanlang to Xiashan; the southern branch passes through Gonghua, Sanjiaotang, etc., also converging at Xiashan, and then

passes through Tangjia, Jida, etc., ultimately converging with the Southern Main Route at the line of Xiangshan Zhai, Baishi Village entering Macao. The eastern route is more circuitous, connecting more coastal villages and resource points (such as salt fields).

These two route networks cover the present-day cities of Zhongshan, Zhuhai, and the Macao Special Administrative Region, constituting a complete overland transportation system and also serving as the specific spatial boundaries for this study's field surveys and GIS analysis.

Table 2

Schematic of the Qing Dynasty Qi'ao Ancient Road Routes

Route	Direction	Main passing nodes (present-day locations)
Southern main route	Southward	Zhongshan South Gate—Yongmo—Guhe—Zhuhai Jiechong—Cuiwei—Macao Barrier Gate
Eastern main route	Eastward	Zhongshan East Gate—Haotou/Gonghua (bifurcation)—Nanlang/Shanchang—Zhuhai Xiashan (confluence)—Tangjia—Jida—Macao Barrier Gate

Research Path for Qi'ao Ancient Road Cultural Relics Based on the Integrated Framework

This chapter will elaborate on how to systematically conduct research on the Qi'ao Ancient Road by applying the aforementioned integrated framework.

Screening and Collection of Relics

First, based on the requirements of the Charter on Cultural Routes regarding the integrity and relevance of heritage elements, and in combination with the “function - culture - space” framework, the study establishes screening criteria. The collection of relics needs to consider:

- **Comprehensiveness of types:** Covers transportation facilities (roads, bridges, post stations), military-political installations (passes, government offices), commercial-industrial sites (guild halls, docks, workshops), cultural-religious sites (temples, churches, schools), social life sites (residential houses, ancient trees, stone inscriptions), and related intangible cultural heritage (legends, skills, festivals).
- **Representativeness of value:** Prioritizes relics with symbolic significance during key development stages of the ancient road (e.g., peak period, transformation period) or closely associated with important historical events or figures.
- **Spatial relevance:** Relics must be located within or closely attached to a reasonable buffer zone on both sides of the determined ancient road route and be able to reflect the spatial logical relationship of “point” and “line”, “line” and “area”.

Regarding collection methods, the study begins with a literature investigation, including local gazetteers, archives, and ancient maps, to outline a “list of relics.” Next, it conducts comprehensive field surveys for verification, positioning, recording, and supplementation. Finally, the study utilizes GIS to establish a spatial database of relics for digital management.

Holistic Analysis of Relic Value

Value assessment needs to jump out of the “solitary appreciation” style evaluation of single relics and instead conduct holistic value analysis by placing them within the dynamic historical process of the “cultural route”. This analysis should focus on three dimensions:

1. **Historical value:** How does the relic witness and reflect the specific historical functions and stages of the Qi'ao Ancient Road as a trade route, idea corridor, and axis of social change? For example, an express courier

station site witnesses the efficiency of official document transmission, while a Sino-Western style residence reflects the depth of cultural integration.

2. Scientific and artistic value: What unique features do the relics possess in architectural technology, engineering craftsmanship, landscape creation, or artistic expression forms (e.g., carving, decoration)? How are these characteristics related to the geographical environment and cultural exchange along the ancient road route?

3. Socio-cultural value: What connection does the relic have with the local community today? What collective memories, identity, or emotional attachment does it carry? Does it still possess educational, aesthetic, or spiritual significance in contemporary times?

Through this holistic analysis, scattered relic “points” are rewoven into the “web of meaning” of history and culture, restoring a living, vivid, and three-dimensional cultural route.

Diagnosis of Problems in Protection and Utilization Status

Through field surveys and status analysis, it is anticipated that the protection and utilization of the Qi'ao Ancient Road may face the following typical problems: (1) Compromised integrity: The route is discontinuous and unclear; a large number of relics are lost or exist in isolation, making it difficult to form a coherent experience. (2) Insufficient value recognition: The public's understanding of its historical and cultural value often remains at the level of “an old road”, with little knowledge of its profound significance in the history of Sino-Western exchange. (3) Single and extensive utilization methods: Existing development is mostly limited to simple route signage or introductions to a few attractions, lacking in-depth cultural interpretation and diverse experiential design, disconnected from modern consumption demands. (4) Difficulties in management coordination: The ancient road crosses multiple cities, involving coordination among cultural heritage, cultural tourism, planning, transportation, and other departments, as well as different administrative regions, leading to ineffective holistic protection and management mechanisms. (5) Limited dissemination influence: Traditional publicity methods fail to effectively utilize new media to reach broader and younger audiences.

Strategic Construction for Revitalization Utilization From the Perspective of E-commerce New Media Marketing

In response to the problems raised in Chapter 4, this chapter combines the e-commerce new media marketing model to propose an overall strategy for revitalizing and utilizing the Qi'ao Ancient Road cultural route.

Holistic Protection and Promotion Strategy

Protection is the prerequisite for utilization. First, based on GIS analysis results, the study delineates a cultural route conservation buffer zone for the ancient road, and formulate a unified conservation plan and management coordination mechanism to overcome administrative divisions. Second, the protection philosophy should shift from “freeze-style protection” to “revitalization inheritance”, allowing adaptive utilization under the premise of properly protecting core values.

