

THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE OF CHINESE GARDENS ON YOUTH TOURISTS INTENTIONS: CASE OF FOUR GARDENS IN CHINA

Jiayu Chen

An Independent Study submitted in partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Management
Program in Creative Industries Management
Rattanakosin International College of Creative Entrepreneurship
Rajamangala University of Technology Rattanakosin
Academic Year 2026
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Signature Student
(Miss Jiayu Chen)

Signature Advisor
(Dr. Nutteera Phakdeephirot)

Signature Director
(Dr. Nuttapong Jotikasthira)



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Rattanakosin International College of Creative Entrepreneurship
Rajamangala University of Technology Rattanakosin

Title of Independent study	The Influence of Cultural Landscape Architecture of Chinese Gardens on Youth Tourists Intentions: Case of Four Gardens in China
Researcher	Miss Jiayu Chen
Degree Sought	Master of Management Program in Creative Industries Management (Internaional Program)
Independent Advisors	Nutteera Phakdeephirot (Ph.D.)

Rattanakosin International College of Creative Entrepreneurship, Rajamangala University of Technology Rattanakosin Approved this Independent Study in Partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Management

…… Director
(Dr. Nuttapong Jotikasthira)

Independent Study Committee

…… Chairperson
(Assistant Professor Dr. Ruihui Pu)

…… Member
(Associate Professor Xuegang Zhan)

…… Member and Advisor
(Dr. Nutteera Phakdeephirot)

Title of Independent Study: The Influence of Cultural Landscape Architecture of Chinese Gardens on Youth Tourists Intentions: Case of Four Gardens in China
Researcher: Miss. Jiayu Chen (BBA)
Degree: Master of Management (Creative Industries Management)
Advisor: Nutteera Phakdeephirot (Ph.D.); **Academic Year**: 2026

ABSTRACT

This study aims to (1) examine the direct influence of cultural landscape experience in Chinese classical gardens on youth tourism intention, (2) investigate the effect of cultural landscape experiences on the formation of cultural identity among young tourists, (3) clarify the role of cultural identity as a core component of perceived value in Chinese garden tourism, and (4) test the mediating mechanism through which cultural identity links cultural landscape experiences and youth tourism intention, using the Four Famous Gardens of China as representative cases.

This study adopted a quantitative research design based on questionnaire survey data. A total of 238 questionnaires were collected, of which 200 valid responses from respondents who had visited at least one of the Four Famous Gardens were retained for analysis. The measurement model included four dimensions of a cultural landscape experience and cultural identity, with 16 observed variables. Data analysis was conducted using computer software. Descriptive statistics, reliability and validity tests, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modeling (SEM) were employed to examine the relationships among cultural landscape experiences, cultural identity, and youth tourism intention, as well as to test the proposed mediation mechanism.

Major findings: (1) Youth tourism intention toward Chinese gardens is significantly influenced by youth preferences, indicating that experiential relevance, lifestyle compatibility, and emotional resonance are key factors shaping young tourists' travel decisions; (2) A cultural landscape experience has a significant positive effect on cultural identity, suggesting that meaningful engagement with garden environments effectively enhances young tourists' recognition and understanding of traditional culture; (3) Cultural identity constitutes a core component of perceived value in Chinese garden tourism, serving as a crucial psychological mechanism that transforms landscape experiences into symbolic and emotional attachments; (4) Structural equation modeling results confirm that cultural identity plays a full mediating role between cultural landscape experiences and youth tourism intention, revealing that landscape experiences influence travel intention primarily through the formation of cultural identity rather than through a direct effect.

Key words: Chinese gardens, Cultural Landscape, Cultural landscape architecture, Cultural identity, Youth Tourists Intention

Advisor's Signature…….

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

1.1.1 Macro Background

In recent years, China's tourism development has entered a new stage characterized by a shift from rapid scale expansion to quality-oriented and value-driven growth. With the continuous advancement of the integration of culture and tourism, cultural heritage has been increasingly recognized not only as a tourism resource, but also as a strategic asset for cultural confidence, national identity construction, and sustainable development (NDRC, 2021). The 14th Five-Year Plan for Cultural and Tourism Development explicitly emphasizes the need to promote the creative transformation and innovative development of cultural heritage, calling for the revitalization of cultural relic resources and the enhancement of their contemporary value through diversified forms of utilization (Sun, 2025).

Under this policy framework, the “All-for-One Tourism” strategy has become a key approach to restructuring regional tourism development. This strategy advocates breaking away from the traditional scenic-spot-centered model and instead integrating cultural heritage, urban space, ecological environment, and local communities into a holistic tourism system. Cultural heritage sites are thus expected to shift from isolated sightseeing attractions to core nodes that stimulate regional cultural industries, tourism consumption, and place identity (Ma, 2022). As a result, traditional heritage destinations are increasingly under pressure to transform from a “ticket economy” reliant on visitor volume into an “industrial economy” emphasizing cultural creativity, experience production, and extended value chains.

Chinese classical gardens, as an important component of China's cultural heritage system, are deeply embedded in this structural transformation. Beyond their function as leisure spaces, classical gardens are widely regarded as “living museums” that embody historical memory, aesthetic philosophy, and traditional values such as harmony between

humanity and nature (Wu, 2024). However, in the context of intensified cultural tourism integration, many classical garden destinations face a common dilemma: while their physical spaces are well preserved, their cultural meanings are often inadequately interpreted or simplified into visual symbols for rapid consumption. This has led to a growing gap between heritage protection goals and the experiential expectations of contemporary tourists.

The challenges faced by the Chengde Mountain Resort illustrate this broader structural issue. Although it is both a World Cultural Heritage site and a national 5A-level scenic area, its tourism development has long been constrained by a single sightseeing -oriented model, limited interpretive depth, and insufficient coordination with surrounding cultural and tourism resources. The lack of immersive storytelling, thematic experiences, and cross-site linkage has weakened its role as a cultural and regional tourism hub, thereby restricting its leading function within the framework of all-for-one tourism.

More broadly, the integration of culture and tourism has exposed a fundamental contradiction confronting traditional cultural heritage sites: while policy discourse increasingly emphasizes innovation, participation, and cultural value activation, many heritage destinations remain locked in rigid presentation modes and standardized tourism products. How to transcend passive sightseeing, activate cultural meaning, and realize the creative transformation of heritage landscapes within the all-for-one tourism framework has thus become a critical issue not only for individual scenic spots, but also for the sustainable development of cultural heritage tourism as a whole.

1.1.2 Industry Background

Classical Chinese gardens represent one of the most distinctive forms of traditional Chinese cultural heritage. Rooted in philosophical ideas such as the harmony between humanity and nature, these gardens integrate architecture, water, plants, rocks, and spatial sequencing to create poetic and symbolic landscapes that transcend purely functional or decorative purposes (He, 2007). The principle of “though made by man, it seems as if created by nature” reflects the aesthetic pursuit of naturalness, restraint, and spiritual resonance that defines classical garden art. From the grand imperial layout of the Summer Palace to the refined spatial techniques of Suzhou private gardens, Chinese classical gardens are widely regarded as the pinnacle of world garden art and an important manifestation of traditional Chinese aesthetics (Zhang, 2023).

From a quantitative perspective, classical gardens constitute a vast and diverse heritage system in China. According to statistics released by the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of China, more than 3,000 historical gardens and garden-related heritage sites have been identified nationwide, including imperial gardens, private gardens, temple gardens, and scenic gardens integrated with natural landscapes (MOHURD, 2021). In addition, nine representative Chinese classical gardens, including the Summer Palace and the classical gardens of Suzhou, have been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, underscoring their outstanding universal value in terms of landscape art, cultural symbolism, and historical continuity (UNESCO, 2021). This extensive number and diversity indicate that classical gardens are not marginal cultural relics, but rather a major category within China's cultural heritage and tourism system.

However, despite their abundance and high cultural value, the contemporary utilization and interpretation of classical gardens face increasing challenges. Existing studies suggest that modern conservation and tourism development practices often prioritize physical preservation and visual representation, while neglecting the deeper cultural, philosophical, and emotional dimensions embedded in garden landscapes (Wang, 2023). In many cases, garden interpretation remains limited to factual descriptions of architectural elements or historical dates, resulting in a superficial understanding of garden aesthetics. As a consequence, visitors may “recognize the scenery but not its meaning,” experiencing the space visually without forming a deeper emotional or cultural connection.

This problem is further intensified by the complex intertextual relationship between classical gardens and Chinese literary, artistic, and philosophical traditions. Classical gardens are deeply intertwined with poetry, painting, and classical literature—for example, the conceptual resonance between the Grand View Garden in Dream of the Red Chamber and imperial garden aesthetics represented by the Summer Palace. Such cultural associations constitute a form of intangible “cultural IP” that has strong potential to enhance visitors' cultural imagination and identity formation. Nevertheless, due to the lack of effective interpretive systems and interactive experience design, this cultural potential is often underutilized in current tourism practices.

Against this background, this study deliberately selects the Four Great Classical Gardens of China—the Summer Palace, the Chengde Mountain Resort, the Humble Administrator's Garden, and the Lingering Garden—as its research objects. These gardens are not only among the most representative examples of classical Chinese garden art, but also cover different garden types, including imperial gardens and private literati gardens, as well as diverse geographical and cultural contexts. More importantly, the Four Great Gardens occupy a central position in both heritage conservation and tourism development, serving as benchmark destinations for classical garden tourism in China. Their scale, popularity, and symbolic status make them ideal cases for examining how cultural landscape experience is constructed, interpreted, and perceived by contemporary visitors.

Therefore, focusing on the Four Great Gardens allows this study to move beyond isolated or marginal cases and instead address broader structural issues in classical garden tourism. By examining these flagship sites, the research aims to reveal common challenges in cultural landscape interpretation and experiential design, particularly in relation to young tourists, and to provide insights that are applicable to the wider system of classical garden heritage in China.

1.1.3 Market Background

Recent industry data indicate a strong recovery and growth trend in China's tourism sector. According to the Survey Report on Scenic Area Operations in the First Quarter of 2025 released by the China Association of Tourist Attractions, domestic tourist trips reached 1.794 billion in the first quarter of 2025, representing a year-on-year increase of 26.4%, while total tourism expenditure amounted to 1.80 trillion RMB, marking an 18.6% growth compared with the same period of the previous year (China Association of Tourist Attractions, 2025). This rapid expansion reflects both the recovery of tourism demand and the intensification of competition among cultural tourism destinations.