For the promotion strategy, the core is applying the “Online Three-in-One” model:

- Content creation: Produce high-quality, serialized new media content. For example, a documentary series *Walking the Qi'ao Ancient Road*, short video series (each episode focusing on a relic point or historical figure story), VR/AR online virtual tours, history-themed podcasts, etc.
- Platform synergy: Distribute localized content and interact on domestic platforms such as Douyin, Bilibili, and Xiaohongshu; simultaneously, use YouTube, Facebook/Instagram internationally to shape the cultural

tourism brand image of “Maritime Silk Road Land Trail”.

- Traffic conversion: Skillfully embed links to official cultural tourism mini-programs, e-commerce platform flagship stores within the content, selling ancient road-themed cultural and creative products, study courses, customized travel services, etc., converting cultural interest into consumption support, which in turn feeds back into conservation efforts.

Construction of Cultural Space Development and Utilization Paths

Offline utilization is the core of the experience. It needs to rely on the “Offline Six-in-One” network to construct a multi-level cultural space development framework:

1. Core exhibition space: Build high-standard Qi'ao Ancient Road Cultural Exhibition Halls or Visitor Centers at key nodes of the ancient road (e.g., Yongmo, Tangjia Bay), using digital technology to present the ancient road's story panoramically, serving as the “nerve center” of the offline experience.

2. Themed experience corridors: Design themed walking or slow-travel experience routes in segments. For example, a “Trade Trail Segment” (focusing on guild halls, docks), an “Ideas Footprint Segment” (connecting former residences of famous figures, churches, schools), and an “Ecological Leisure Segment” (combining rural landscapes).

3. Heritage revitalization nodes: Reactivate eligible ancient buildings into themed homestays, cultural restaurants, intangible cultural heritage workshops (e.g., Xiangshan pastry making, Sanxiang tea fruit making experience), community bookstores, etc., allowing heritage spaces to “live” in the present.

4. Deep integration cultural tourism products: Collaborate with universities to develop study travel programs; cooperate with cultural tourism enterprises to launch cultural deep travel experiences and film/TV shooting location tourism; plan and organize periodic events like the “Qi'ao Ancient Road Cultural Festival” and “Retracing the Ancient Road” hiking competitions to continuously generate buzz.

5. Smart cultural tourism system: Develop a “Qi'ao Ancient Road” APP or mini-program, integrating functions such as map navigation, audio guide, AR live scene restoration, check-in points, cultural and creative product mall, activity booking, etc., providing one-stop smart services.

Through the deep integration of online and offline strategies, the ultimate goal is to construct an activation ecosystem for the Qi'ao Ancient Road cultural heritage that “has traffic and stories online, and has experience and consumption offline”, making it a shining historical and cultural name card for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

Conclusion and Outlook

This study, using the Qi'ao Ancient Road as a case study, explores new paths for the contemporary protection and revitalization of linear cultural heritage. The main conclusions are as follows:

1. Effectiveness of the theoretical framework: The constructed integrated framework of “cultural route theory for definition—cultural heritage/relics discernment for entry—function/culture/space path for analysis—e-commerce new media marketing as application tool” can systematically and deeply deconstruct the complex value of linear cultural heritage and provide clear logical guidance and practical solutions for its sustainable utilization.

2. Highlighting the unique value of the Qi'ao Ancient Road: The research confirms that the Qi'ao Ancient Road was far from an ordinary trade route; it was a key link for land-water transport in Southern China during

the Ming and Qing, a precious relic of the Maritime Silk Road extending inland, and moreover, an “ideological artery” for two-way exchange between Chinese and Western civilizations and the enlightenment of China’s early social modernization. Its protection and interpretation hold significant academic value and practical significance.

3. Applicability and innovativeness of e-commerce new media marketing: Applying the concepts and tools of e-commerce and new media to the field of cultural heritage is not a mechanical imposition but a strategic choice based on the patterns of cultural dissemination and consumption in the digital era. The proposed “Online Three-in-One + Offline Six-in-One” model provides a concrete, operable solution for solving the problems of cultural heritage being “hidden in the boudoir unknown to the world” and inefficient utilization, possessing considerable innovativeness and potential for replication.

4. Realistic feasibility of the proposed strategies: The strategy design fully considers cultural heritage protection laws and regulations, market demand, community interests, and technical conditions, emphasizing multi-party collaboration and sustainable operation, possessing a realistic foundation for transformation into specific plans and action plans.

Research outlook: Although this study focuses on the Qi’ao Ancient Road, there remains room for expansion. First, at the spatial level, future research could expand the perspective to the entire Southern China Ancient Post Road network. Through comparative studies of multiple ancient roads, more universal models for the protection and utilization of linear cultural heritage could be extracted, and cross-regional coordination mechanisms could be explored at the provincial or even national level. Second, at the methodological level, archaeology’s “processual approach” could be further introduced, not only describing “what” the relics are but also deeply explaining “why” people along the ancient road behaved as they did, how their lifestyles, social organizations, and cultural concepts were shaped and changed by this road, thereby depicting a more vivid and three-dimensional picture of human historical life. Finally, at the practical level, the proposed e-commerce new media marketing strategies need to be validated, receive feedback, and undergo iterative optimization in future actual project implementation, while continuously paying attention to new opportunities and challenges that new technologies (such as the metaverse, artificial intelligence) may bring.

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