At the same time, China's domestic tourism market is undergoing notable structural changes in terms of age composition. According to the Annual Report on the Development of Domestic Tourism in China (2024), elderly and youth-oriented travel segments have shown particularly strong growth. In 2024, the population aged 60 and above reached 310 million, accounting for 22.0% of the total population, while tourists aged 45 and above generated 1.194 billion domestic trips, representing 36.81% of the

domestic tourism market. Meanwhile, demand for youth travel - especially study tours - has expanded rapidly. For instance, Qufu, a major study-tour destination, received 1.367 million youth study-tour visits in the first half of 2024, with a year-on-year growth rate of 24.3% (China Tourism Academy, 2024). Against this backdrop of accelerated growth at both ends of the age spectrum, young people aged 18-35 have emerged as a pivotal group connecting cultural consumption, family travel decision-making, and digital tourism communication. In line with Chinese policy and academic research conventions, this study defines youth as individuals aged between 18 and 35 years (State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2017).

In terms of visitation volume at classical garden destinations, publicly available government and media reports indicate that major classical gardens in China attract extremely large tourist flows during peak periods, with daily visitation often exceeding 100,000 visitors at flagship sites such as the Summer Palace. Moreover, national scenic area visitor profiles show that age groups including 18–30 and 31–40 together account for a large share of total visits (WHITRAP, 2022), suggesting that young adult visitors constitute a substantial segment of the market. Although age-specific visitation statistics for the Four Great Gardens are not publicly released, these broader patterns indicate that youth tourism is highly relevant to garden destinations. These figures illustrate the sustained and concentrated visitation at historically and culturally significant garden sites, indicating that garden attractions consistently draw large tourist flows in the domestic market.

As youth tourists gradually become a dominant force in the tourism market, their travel motivations and behavioral patterns have undergone significant transformation. Existing studies indicate that young tourists are increasingly driven by cultural exploration, interaction, and experiential engagement rather than passive sightseeing (Buffa, 2015). Compared with traditional tourist groups, they demonstrate a stronger preference for creative, participatory, and meaning-oriented travel experiences that allow for personal involvement and cultural expression (Chan, 2016). They are no longer satisfied with one-way guided explanations but instead seek personalized, immersive, and interactive tourism products aligned with their interests and values (Miao, 2023). However, a clear mismatch persists between the experiential needs of young tourists and the current supply of classical garden tourism products. For example, at the Chengde Mountain Resort, tourism activities remain largely limited to photo-taking in traditional

costumes, with insufficient immersive storytelling, educational interaction, or nighttime cultural experiences, resulting in short stays and low revisit rates among young visitors. On the one hand, young people exhibit a growing desire to engage with "Guochao (the revival of traditional Chinese culture，国潮)" and develop cultural identity through tourism; on the other hand, scenic destinations lag behind in adapting their cultural landscape presentation and experiential design. This structural contradiction between demand and supply constitutes the key research problem addressed in this study.

1.1.4 Theoretical Background

Scholarly research on Chinese gardens has long emphasized aesthetic philosophy, spatial composition, and artistic symbolism, viewing gardens primarily as visual and contemplative objects (He, 2007; Keswick, 2003). Influenced by environmental aesthetics and traditional landscape studies, early tourism research tended to interpret garden visitation through visual appreciation and aesthetic pleasure, corresponding to what Urry (2002) conceptualized as the "tourist gaze." Within this framework, cultural landscapes are largely treated as static scenic backdrops for observation rather than dynamic spaces of meaning production.

However, with the rise of cultural tourism studies, scholars have increasingly questioned the adequacy of purely visual or form-oriented approaches. Cultural landscape theory emphasizes that landscapes are not only physical environments but also socially constructed spaces embedded with historical narratives, symbolic meanings, and collective memory (Antrop, 2005; Sauer, 1925). In heritage tourism contexts, landscapes function as cultural texts that are interpreted, negotiated, and re-signified through visitor experience (Smith, 2006).

Recent studies further suggest that tourists' engagement with heritage landscapes involves complex psychological processes related to identity formation. Cultural identity has been identified as a critical factor influencing tourists' behavioral intentions, particularly in heritage and culturally symbolic destinations (Poria, Butler, & Airey, 2003; Cai, 2024). Rather than being directly driven by physical landscape attributes, tourism intention is often mediated by tourists' emotional attachment, sense of belonging, and perceived cultural relevance (Bond & Falk, 2013). Yang (2022) similarly argues that meaningful experiential engagement with heritage environments activates identity-related mechanisms that link aesthetic perception to cultural identification.

Despite these theoretical advances, empirical research on Chinese garden tourism has remained relatively limited in its integration of cultural identity perspectives. Existing studies tend to focus on outcome-oriented variables such as satisfaction, perceived quality, or destination image (Oliver, 1999; Timothy, 2011), while insufficient attention has been paid to the internal psychological pathways through which cultural landscape experience contributes to identity construction and subsequent travel intention.

This gap is particularly evident in research concerning youth tourists. As an identity-sensitive and experience-oriented group, young tourists tend to seek participatory, symbolic, and self-expressive travel experiences rather than passive sightseeing (Buffa, 2015; Chan, 2016). For them, cultural tourism functions not only as leisure consumption but also as a medium for identity exploration and value alignment (Urry & Larsen, 2011). However, current interpretation and presentation strategies in Chinese classical gardens are often designed for traditional tourist groups and may fail to resonate with the experiential preferences and identity needs of younger generations.

Therefore, this study shifts the analytical perspective from a conventional “landscape gaze” toward a cultural identity-oriented framework. By integrating cultural landscape theory with cultural identity theory, this research aims to clarify how cultural landscape experiences in Chinese gardens shape youth tourists' cultural identity and, in turn, influence their tourism intentions. This approach addresses an important theoretical and empirical gap in existing garden tourism research and provides a more nuanced understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying youth engagement with cultural heritage landscapes.

1.2 Research Questions

1.What issues do conservation and development face in the current cultural landscape architecture of Chinese gardens?

2. What are the characteristics and preferences of young tourists?

3. How does the cultural landscape of Chinese gardens affect young people's tourism intentions?

4. How to optimize the cultural landscape of the garden to better attract young tourists?

By answering these questions, this study aims to provide theoretical basis and practical strategies for the sustainable development of garden heritage sites. And focuses on the mechanism through which cultural landscape experience influences youth travel intention via cultural identity.

1.3 Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to systematically reveal the core mechanisms by which the cultural landscape of Chinese gardens influences young tourists' travel intentions by stimulating their emotional resonance and cultural identification.

The research objectives primarily focus on the following four aspects:

1. To exploring the Current Situation and Challenges: Through literature analysis and field research, this study systematically examines the current status of cultural landscape architecture in Chinese gardens, exemplified by the Four Great Gardens, and identifies the key issues and challenges they face in heritage preservation and tourism development, particularly in attracting young tourists.

2. To analyzing the Characteristics of Young Tourists: Using questionnaires and interviews, we conducted an in-depth analysis of the behavioral characteristics(Xia , 2024), core preferences, information acquisition channels, and cultural consumption motivations of young tourists aged 18-35 during garden tourism.

3. To constructing and Verifying the Influence Mechanism: Based on cultural landscape and cultural identity theories, this study investigates how cultural landscape experiences influence young tourists' travel intentions, both directly and indirectly through cultural identity, using structural equation modeling (SEM) to empirically test the hypothesized pathways.

4. To propose optimization strategies and paths: Based on the conclusions of empirical analysis, and targeting the current deficiencies in the construction of garden cultural landscapes and the core needs of young tourists, we propose targeted and operational optimization strategies, providing a practical path for the youth-oriented development and cultural revitalization of traditional Chinese gardens. Specifically, this study focuses on the mechanism through which cultural landscape experience influences youth travel intention via cultural identity.

1.4 Research Significance

1.4.1 Theoretical significance

This study expands the application boundaries of environmental aesthetics in tourism research. It introduces environmental aesthetics theory into the study of youth tourism behavior, responding to the academic call for establishing "participatory aesthetics." By analyzing young tourists' aesthetic experiences in gardens, it reveals the psychological mechanism that elevates "sensory pleasure" to "cultural identity," enriching the theoretical framework of garden tourism.

This study deepens the understanding of the value of cultural heritage tourism. Combining the perspective of world heritage protection, it explores the unique appeal of Chinese gardens to contemporary youth against the backdrop of differences in aesthetics between Eastern and Western gardens, providing new empirical evidence for understanding the educational function of cultural heritage in modern society.

This study constructs an integrated model of "landscape-identity-intention." Breaking away from previous research paradigms that solely focus on satisfaction or revisit rates, it uses "cultural identity" as a core mediating variable to explain, from a psychological perspective, how garden landscapes influence the behavioral intentions of young people.

1.4.2 Practical significance

This study provides strategic support for the "rejuvenation" transformation of the four gardens. Addressing the pain points of "single development model" and "insufficient interactive experience" in existing imperial gardens such as the Mountain Resort, the optimization strategies proposed in this study (such as enhancing immersive experiences and developing cultural IPs) have direct guiding significance.

It promotes the deep integration of all-for-one tourism and cultural tourism. Responding to the national all-for-one tourism development strategy, it is recommended to consider garden scenic areas and surrounding cultural resources in a coordinated manner, extending the tourism industry chain and providing a path reference for the sustainable development of heritage sites.

It enhances the cultural confidence of young people. By optimizing the presentation of garden cultural landscapes, it can better carry and disseminate excellent traditional Chinese culture, helping the younger generation shift from "spectator" to

"understanding" during visits, and effectively enhancing their national pride and cultural identity.

This study not only deepens the theoretical understanding of the tourism value of Chinese gardens, but also provides a practical path for the innovative development of the four famous gardens and other traditional gardens, which has a dual significance to promote the protection and revitalization of traditional cultural heritage.

1.5 Limitations and Innovations

1.5.1. Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study are as follows:

The representativeness of the research sample has limitations. While the case study of China's Four Great Gardens demonstrates typical characteristics, the inherent differences between northern and southern garden styles may limit the applicability of the findings to other regional garden types (such as Lingnan gardens or Jiangnan gardens). Future studies could expand the sample scope by incorporating more diverse classical garden types for comparative analysis.

The criteria for defining the youth tourist demographic require further refinement. While the study uniformly categorizes individuals aged 18-35 as the youth group, distinct subgroups within this age range - such as college students versus new professionals - may exhibit markedly different travel preferences. Future research could consider implementing more nuanced segmentation based on factors like age brackets and educational backgrounds.

The current data collection methods have certain limitations. The subjective data obtained mainly from questionnaires may not fully reflect the real behavioral characteristics of tourists. It is suggested that future studies should combine objective measurement methods such as GPS trajectory tracking and eye movement experiments to obtain more accurate behavioral data.

The short time span of the study failed to fully investigate the influence of seasonal factors on the results. The landscape characteristics of Chinese gardens change significantly with the four seasons, which may lead to fluctuations in tourists' experiences and evaluations. Long-term tracking studies will help to obtain more stable conclusions.

These limitations indicate directions for improvement in future research, but do not affect the validity of the core conclusions of this study. The researchers suggest that subsequent work could be improved by expanding the sample size, refining group classification, adopting multiple data collection methods, and extending the research period.

1.5.2 Research Innovation Points

This study has some theoretical and methodological innovations:

At the theoretical level, this paper combines cultural landscape theory with cultural identity theory to construct a conceptual model of Cultural Landscape Experience and Youth Tourists Intention, which makes up for the problem of theoretical application fragmentation in existing studies.

At the method level, field research and questionnaire survey were conducted on the young tourist groups of China's four famous gardens to collect first-hand data, and structural equation model (SEM) was used for analysis to ensure the scientificity and verifiability of the research conclusions.

At the practical level, the research not only puts forward landscape optimization strategies, but also focuses on how to enhance the cultural identity and willingness of young tourists to revisit through digital, immersive and other new experience methods, so as to provide an operational path for the youth-oriented development of garden heritage sites.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Cultural Landscape Theory in Garden Tourism Research

2.1.1 Conceptual Foundations and the Dialectics of Cultural Landscape

Cultural landscape theory, pioneered by Carl Sauer (1925), establishes the concept that landscapes are not merely static physical spaces (Carl O Sauer ,1925) but are fundamentally culturally constructed environments shaped by the co-evolutionary interaction between human activity and the natural environment (Mitchell & Buggey, 2000). From a theoretical perspective, the fundamental proposition of cultural landscape theory can be summarized in a classic statement: "Culture is the driving force, nature is the medium, and cultural landscape is the result". In heritage tourism, cultural landscapes are viewed as multi-layered texts that embed natural, artistic, and historical attributes, facilitating visitors' cognitive, emotional, and symbolic engagement with the site.

To deepen the understanding of this concept, contemporary research has introduced the notion of Cultural Landscape Gene (CLG). CLG theory posits that a landscape's unique historical and cultural information is stored in its material appearance (architecture, landforms) and micro cultural factors (tradition, philosophy) (Hu et al., 2021). For heritage sites like classical gardens, the CLG represents the core cultural value that must be identified, protected, and communicated to tourists.

In this study, cultural landscape architecture is understood through this dialectical lens: it is the physical manifestation (architecture, spatial design) that acts as the primary carrier of the non-material cultural genes (philosophy, symbolism, narrative), which visitors interpret to construct meaning.

2.1.2 The Chinese Context: Aesthetics, Philosophy, and Systemic Dimensions

Chinese gardens embody a unique theoretical framework of cultural landscape, primarily guided by the aesthetic philosophy of “Harmony between heaven and humanity (天人合一)”. This philosophy mandates those spatial arrangements, architectural

symbolism, and poetic metaphors must express harmonious co-existence between human endeavor and nature (Chen & Wu, 2009).

Design and Aesthetic Expression (Physical Layer): The aesthetic value of Chinese gardens is achieved through ingenious design techniques such as Jie Jing (borrowing scenes), Dui Jing (contrasting scenes), and the skillful use of rockery, water, and plant arrangements. These elements are not merely ornamental; they are purposeful design elements that reflect profound philosophical intent (Wang, 2023). The Humble Administrator's Garden, for instance, uses the "limited to create the unlimited" principle to allow visitors to mentally transcend the physical enclosure (Wang, 2023). This intentional aesthetic expression forms the foundational dimension of the cultural landscape experienced by youth tourists.

Cultural Narrative and Symbolic Meaning (Non-Physical Layer): The cultural significance of the Four Famous Gardens (The Summer Palace, The Mountain Resort in Chengde, The Humble Administrator's Garden, and The Lingering Garden) lies in their ability to convey complex historical and literary narratives. Imperial gardens (e.g., The Summer Palace, The Mountain Resort) are spaces of national historical identity and political symbolism (Zeng, 2023), while literati gardens (e.g., The Humble Administrator's Garden) encode the ethics of reclusion and scholarly contemplation (Xu, 2013). Crucially, the Mountain Resort, for example, is linked to the literary context of The Dream of the Red Chamber's Grand View Garden, deepening its narrative complexity and cultural resonance (Ou, 2024).

Interpretive Systems and Language Landscape: The communication of the cultural and aesthetic values relies heavily on the interpretive system. Contemporary research suggests that this communication system should be analyzed under the framework of Linguistic Landscape (LL), which includes all texts, signs, and multilingual services provided within the site (Wu Yi et al., 2024). An effective LL and interpretation system is vital for transforming physical architecture into meaningful cultural information, thereby strengthening the cultural comprehension and emotional connection among visitors (Li Jiong, 2014).

2.1.3 Research Gaps and the Pivot to Cultural Identity

Recent literature highlights two key directions: the utilization of digital technologies (AR/VR, 3D scanning) to create immersive virtual experiences and improve heritage

interpretation (Cai et al., 2021), and the focus on experiential landscape aesthetics, emphasizing how multi-sensory and emotional experiences shape visitor responses (Liu , 2023).

Despite these advancements, significant research gaps remain, which this study intends to address:

Limited Behavioral Research: Much of the existing literature examines cultural landscapes primarily from architectural, historical, or environmental perspectives, while fewer studies investigate the direct behavioral influence of cultural landscape dimensions on tourists, especially the emerging youth demographic.

Neglected Mediating Mechanism: Even fewer studies integrate cultural landscape theory with cultural identity theory. Although scholars acknowledge that tourism is a form of cultural activity and education that fosters patriotism (Qin, 1993), the specific psychological mechanism by which the architectural stimulus (cultural landscape) is converted into a durable behavioral response (tourists intention) via the mediation of cultural identity remains largely underexplored.

Youth-Centric Deficit: Youth tourists exhibit a high propensity for cultural learning and national pride (Wang, 2023), yet their distinct preference for digital media, interactive facilities, and emotionally resonant content necessitates a specialized model to capture their unique interaction with heritage sites.

Therefore, this study applies the integrated theoretical lens to model the causal relationships, affirming the role of cultural landscape architecture not only as an aesthetic object but as a crucial catalyst for identity affirmation and subsequent tourism intention among young visitors.

2.2 Cultural Identity Theory in Tourism Studies

2.2.1 Conceptual Definition and the Social-Psychological Perspective

Cultural Identity Theory serves as a critical analytical lens for examining how individuals internalize, perceive, and respond to cultural symbols embedded within specific social and geographic contexts. Drawing on the foundational work of Stuart Hall, cultural identity is understood not as a fixed essence but as a dynamic and often fractured process, continuously shaped by engagement with cultural representations, historical narratives, and shared experiences (Tomlinson, J., 2003). This fluid and dialogical nature

is particularly relevant in the era of globalization, where cultural identity is a negotiation between the local (heritage) and the global (modernity) (Hauser, R., 2024).

The theoretical application is further strengthened by Tajfel's Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which posits that individuals derive self-concept and self-esteem from their membership in social groups and the internalization of shared cultural values. In the context of national heritage tourism, this translates to a mechanism where the recognition of shared cultural heritage reinforces a collective identity, which in turn influences attitudes and behavioral intentions towards the heritage site (Hsieh & Chang, 2013).

2.2.2 Cultural Identity as the Core Mediator in Heritage Tourism

In tourism studies, cultural identity is widely recognized as the key psychological mediator connecting the cultural environment of a destination to tourists' behavioral outputs.

Cognitive Recognition and Emotional Resonance: Cultural heritage sites, such as classical gardens, function as tangible carriers of cultural narratives and philosophical ideas. Visitors engage in a process of cognitive recognition when interpreting elements like architectural motifs, poetic inscriptions, and historical designs. This cognitive step is immediately followed by, or intertwined with, emotional resonance - the feeling of connection, pride, or nostalgia evoked by recognizing the shared heritage (Zhang & Wu, 2020). This emotional pathway is highly effective in strengthening cultural identity and is directly linked to higher levels of appreciation and a stronger intention to revisit or promote the site (Parusheva, T., 2022).

Cultural Education and Self-Affirmation: Tourism is intrinsically a form of cultural activity and education, functioning as a "living cultural atmosphere" that instills knowledge, imagination, and a sense of patriotism (Qin, 1993). By engaging with a cultural landscape, tourists actively affirm their connection to the past, achieving a sense of self-location within their national cultural lineage. This process of cultural self-affirmation is a critical output of a successful heritage tourism experience.

2.2.3 The Unique Dynamics of Youth Cultural Identity Formation

The relationship between cultural identity and tourism is intensified among youth tourists (18-35 age group) due to their distinctive preferences and developmental stage.

Experiential and Interactive Pathways: Unlike traditional tourists who may prioritize passive viewing, the younger demographic favors experiential depth and active participation. Their cultural identity formation is closely tied to immersive activities such as digital interpretation (e.g., AR/VR guides, mobile storytelling), themed events, and interactive cultural practices (Cai et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2024). Research confirms that such interactive and engaging experiences significantly enhance their emotional involvement and cultural identity (Dionysopoulou & Mylonakis, 2013).

Digital Media and Social Expression: Modern youth are digital natives who utilize social media as a core tool for travel information, expression, and identity performance (Wu et al., 2022). Their post-visit behavioral intention (e.g., sharing, promoting) is often driven by the desire to express their cultural pride and identity to their social network. Furthermore, studies on Chinese university students show that the functionality and ease of digital travel apps strongly influence their attitude and ultimate travel intention (Wu et al., 2022). This suggests that the interface between the physical garden and digital interpretation is a critical touchpoint for cultural identity activation.

The Rise of National Identity: Contemporary Chinese youth demonstrate a strong awareness of national heritage and view tourism as an important means to "understand the motherland and increase knowledge" (Wang, 2023). This high level of collective identity consciousness makes them highly receptive to the historical and philosophical narratives embedded in gardens, positioning cultural identity as a powerful and relevant predictor of their tourism behavior.

In summary, Cultural Identity Theory provides the mechanistic link in this study, demonstrating how the external stimulus of Cultural Landscape Architecture is processed (cognitively and emotionally) to form an internalized sense of cultural connection (Cultural Identity), which ultimately dictates the resulting Youth Tourism Intention.

2.3 Four gardens cultural landscape and cultural identity

2.3.1 The Summer Place (颐和园)

The Summer Palace, originally constructed in 1750 and formerly known as Qingyi Garden (清漪园), represents the pinnacle of imperial garden design in China. It combines monumental architectural forms with natural elements such as Kunming Lake and Longevity Hill, creating a highly integrated landscape system characterized by

aesthetic harmony and symbolic order (Zeng, 2023). From a landscape architectural perspective, its spatial organization, axial layout, and visual sequencing demonstrate sophisticated techniques of scale control and scenic composition, reflecting the political authority and cultural values of the Qing Dynasty.

From the standpoint of Cultural Landscape Theory, the Summer Palace can be understood as a socially constructed landscape in which natural geography and cultural power are deeply intertwined. The deliberate integration of water, mountains, and architecture embodies the traditional Chinese philosophical concept of “harmony between heaven and humanity”, transforming natural space into a cultural medium that conveys imperial cosmology, governance ideology, and moral order. In this sense, the Summer Palace functions not merely as a physical environment but as a symbolic cultural “text” through which historical meanings and collective memory are continuously reproduced.

In relation to Cultural Identity Theory, the Summer Palace provides an important site for identity construction, particularly for young visitors. The “Long Corridor”, decorated with over 14,000 narrative paintings depicting historical stories, myths, and moral allegories, serves as a visual archive of Chinese cultural symbols. These symbolic representations allow visitors to engage with traditional values through interpretation and reflection. Recent studies indicate that digitalized interpretation methods, such as animated reconstructions and interactive displays, reported a significant improvement in cultural comprehension (Wang, 2023), suggesting that technological mediation enhances the accessibility of cultural symbols.

Through immersive spatial experience and interpretive engagement, young tourists move beyond passive sightseeing toward active meaning-making. This process aligns with Cultural Identity Theory, which emphasizes that identity is formed through interaction, emotional resonance, and symbolic recognition. By enabling young visitors to decode cultural symbols and situate themselves within historical narratives, the Summer Palace contributes to the strengthening of cultural belonging and identity alignment with traditional Chinese aesthetics and values.



Figure 2. 1 The Summer Palace

2.3.2 Chengde Mountain Resort（承德避暑山庄）

The Chengde Mountain Resort represents a distinctive political and cultural landscape formed through the integration of Han, Tibetan, Mongolian, and Manchu architectural traditions. As a large-scale imperial garden constructed during the Qing Dynasty, it functioned not only as a summer retreat but also as a spatial manifestation of frontier governance and ethnic integration. From the perspective of Cultural Landscape Theory, the resort exemplifies how cultural landscapes materialize social power relations and political ideology, transforming natural terrain into a symbolic landscape of imperial authority and national unity.

The spatial diversity of temples, palaces, and ceremonial spaces within the resort conveys a narrative of multicultural coexistence. These architectural forms and spatial arrangements encode the Qing dynasty's vision of a multiethnic empire, positioning Chengde as a cultural landscape where political order, cultural symbolism, and natural environment are closely intertwined.

From the lens of Cultural Identity Theory, Chengde Mountain Resort provides young visitors with opportunities to construct cultural identity through exposure to multicultural historical narratives. Empirical studies indicate that more than 70% of youth tourists reported an increased awareness of China's multiethnic cultural heritage after participating in ethnic-themed exhibitions and interpretive programs (Hui, 2020).

Such experiences contribute to cognitive identity formation by enhancing historical understanding, while also fostering emotional identity through the recognition of cultural diversity and national inclusiveness.

However, existing research and field observations suggest that the cultural potential of Chengde Mountain Resort has not been fully realized in contemporary tourism practice. The integration between historical cultural content and visitor experience remains relatively limited, with interpretation methods relying heavily on static displays and traditional guided tours. As a result, youth tourists often engage with the landscape at a superficial level, which partially explains the relatively low proportion of overnight stays and repeat visitation among young visitors.

From a cultural identity perspective, this limitation constrains the continuity of identity construction. Cultural identity formation requires repeated engagement, emotional immersion, and participatory interpretation. When cultural landscapes are presented primarily as sightseeing spaces rather than experiential environments, their capacity to sustain long-term identity attachment is weakened. Therefore, Chengde Mountain Resort illustrates both the strong symbolic value of multicultural cultural landscapes and the challenges of translating historical significance into meaningful identity experiences for contemporary youth tourists.



Figure 2. 2 Chengde Mountain Resort

2.3.3 The Humble Administrator's Garden（拙政园）

The Humble Administrator's Garden is widely recognized as the highest expression of the Jiangnan literati garden tradition. It was designated as one of the first batch of National Key Cultural Relics Protection Units in China and was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1997 (Wang, 2023), reflecting its outstanding universal value in terms of cultural representation and landscape artistry. As a cultural landscape, it integrates natural elements, architectural space, and literati philosophy into a coherent symbolic system.

From the perspective of Cultural Landscape Theory, the garden exemplifies how landscapes are socially constructed through cultural ideals rather than merely shaped by natural conditions. Its water-centered spatial organization, poetic naming of scenes, and carefully framed views embody the literati ideals of retreat from official life, moral self-cultivation, and harmony with nature. These spatial and symbolic arrangements transform the physical garden into a cultural medium that communicates intellectual values and aesthetic norms of traditional Chinese scholars.

In relation to Cultural Identity Theory, the Humble Administrator's Garden offers young visitors an experiential pathway to identity formation through active cultural participation. Unlike monumental imperial gardens, its cultural meanings are subtle and introspective, requiring interpretation and engagement. Empirical studies indicate that youth tourists who participate in cultural programs such as “garden poetry gatherings,” traditional music performances, and role-based immersive storytelling report showed a notable increase on a five-point Likert scale (Huang, 2025).

These participatory encounters enable young visitors to move beyond visual appreciation toward embodied experience. By enacting literati practices within authentic historical settings, youth tourists internalize symbolic values, develop emotional resonance with classical aesthetics, and establish a personalized sense of cultural belonging. In this process, the Humble Administrator's Garden functions not only as a preserved heritage site but also as an active cultural space where cultural identity is continuously constructed and renewed.



Figure 2. 3 The Humble Administrator's Garden

2.3.4 The Lingering Garden（留园）

The Lingering Garden is internationally renowned for its refined architectural craftsmanship, sophisticated rockeries, and highly articulated spatial composition. As one of the Four Most Famous Gardens in China, it represents the artistic culmination of Jiangnan garden design and embodies the spiritual essence of traditional Chinese landscape aesthetics. Historically, the garden was constructed adjacent to a private residence and organized into three main spatial zones - western, central, and eastern - each characterized by distinct landscape features (Liu, 2023). The western section emphasizes mountainous scenery, the central area integrates both water and rock elements, while the eastern section highlights architectural elegance. Although parts of the western area have become relatively sparse over time, the central and eastern sections remain the core spaces where the artistic value of the garden is most fully expressed.

From the perspective of Cultural Landscape Theory, the Lingering Garden exemplifies how cultural meaning is produced through deliberate spatial ordering and aesthetic design rather than through natural scenery alone. The careful orchestration of rock formations, water features, and plant arrangements constructs a rhythmical landscape that guides movement, frames visual understanding, and conveys philosophical ideals of balance, refinement, and harmony. These landscape elements collectively transform

physical space into a symbolic environment, allowing the garden to function as a culturally constructed text that communicates literati values and artistic ideals.

In terms of Cultural Identity Theory, the Lingering Garden provides young visitors with a site for aesthetic-based identity formation. Unlike imperial gardens that convey power and authority, the Lingering Garden emphasizes subtle beauty and contemplative experience, encouraging emotional resonance with artistic principles. Visitor studies indicate that interpretive strategies such as guided tours and digital storytelling increase youth tourists' satisfaction levels by approximately 20% (Xu, 2013), suggesting that narrative mediation plays a crucial role in translating abstract aesthetic values into accessible cultural understanding.

By combining historical interpretation with multisensory spatial experience, the Lingering Garden enables young tourists to cognitively recognize traditional garden aesthetics while simultaneously developing emotional attachment to the cultural values embedded within the landscape. This fusion of explanation and experience strengthens both cognitive identification and affective belonging, reinforcing cultural identity alignment through aesthetic appreciation and reflective engagement.



Figure 2. 4 The Lingering Garden

2.4 Youth Tourists' Characteristics and Preference

The youth tourist segment, typically defined as individuals aged 18 to 35, has emerged as a crucial and distinct demographic in the global and Chinese cultural tourism market. Their travel motivations and behavioral patterns are fundamentally different from traditional tourist groups, characterized by a preference for deep engagement, technological integration, and the pursuit of self-identity and cultural recognition.

2.4.1 Demand for Experiential and Interactive Engagement

A primary characteristic of young tourists is their strong orientation toward experience-driven and participatory tourism, actively moving beyond passive sightseeing (Dionysopoulou & Mylonakis, 2013). This group seeks immersive activities that allow for personal involvement and deeper cultural connection.

Active Cultural Immersion: Young visitors desire to move from being mere spectators to becoming active participants in the cultural environment. This demand is evidenced by the effectiveness of interactive programming; for instance, the implementation of "garden-themed role-playing" or participation in cultural conservation (Wang 2024)/ repair activities are highly favored, with such interactive segments having been shown to significantly extend average stay times and increase revisit rates in heritage sites. They are driven to engage in tourism as a form of aesthetic practice that enhances their cultural literacy and aesthetic appreciation (Li & Li, 2014).

Value-Driven Experience: This desire for depth translates into an emphasis on cultural education, seeking experiences that strengthen the popularization of garden culture and offer rich, interesting activities rather than merely viewing static scenery. Their psychological openness to positive tourism impacts, especially the social and cultural benefits, makes them highly receptive to these value-adding experiences (Zhu & Wei, 2014).

2.4.2 Reliance on Digital Tools and Media-Centric Behavior

Youth tourists are digital natives whose travel behaviors are inseparable from smart technology, digital media, and social networks(Zhou, Zhang et al. 2021).

Mobile Planning and Sharing: They heavily rely on mobile applications and social media platforms for pre-trip planning, on-site navigation, and post-trip sharing of their experiences (Dionysopoulou & Mylonakis, 2013). Research focusing on Chinese university students highlights a crucial finding: the ease of use and functionality of travel

mobile applications significantly influence their attitude, perceived behavioral control, and ultimately, their travel intention, often outweighing the influence of the app's content itself (Wu et al., 2022).

Advanced Digital Interpretation: Young tourists expect and are receptive to advanced digital interpretive tools at heritage sites. The use of sophisticated digital technologies, such as 3D laser scanning, 360-degree panoramas, and virtual reality (VR) subsystems, is essential for promoting cultural landscape marketing and providing a virtual experience of heritage (Cai et al., 2021). Furthermore, the successful integration of digital interpretation requires the enhancement of the linguistic landscape and the optimization of multi-modal presentation forms to better exhibit cultural value and aesthetic appeal (Wu et al., 2024).

2.4.3 Pursuit of Cultural Identity and Social Expression

The travel motivation of the youth is closely linked to their ongoing process of cultural identity formation and the need for social self-expression.

Cultural Recognition and Patriotism: Tourism is widely viewed as a means for self-education and national connection. A survey of Chinese youth revealed that a vast majority (92.7%) of respondents considered tourism an important way to "know the country and broaden horizons", underscoring a strong underlying motivation to affirm and build their collective national and cultural identity (Wang, 2023).

Unique Narrative and Branding: They are drawn to destinations that offer unique, coherently branded cultural narratives. For heritage sites, this necessitates organizing the site's unique history, literature, folklore, or philosophical culture (such as the reclusive culture of Jiangnan gardens or the royal culture of imperial gardens) to develop a clear theme and unfold it through a sequence of landscapes in a storytelling manner. Moreover, creating distinct cultural and creative peripheral products is highly effective in attracting this group.

In sum, the tourists intention of youth tourists toward cultural landscapes is driven by a sophisticated blend of interactive experiential preferences, high expectations for digital and media-centric services, and an active pursuit of cultural identity and social expression. This dynamic profile directly shapes their behavioral intentions and necessitates that heritage sites, like classical gardens, prioritize the development of immersive, digitally-enhanced, and culturally-narrative-rich visitor experiences.

2.5 Youth Tourists' Intentions

Youth tourists' travel intentions demonstrate a distinct shift toward experience -driven, emotionally oriented, and identity-expressive forms of cultural consumption. Unlike traditional tourists who often prioritize cost, convenience, or general sightseeing motives, young travelers increasingly value immersive cultural engagement as their primary decision-making factor. This trend is particularly evident in garden tourists, where youth tourists show strong preferences for interactive interpretations, scenario-based activities, and participatory cultural programs that allow them to feel personally connected to traditional culture.

2.5.1 The Dominance of Emotional Resonance and Experiential Learning

For young travelers, the motivation to visit a cultural site is deeply rooted in the potential for psychological connection and personal growth. Empirical studies reveal that emotional resonance and cultural identity derived from the cultural landscape serve as the core mediating factors driving youth tourists' intentions, often surpassing the mere appeal of physical scenic attractions. This strong psychological openness means they are significantly more aware of positive tourism impacts, such as social and cultural benefits, than negative ones, enhancing their willingness to participate.

Recent studies indicate that youth travelers often face a gap between their ability to perceive complex cultural symbols and their depth of historical-cultural understanding. This discrepancy leads them to prefer multisensory and hands-on experiences- such as thematic storytelling, role-playing activities, and craft-based workshops- that transform abstract cultural symbols into tangible and relatable encounters. Their knowledge acquisition pattern has also shifted from passive reception (e.g., listening to a tour guide) to active exploration, where they seek autonomy in navigating cultural sites through digital tools, mobile apps, or self-guided interpretation.

2.5.2 Digital Engagement and Information Consumption

The travel intention of young tourists is highly intertwined with their identity as digital natives, affecting both the planning and execution phases of their trip. They heavily rely on digital media for searching, assessing, producing, purchasing, and consuming information related to travel products and services.

Furthermore, digital tools are key to facilitating their desired "active exploration." Research on Chinese university students indicates that the ease of use and functionality

of travel mobile applications have a stronger influence on their attitude, perceived behavioral control, and, consequently, their travel intention, compared to the application's content itself. This suggests that providing seamless digital navigation and interactive media (such as 3D laser scanning or virtual reality subsystems for heritage sites) is crucial for meeting their expectations for personalized and accessible cultural content.

2.5.3 Identity Expression and Cultural Recognition

Youth tourists' intentions are closely intertwined with identity expression and social presentation. Tourism is widely viewed as an important social vehicle for self-education and national connection, with a survey revealing that 92.7% of young respondents consider tourism an important way to “know the country and broaden horizons” (Wang, 2023). This underscores a strong motivation to affirm cultural identity and national pride through travel.

Social media platforms such as Xiaohongshu, Douyin, and Instagram have become essential channels through which young travelers construct personal narratives, document cultural experiences, and signal aesthetic taste. This strong inclination toward self-branding and social expression shapes not only the choice of destinations but also the type of cultural experiences they pursue.

Generational studies reveal that different cohorts of young people exhibit divergent identity orientations in their travel motivations. Cavagnaro and Staffieri (2018) highlight that Generation Z tends to prioritize authenticity, personal relevance, and emotional resonance, while earlier generations favor educational or heritage-oriented motivations. Jani and Hussain (2011) further describe youth identity as a dynamic and evolving spectrum, influenced by social values, cultural exposure, and digital interaction patterns. These variations imply that youth tourists' intentions toward gardens are fluid and multifaceted, shaped simultaneously by cultural curiosity, emotional needs, and social identity construction. Empirical evidence from studies on university students further suggests that experiential engagement influences travel intention mainly through attitudinal and cognitive mechanisms rather than through direct effects, highlighting the importance of mediating psychological processes in youth tourism behavior (Wu, 2022).

Overall, youth tourists' intentions toward cultural sites like gardens reflect an integrated pursuit of cultural immersion, emotional connection, self-expression, and personalized learning. Understanding these evolving motivations is essential for

designing cultural landscape experiences that resonate with younger generations and ultimately enhance their willingness to visit, revisit, and engage more deeply with Chinese gardens.

2.6 Research Hypotheses

Based on the Cultural Landscape Theory and Cultural Identity Theory, this study proposes a structural model involving tourist experience, cultural identity, youth tourists' characteristics and preferences, and youth travel intention. Existing studies show that youth tourists' perceptions and experiences in cultural heritage sites significantly influence their cultural understanding and behavioral intentions. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are developed.

H1: Tourist experience has a positive impact on cultural identity.

Tourist experience plays a fundamental role in shaping visitors' cultural understanding and emotional resonance. In Chinese gardens, aesthetic appreciation, cultural interpretation, and interactive participation can collectively enhance young tourists' recognition of traditional cultural values. Therefore, a more engaging and meaningful experience is expected to foster stronger cultural identity.

H2: Tourist experience has a positive impact on youth travel intention.

High-quality experiences stimulate visitors' interest and motivation to revisit or further explore cultural destinations. Prior research indicates that immersive, enjoyable, and culturally rich experiences increase the likelihood of behavioral intention among young tourists. Hence, positive experiential encounters in Chinese gardens are likely to promote youth travel intention.

H3: Cultural identity has a positive impact on youth travel intention.

Cultural identity strengthens emotional attachment to heritage landscapes, which in turn influences behavioral decision-making. When youth tourists perceive a sense of cultural connection and recognition, they are more inclined to support, appreciate, and actively engage in cultural tourism activities. Therefore, stronger cultural identity is expected to lead to higher travel intention.

H4: Youth tourists' characteristics and preferences have a positive impact on youth travel intention.

Young tourists' personal interests, cultural preferences, and travel motivations shape their willingness to participate in cultural tourism. Individuals who show stronger preference for cultural experiences, aesthetic activities, or interactive learning tend to exhibit higher levels of cultural tourism intention. Thus, youth characteristics and preferences are expected to positively predict youth travel intention.

2.7 Theoretical Model

Based on the Cultural Landscape Theory and Cultural Identity Theory, this study constructs a theoretical model that examines the relationships among four key latent variables: tourist experience, cultural identity, youth tourists' characteristics and preferences, and youth travel intention. The model explains how youth visitors form cultural understanding and behavioral intentions in the context of Chinese gardens.

First, tourist experience is proposed as a primary antecedent within the model. In this study, cultural landscape architecture is operationalized through tourist experience, reflecting youths' direct interaction with cultural space. According to Cultural Landscape Theory, visitors' interaction with cultural landscapes - including aesthetic appreciation, cultural interpretation, and participatory activities - shapes their subjective experiences. These experiences serve as the foundation for cognitive and emotional responses to cultural heritage. Thus, the model assumes that richer and more meaningful experiences lead to a higher level of cultural identity among youth tourists (H1). At the same time, tourist experience directly influences youth travel intention (H2), suggesting that positive experiential encounters can immediately motivate young visitors to revisit or recommend the cultural destination.

Second, cultural identity functions as a cognitive - affective mediator that connects experiential encounters with behavioral intention. Aligned with Cultural Identity Theory, when youth tourists develop a stronger sense of cultural recognition and emotional belonging, they are more likely to support and engage with cultural tourism activities. Therefore, the model proposes that cultural identity positively predicts youth travel intention (H3).

Third, the model incorporates youth tourists' characteristics and preferences as an independent predictor. Individual differences - including interest in cultural heritage, personal travel motivations, and aesthetic or experiential preferences - can shape young visitors' willingness to participate in cultural tourism. Thus, youth characteristics and preferences are expected to directly influence youth travel intention (H4), highlighting the role of personal orientation in shaping tourism behavior.

Overall, the theoretical model integrates experiential, cognitive, and personal dimensions to explain youth tourists' behavioral intentions in garden settings. It proposes that tourist experience affects travel intention directly and indirectly through cultural identity, while youth characteristics and preferences exert an additional direct influence on behavioral intention. This integrated framework provides a foundation for the empirical testing presented in subsequent chapters.

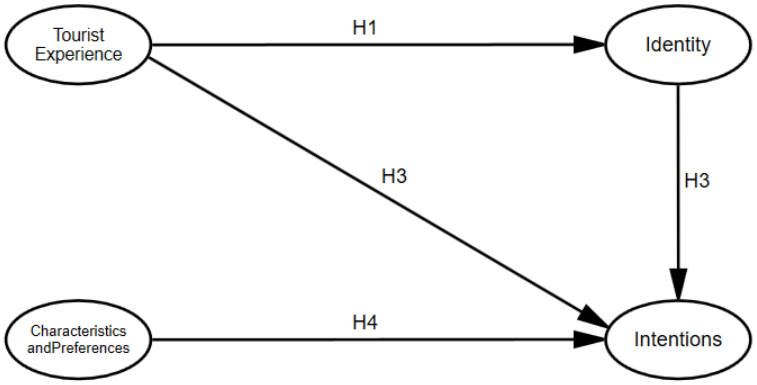


Figure 2. 5 Conceptual Model of Cultural Landscape Experience and Youth Tourists Intention

Source: Developed by the author based on cultural landscape theory (Tuan, 1977; Antrop, 2005), cultural identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Bond & Falk, 2013), and prior tourism behavior studies (Poria et al., 2003; Vong & Ung, 2012).

Although no single existing study provides an identical theoretical model, the conceptual framework of this research is developed by integrating insights from cultural landscape theory, cultural identity theory, and youth tourism behavior literature.

Specifically, previous studies have established that cultural landscape experience plays a significant role in shaping tourists' perceptions and emotional responses (Tuan, 1977; Antrop, 2005). Cultural identity theory further suggests that emotional and symbolic identification mediates the relationship between cultural exposure and behavioral intention (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Bond & Falk, 2013). Meanwhile, youth tourism research emphasizes the importance of experiential participation and preference alignment in influencing travel intention (Poria et al., 2003; Vong & Ung, 2012).

Based on these theoretical foundations, this study constructs an integrated conceptual model to examine how cultural landscape experience influences youth tourists' intention through cultural identity, while accounting for youth characteristics and preferences.

In summary, the theoretical model integrates four core constructs-ourist experience, cultural identity, youth tourists' characteristics and preferences, and youth tourists intention - to explain how young visitors develop intentions toward Chinese gardens. Tourist experience serves as the primary influencing factor, shaping both cultural identity and travel intention. Cultural identity further strengthens the intention to visit, functioning as a cognitive and emotional bridge between experience and behavior. Meanwhile, youth characteristics and preferences directly affect tourists intention, reflecting individual differences in cultural interest and motivation. Together, these relationships illustrate how experiential, cognitive, and personal factors jointly determine youth tourists' behavioral intentions.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study conducts empirical analysis based on the four core research questions proposed earlier:

1. The current situation and challenges of landscape architecture in Chinese garden culture

2. Behavioral characteristics and preferences of young tourists

3. The impact mechanism of cultural landscapes on tourism intentions

4. Landscape optimization strategy

The research hypothesis suggests that the cultural landscape of gardens plays a mediating role in enhancing cultural identity and, positively influencing young people's travel intentions, and this influence is moderated by personal interests and social factors. The research objective is to construct a theoretical model of "landscape identity intention" through a mixed research method, providing empirical evidence for the sustainable development of the four famous gardens.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

3.2.1 Questionnaire survey

A structured questionnaire survey was adopted as the primary method for data collection in this study. To ensure adequate coverage and to enhance the representativeness of the sample, the questionnaire was distributed through various online channels, including major social media platforms (e.g., WeChat Moments, Weibo, Xiaohongshu), tourism communities (e.g., Mafengwo, Ctrip Community), and university networks (e.g., campus forums and student organizations).

1) Target population

The target population of this study consists of young individuals aged 18-35.

The questionnaire included an item measuring respondents' prior visitation experience to the Four Famous Gardens of China. This variable was used to describe the sample characteristics rather than as a screening criterion, and all valid questionnaires were included in the final data analysis.

2) Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was designed based on relevant literature in cultural landscape perception, cultural identity, and youth tourism behavior. It consisted of five major sections:

Part 1: Basic Information

Part 2: Experience of Chinese Garden Culture Landscape (4 questions)

Part 3: Cultural Identity (4 questions)

Part 4: Youth Tourists Characteristics and Preferences (4 questions)

Part 5: Youth Tourists Intentions (4 questions)

All measurement items were adapted from validated scales in previous studies and modified to fit the context of this research. Likert-scale items were used where appropriate to assess attitudes and perceptions.

3) Sample size estimation

Sample size adequacy in structural equation modeling (SEM) should be evaluated by considering multiple factors, including model complexity, the number of latent constructs, observed indicators, and structural paths, rather than relying on a single heuristic rule (Kline, 2016; Hair et al., 2019).

In this study, the proposed model consists of a moderate number of latent variables, a total of 16 observed measurement items, and a relatively limited number of structural paths, including one mediating relationship. According to Hair et al. (2019), SEM models with moderate complexity generally require a sample size of approximately 100-200 cases to achieve stable and reliable parameter estimation.

In addition, as a supplementary reference, earlier guidelines suggest that the minimum sample size should be at least five to ten times the number of observed variables (Bentler & Chou, 1987), which would indicate a recommended range of 80-160 cases for the present measurement model.

With approximately 150 valid responses collected, the sample size meets the recommended requirements for SEM analysis of moderate complexity. Therefore, the sample size is considered sufficient to ensure acceptable estimation accuracy and model stability.

4) Questionnaire Reliability Test

To ensure internal consistency of the measurement items, Cronbach's alpha was used as the primary reliability coefficient (Cronbach, 1951). According to Nunnally (1978) and Hair et al. (2010), a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.70 or higher is generally regarded as acceptable for social science research. This threshold is further supported by empirical research in science education (Taber, 2018). Additionally, Bujang et al. (2018) emphasize the importance of conducting a pilot test to assess reliability before large-scale data collection.

Prior to the full-scale data collection, a pilot study with 47 respondents was conducted. Reliability analysis performed using SPSS produced a Cronbach's alpha of 0.963, indicating excellent internal consistency. This value far exceeds the conventional threshold of 0.70, demonstrating that the questionnaire items are highly stable and consistently measure the intended constructs. Therefore, the instrument was deemed suitable for subsequent large-scale data collection.

3.2.2 Auxiliary Data Collection

Scenic area management data: Collect annual tourist statistics and tourist satisfaction reports for each garden.

Social media data: Collect tourist reviews from platforms such as Weibo and Xiaohongshu regarding the four famous gardens (in compliance with ethical standards).

3.3 Data Analysis Methods

This study adopts a quantitative research approach based on questionnaire survey data. Prior to analysis, the data were screened to eliminate invalid responses and ensure completeness. Descriptive statistical analysis was first conducted using SPSS to summarize the basic characteristics of the sample, including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions.

Inferential statistical analyses were then performed to examine differences and associations among key variables. Independent-sample t-tests and chi-square tests were used to explore potential differences in tourism intentions and preferences across demographic groups. Correlation analysis was conducted to assess the relationships among cultural landscape experience, cultural identity, youth preferences, and tourism intention.

To assess the reliability and validity of the measurement scales, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using AMOS. Composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and standardized factor loadings were examined to evaluate convergent validity and internal consistency of the constructs.

Finally, structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to test the hypothesized influence mechanism among cultural landscape experience, cultural identity, youth preferences, and tourism intention. The structural model was estimated using maximum likelihood estimation, and model fit indices were used to evaluate the overall goodness of fit.

All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS and AMOS, ensuring both methodological rigor and analytical feasibility.

3.4 Questionnaire content

Questionnaire instructions

As young tourists become a significant consumer force in the cultural tourism market, their aesthetic preferences and experiences are evolving. How can traditional Chinese gardens effectively attract this emerging demographic through the development of cultural landscapes? This has become a key issue in the integration of culture and tourism. This questionnaire investigates young tourists' perceptions of the cultural landscapes, cultural identification, and travel intentions of China's four famous gardens (the Summer Palace, the Mountain Resort, the Humble Administrator's Garden, and the Lingering Garden). Through your honest feedback, this study aims to analyze the role of garden cultural landscapes in attracting young tourists and fostering cultural identification. All data will be used for academic research purposes only and remain strictly confidential. Please provide your responses based on your experiences. Thank you for your participation and support!

Questionnaire Content

Age

1.18-22 2. 23-28 3. 28-35 4. Over 35

Gender

1.Male 2. Female

Occupation

1.Student 2.Employee 3.Civil servant 4.Other occupation

Income (Per month/Yuan)

1. Under 3500 2. 3500-5000 3. 5100-10000 4. Over 1w

Times of trips per year

1. Under 1 2. 1-2 3. 3-4 4. Over 5

Number of participants

1.Alone 2. 2-4 people 3. 5-8 people 4. More than 8 people

Have ever visited the Chinese garden?

1.Yes 2. No

Which garden have you been to visit? (Multiple Choice Questions)

1.The Summer Place（颐和园）

2. Chengde Mountain Resort（承德避暑山庄）

3.The Humble Administrator's Garden（拙政园）

4.The Lingering Garden（留园）

How do you think the garden cultural landscape should be optimized to better attract young tourists?

Answer:

Likert 5-point scale distribute: the assessment values ranged from “Strongly disagree” (1 point) to “Strong agree” (5 points).

Table 3. 1 The questionnaire survey

	No.	**Question**					
Experience of Chinese Garden Culture Landscape	1	The cultural landscape of the garden has a unique architectural style and strong traditional cultural characteristics.	1	2	3	4	5
	2	The landscape design of the garden (such as water features, rockery, and plant arrangements) is pleasing to the eye.	1	2	3	4	5
	3	The cultural displays in the gardens (such as couplets, plaques, and guided tours) can help me understand traditional culture.	1	2	3	4	5
	4	The interactive experience of the garden (such as guided tours, handicraft experiences, and immersive activities) makes me more willing to explore garden culture.	1	2	3	4	5
Cultural Identity	5	Visiting Chinese gardens has made me more interested in traditional Chinese culture.	1	2	3	4	5
	6	The cultural atmosphere of the garden inspires my pride in traditional culture.	1	2	3	4	5
	7	The cultural experience of the garden has enhanced my identification with Chinese culture.	1	2	3	4	5
	8	My experience visiting the gardens has made me more willing to share traditional cultural knowledge with friends and family.	1	2	3	4	5
Youth Tourists Characteristics and Preferences	9	When choosing a travel destination, I attach great importance to its historical and cultural value.	1	2	3	4	5
	10	I prefer to choose scenic spots that can provide immersive experiences.	1	2	3	4	5
	11	When traveling, I will actively participate in cultural interactive activities (such as garden tours and handicraft experiences).	1	2	3	4	5
	12	I tend to choose scenic spots with a strong cultural atmosphere rather than purely entertainment-oriented ones.	1	2	3	4	5
Youth Tourists Intentions	13	I would like to visit or recommend the garden to friends or family in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
	14	The cultural experience of Chinese gardens will influence my choice of travel destination.	1	2	3	4	5
	15	Compared with other types of scenic spots, I prefer cultural garden scenic spots.	1	2	3	4	5
	16	If new cultural experience projects are launched, I would like to visit the garden again.	1	2	3	4	5

CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 Demographic Profile and Tourism Behavior of Respondents

This section presents the demographic profile and tourism behavior characteristics of the respondents included in the final data analysis. Understanding the basic attributes of the analytical sample provides important context for interpreting subsequent statistical analyses and structural equation modeling results.

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked whether they had visited any of the Four Great Classical Gardens of China. Among the 238 questionnaires collected, 200 respondents reported having visited at least one of the Four Great Gardens, while 38 respondents indicated no prior visitation experience (n=200). Given that this study focuses on the influence of actual cultural landscape experience on cultural identity and tourism intention, only respondents with prior visitation experience were retained for further analysis.

Accordingly, the final analytical sample consisted of 200 valid responses. The demographic and travel behavior characteristics reported in this section are based on this filtered sample.

4.1.1 Emographic Variables

The respondents' demographic variables are presented in Table 4.1 as shown below.

Table 4. 1 Basic information of respondents (n=200)

Variables	Details	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	77	38.5
	Female	123	61.5
Age group	18-22	46	23.0
	22-28	102	51.0
	28-35	52	26.0
Occupation	Student	56	28.0
	Employee	93	46.5
	Civil servant	10	5.0
	Other occupation	41	20.5
Monthly income (yuan)	Under 3500	74	37.0
	3500-5000	68	34.0
	5000-10000	43	21.5
	Over 10000	15	7.5

Table 4.1 shows that 200 valid questionnaires were collected in this study. The sample exhibits distinct characteristics in terms of gender, age, educational background, occupation, and frequency of visits, providing a solid data foundation for subsequent research on the impact of China's four famous gardens on youth tourism intentions.

First, the sample structure accurately covers the "youth" group defined in this study, and the gender ratio is balanced. Males account for 38.5%, and females account for 61.5%, a relatively balanced gender distribution that ensures the universality of the research conclusions.

Second, the sample structure highly aligns with the "youth" theme of this study. In terms of age distribution, respondents aged 22-28 account for a significant 51.0%, with the remaining 23.0% aged 18-22 and 26% aged 28-35. This indicates that the survey subjects accurately cover the youth group defined in this study, and the sample is highly representative, effectively reflecting the true views and preferences of young tourists.

Third, the sample outlines the economic characteristics of typical young tourists. In terms of occupation, employees accounted for the largest proportion at 46.5%, followed by students at 28%, demonstrating a strong motivation for cultural exploration and learning potential. The four famous gardens of China, as heritage sites with profound cultural significance, inherently "self-select" visitors, attracting this group of young people who often have a natural interest in history and culture. This combination of identity and "cultural destination preference" ensures, to a certain extent, their potential for perceiving and understanding garden cultural landscapes.

Finally, in terms of income, the largest group (37.0%) had a monthly income below 3,500 yuan, exhibiting characteristics primarily of students and young professionals. This profile aligns with the current economic situation of young people and provides a realistic context for subsequent discussions on consumption intentions within the experience economy.

4.1.2 Consumer Behavior

Table 4. 2 Consumer behavior statistics

Variables	Details	Frequency	Percent
Number of participants	Alone	25	12.5
	2-4 people	142	71.0
	5-8 people	29	14.5
	More than 8 people	4	2.0
Times of trips per year	Under 1	45	22.5
	1-2	88	44.0
	3-4	42	21.0
	Over 5	25	12.5

Note: Percentages are calculated based on the total sample size (N = 200). Multiple responses were allowed.

Table 4.2 shows that this study investigated the basic travel habits and tourism activity levels of the surveyed young tourists through three key questions.

Young tourists exhibited a significant preference for social travel. In terms of the number of travelers, the proportion choosing to travel in groups was the absolute

majority. Among them, the highest percentage (71.0%) traveled with "2-4 people," compared to only 12.5% traveling alone. This suggests that for young people, visiting the four famous gardens is not merely a cultural sightseeing activity, but also an important social interaction process.

And, the surveyed group represents active tourism consumers. Regarding the average annual frequency of travel, nearly half (44.0%) of respondents indicated that they travel "1-2 times" per year, while another 12.5% travel "more than 5 times" per year. This suggests that the young respondents generally possess relatively rich travel experience and are active participants in the tourism market. Their evaluations of the four famous gardens are based on comparisons with other destinations, and therefore have high discernment and reference value.

4.1.3 Visitation Distribution across the Four Great Classical Gardens

Table 4. 3 Visitation Distribution across the Four Great Classical Gardens (Multiple Responses, N = 200)

Variables	Details	Frequency	Percent
Which graden have you been to visit? (Multiple Choice Questions)	The Summer Place	112	56.0
	Chengde Mountain Resort	87	43.5
	The Humble Administrator's Garden	64	32.0
	The Lingering Garden	58	29.0

Table 4.3 further illustrates the distribution of visitation across the Four Great Classical Gardens among the surveyed young tourists. As this was a multiple-response question, the results reflect the proportion of respondents who had visited each garden, revealing clear differences in popularity and spatial reach among the four sites.

First, the Summer Palace emerged as the most frequently visited garden, with 112 respondents (56.0%) reporting prior visitation. This result highlights its dominant position within China's classical garden tourism system. As the largest and most accessible of the Four Great Gardens, the Summer Palace benefits from its location in Beijing, strong national visibility, and integration into mainstream urban tourism itineraries. Its high visitation rate suggests that it often serves as an entry point through which young tourists encounter classical garden culture.

Second, Chengde Mountain Resort ranked second, with 87 respondents (43.5%) indicating visitation experience. Although geographically more distant from major metropolitan centers, its status as a World Cultural Heritage site and its strong historical association with imperial culture continue to attract a substantial proportion of young tourists. This finding suggests that historical significance and heritage branding remain influential factors in motivating youth visitation, even when travel costs and distance are relatively higher.

Third, the Humble Administrator's Garden and the Lingering Garden showed comparatively lower but still notable visitation rates, with 64 respondents (32.0%) and 58 respondents (29.0%), respectively. As representative private gardens located in Suzhou, these sites are more closely associated with regional tourism and refined literati aesthetics. The lower visitation proportions may reflect geographical constraints and more specialized cultural appeal, indicating that young tourists are less likely to encounter these gardens unless they deliberately plan heritage-oriented or in-depth cultural trips.

Overall, the visitation pattern demonstrates a clear hierarchy among the Four Great Classical Gardens, shaped by factors such as location accessibility, national prominence, and tourism infrastructure. At the same time, the fact that all four gardens were visited by a considerable proportion of respondents confirms that young tourists have diverse exposure to classical garden landscapes. This provides a solid empirical basis for subsequent analyses examining how different cultural landscape experiences influence cultural identity formation and tourism intention among young visitors.

4.2 Descriptive and Preliminary Analysis

Before conducting the structural equation modeling, a set of descriptive and preliminary statistical analyses was performed to provide an overall understanding of the sample characteristics and key variables related to youth tourism behavior. These analyses aim to examine the basic distribution patterns, central tendencies, and group differences among respondents, thereby offering contextual insights into their perceptions, preferences, and behavioral intentions toward cultural landscape gardens.

Specifically, descriptive statistical analysis was employed to summarize the core constructs of the study, including Experience, Identity, Characteristics and Preferences,

and Intention. Pearson chi-square tests and independent-samples t-tests were further conducted to explore potential differences across demographic groups and among the four selected gardens. Together, these preliminary analyses establish a foundational understanding of the data and support the subsequent interpretation of the structural model results.

4.2.1 Descriptive statistical analysis of core variables

Table 4. 4 Descriptive statistical analysis of young tourists' experience of Chinese garden culture

Variables	NO.		Mean	SD.
Experience of Chinese Garden Culture Landscape	Q1	The cultural landscape of the garden has a unique architectural style and strong traditional cultural characteristics.	4.40	0.88
	Q2	The landscape design of the garden (such as water features, rockery, and plant arrangements) is pleasing to the eye.	4.39	0.89
	Q3	The cultural displays in the gardens (such as couplets, plaques, and guided tours) can help me understand traditional culture.	4.40	0.76
	Q4	The interactive experience of the garden (such as guided tours, handicraft experiences, and immersive activities) makes me more willing to explore garden culture.	4.13	0.98
Total			4.33	0.74
Cultural Identity	Q5	Visiting Chinese gardens has made me more interested in traditional Chinese culture.	4.34	0.79
	Q6	The cultural atmosphere of the garden inspires my pride in traditional culture.	4.47	0.76
	Q7	The cultural experience of the garden has enhanced my identification with Chinese culture.	4.47	0.72
	Q8	My experience visiting the gardens has made me more willing to share traditional cultural knowledge with friends and family.	4.20	0.99
Total			4.37	0.69

Table 4.4 (Continued)

Variables	NO.		Mean	SD.
Youth Tourists Characteristics and Preferences	Q9	When choosing a travel destination, I attach great importance to its historical and cultural value.	4.03	0.88
	Q10	I prefer to choose scenic spots that can provide immersive experiences.	4.30	0.88
	Q11	When traveling, I will actively participate in cultural interactive activities (such as garden tours and handicraft experiences).	3.71	1.11
	Q12	I tend to choose scenic spots with a strong cultural atmosphere rather than purely entertainment-oriented ones.	4.11	0.99
Total			4.03	0.79
Youth Tourists Intentions	Q13	I would like to visit or recommend the garden to friends or family in the future.	4.24	0.91
	Q14	The cultural experience of Chinese gardens will influence my choice of travel destination.	4.01	1.05
	Q15	Compared with other types of scenic spots, I prefer cultural garden scenic spots.	4.11	1.00
	Q16	If new cultural experience projects are launched, I would like to visit the garden again.	4.10	1.05
Total			4.11	0.85
ALL Total			4.21	0.68

Descriptive statistics were conducted to examine the distributional characteristics of the four core variables: Experience of Chinese Garden Cultural Landscape, Cultural Identity, Youth Tourists' Characteristics and Preferences, and Youth Tourists' Intentions. The analysis focused on the mean and standard deviation values of each measurement item, providing an overview of respondents' general attitudes and levels of agreement.

Overall, the respondents demonstrated a highly positive evaluation across all items, with the combined mean score for all variables reaching 4.21 and a standard deviation of 0.68, indicating a generally favorable and stable response pattern among the participants. This result is further reflected in the following aspects:

(1) Experience of Chinese Garden Cultural Landscape:

This dimension received a relatively high level of agreement, with an overall mean score of 4.33. Respondents generally affirmed that the architectural design, landscape features, and cultural elements of Chinese gardens provide a visually appealing and culturally rich experience. Although still positive, the item related to interactive activities showed slightly more varied responses, suggesting differences in how respondents perceive these experiences.

(2) Cultural Identity:

This construct recorded the highest overall mean score among the four categories, at 4.37. Participants strongly agreed that visiting Chinese gardens enhances their interest in traditional culture, strengthens their cultural pride, and reinforces their identification with Chinese cultural heritage. These results indicate that garden visits play an important role in shaping and deepening young tourists' cultural identity.

(3) Youth Tourists' Characteristics and Preferences:

This dimension showed a moderately positive evaluation, with a total mean score of 4.03. Respondents expressed a clear preference for destinations offering immersive and culturally rich experiences. However, the item concerning active participation in interactive cultural activities revealed the lowest level of agreement within this dimension, suggesting varying degrees of willingness among tourists to engage in hands-on experiences.

(4) Youth Tourists' Intentions:

Tourists’ intention also received a strong positive evaluation, with an overall mean score of 4.11. Participants indicated that experiences in Chinese gardens influence their future travel considerations, willingness to revisit, and likelihood of recommending such destinations to others. These findings highlight the potential of cultural garden experiences to stimulate continued interest and revisit intentions among young tourists.

Taken together, the descriptive statistical results show that young tourists hold highly favorable perceptions of Chinese gardens, both in terms of cultural content and experiential quality. These perceptions are closely linked to their cultural identity, preferences, and future travel intentions, forming a solid basis for subsequent correlation and hypothesis-testing analyses.

4.2.2 Pearson Chi-square

Table 4. 5 Number and Chi-square of the Relationship between Age and Trip Times

Times of trips per year	Age						
	18-22		23-28		28-35		
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
Under 1	10	21.7	24	23.5	11	21.2	Pearson Chi-square P=.705
1-2	23	50	43	42.2	22	42.3	
3-5	6	13	25	24.5	11	21.2	
Over 5	7	15.2	10	9.8	8	15.4	
Total	46	100	103	100	52	100	

* Significantly at the .05 level

Statistical assumptions

H0: p = 0 Times of trip is not dependent on age

H1: p ≠ 0 Times of trip is dependent on age

P (probability) = 0.000, α (significance level) = .05

Therefore, the P-value is more than the value α, so rejected H1 and accepted H0.

In conclusion, the times of trip is not dependent on age at the significance level .05.

Table 4.5 presents the results of the Pearson chi-square test examining the relationship between age and annual trip frequency among young tourists. The analysis shows that the test produced a p-value of 0.705, which is higher than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis—that age and trip frequency are independent—cannot be rejected.

In practical terms, this result indicates that age does not have a significant influence on how often young tourists travel each year. The three age groups (18–22, 23–28, and 28–35) exhibit similar patterns of travel frequency, suggesting that age differences within the youth segment do not lead to meaningful variations in annual trip behavior.

This further supports the rationale for treating youth tourists as a unified analytical group when examining the influence of cultural landscape experience and cultural identity on tourists intention.

4.2.3 Mean, S.D. and t-test

Table 4. 6 Analysis of Differences in Measurement Items by Gender (M±SD)

variables	NO		Male		Female		t	p
			Mean	SD.	Mean	SD.		
Experience of Chinese Garden Culture Landscape	Q1	The cultural landscape of the garden has a unique architectural style and strong traditional cultural characteristics.	4.17	0.992	4.54	0.771	-2.832	0.005
	Q2	The landscape design of the garden (such as water features, rockery, and plant arrangements) is pleasing to the eye.	4.23	1.037	4.49	0.772	-1.852	0.066
	Q3	The cultural displays in the gardens (such as couplets, plaques, and guided tours) can help me understand traditional culture.	4.30	0.796	4.46	0.739	-1.489	0.138
	Q4	The interactive experience of the garden (such as guided tours, handicraft experiences, and immersive activities) makes me more willing to explore garden culture.	3.73	1.072	4.38	0.825	-4.580	0.000
Total			4.1.7	0.765	4.47	0.685	-3.481	0.001
Cultural Identity	Q5	Visiting Chinese gardens has made me more interested in traditional Chinese culture.	4.22	0.821	4.41	0.766	-1.622	0.106
	Q6	The cultural atmosphere of the garden inspires my pride in traditional culture.	4.43	0.733	4.50	0.772	-0.612	0.541
	Q7	The cultural experience of the garden has enhanced my identification with Chinese culture.	4.49	0.681	4.45	0.749	0.441	0.660
	Q8	My experience visiting the gardens has made me more willing to share traditional cultural knowledge with friends and family.	4.03	1.100	4.31	0.907	-1.976	0.050
Total			4.29	0.634	4.41	0.714	-1.264	0.208

Table 4.6 (Continued)

variables	NO		Male		Female		t	p
			Mean	SD.	Mean	SD.		
Youth Tourists Characteristics and Preferences	Q9	When choosing a travel destination, I attach great importance to its historical and cultural value.	4.09	1.002	3.98	1.101	0.693	0.489
	Q10	I prefer to choose scenic spots that can provide immersive experiences.	4.14	0.969	4.39	0.806	-1.951	0.052
	Q11	I prefer to choose scenic spots that can provide immersive experiences.	3.49	1.154	3.84	1.059	-2.159	0.032
	Q12	I tend to choose scenic spots with a strong cultural atmosphere rather than purely entertainment-oriented ones.	3.96	0.966	4.20	0.997	-1.635	0.104
Total			3.92	0.804	4.10	0.774	-1.572	0.117
Youth Tourists Intentions	Q13	I would like to visit or recommend the garden to friends or family in the future.	4.10	1.021	4.32	0.833	-1.613	0.108
	Q14	The cultural experience of Chinese gardens will influence my choice of travel destination.	3.90	0.981	4.09	1.086	-4.069	0.000
	Q15	Compared with other types of scenic spots, I prefer cultural garden scenic spots.	3.75	1.066	4.33	0.901	-1.270	0.205
	Q16	If new cultural experience projects are launched, I would like to visit the garden again.	3.81	1.159	4.28	0.926	-3.174	0.002
Total			3.89	0.889	4.25	0.801	-2.982	0.003
ALL Total			4.05	0.667	4.31	0.663	-2.658	0.009

* Significantly at the .05 level

The results of the independent-samples t-test in Table 4.6 indicate significant gender differences in young tourists' experiences and behavioral intentions regarding Chinese gardens. Overall, female respondents demonstrated significantly more positive perceptions than males (overall mean = 4.31 for females vs. 4.05 for males, p = 0.009). These differences were mainly reflected in their experiential evaluations and future behavioral intentions. Female participants showed greater appreciation for the architectural style and cultural landscape of the gardens and were significantly more willing to engage in interactive cultural activities such as guided tours and handicraft

experiences ($p < 0.05$). As a result, positive garden experiences exerted a stronger influence on women's future travel decisions, making them more likely to revisit the gardens or return for newly introduced cultural experience programs.

However, it is noteworthy that despite gender differences in experiential preferences and future intentions, no statistically significant difference was found between males and females on the key dimension of cultural identity ($p = 0.208$). This indicates that Chinese gardens effectively enhance cultural pride and strengthen identification with Chinese culture among young tourists regardless of gender. In other words, while the aesthetic and interactive elements of garden experiences tend to resonate more strongly with female visitors and translate more readily into future tourists behavior, the cultural core of Chinese gardens demonstrates universal appeal and exerts an equally positive influence on cultural identity across genders.

4.2.4 Overview and Comparative Comments on the Four Gardens

Regarding Comments on the Four Gardens, we received 200 responses, with 85 valid comments, which can be grouped into seven broad categories of suggestions and feedback. Many comments covered multiple categories, so the total number exceeds 100.

Table 4. 7 Comments on the Four Gardens

Item	Comments Category	frequency	percent
1	Publicity & Promotion	18	18.9
2	IP & Cultural Creative Products	12	12.6
3	Check-in Spots & Highlights	11	11.6
4	Interactive Experience	17	17.9
5	Events & Entertainment	10	10.5
6	Technology & Modern Elements	8	8.4
7	Ticket Pricing	5	5.3
8	Ecology & Environment	7	7.4
9	Infrastructure & Services	10	10.5
10	Cultural Narrative & Uniqueness	14	14.7

The qualitative analysis of respondents' open-ended suggestions regarding the optimization of the Summer Palace, the Mountain Resort in Chengde, the Humble Administrator's Garden, and the Lingering Garden reflects several consistent expectations among young tourists. Based on content coding, ten thematic categories were identified, and their respective frequencies provide insight into the elements that most strongly influence youth perceptions of garden cultural landscapes.

A prominent theme emerging from the data concerns the need to strengthen publicity and promotion (18.9%). Respondents indicated that although the four gardens possess high cultural value, their communication strategies remain relatively traditional and do not adequately appeal to younger audiences. Enhancing visibility through social media campaigns, influencer collaborations, short-video platforms, and youth-targeted marketing was frequently mentioned as a means to reshape public perception and expand outreach. Closely related is the emphasis on enhancing the cultural narrative and uniqueness of each garden (14.7%). Young tourists expressed a desire for clearer thematic storytelling that highlights historical contexts, symbolic meanings, and distinctive landscape characteristics, arguing that a more coherent narrative structure would deepen cultural understanding and strengthen the gardens' identity.

Equally significant is the strong appeal for interactive experiences (17.9%). Respondents repeatedly noted that passive observation alone is insufficient to sustain the interest of young visitors. Instead, they favored hands-on participation, such as traditional craft workshops, guided experiential activities, and creative cultural learning modules. This preference aligns with broader shifts in youth tourists toward experiential and emotionally engaging forms of cultural consumption. In addition, the interest in IP development and cultural creative products (12.6%) highlights a desire for modernized cultural expressions. Respondents emphasized that garden-themed characters, merchandise, and collaborative products can enhance cultural resonance and foster a stronger connection between visitors and site identity.

The desire for visually striking check-in spots and landscape highlights (11.6%) also underscores the influence of social media on youth tourists behavior. Young visitors noted that well-designed viewing nodes or installations can enhance online visibility and contribute to destination popularity. Furthermore, respondents expressed interest in more diversified events and entertainment activities (10.5%), such as seasonal festivals,

nighttime performances, and youth-oriented cultural activities, suggesting a preference for richer, multi-layered tourist experiences beyond traditional sightseeing.

In addition to these cultural and experiential dimensions, respondents also emphasized several practical considerations. Suggestions related to infrastructure and visitor services (10.5%) addressed issues such as rest facilities, navigation systems, cleanliness, and service quality, indicating that basic amenities remain central to visitor satisfaction. Comments related to ecology and environmental quality (7.4%) highlighted expectations concerning environmental protection, natural landscape preservation, and overall spatial comfort. Meanwhile, the category of technology and modern elements (8.4%) reflects a growing interest in the integration of AR/VR interpretation, digital guides, and intelligent navigation tools, which respondents believe can help bridge the interpretive gap between traditional garden aesthetics and contemporary visitor needs. Finally, although less frequently mentioned, ticket pricing (5.3%) remains a consideration for some young tourists, suggesting that cost may influence participation, particularly among students.

Overall, the thematic distribution reveals that young tourists value an integrated experience that balances historical authenticity with contemporary engagement strategies. Their suggestions emphasize the need for the four gardens to adopt a multidimensional approach that combines enhanced cultural communication, interactive and creative programming, modern technological tools, and improved service facilities. By addressing these interconnected dimensions, the four gardens may better align with the evolving expectations of young visitors and strengthen their attractiveness within the context of contemporary cultural tourists.

4.3 Measurement Model (CFA)

4.3.1 Convergent Validity

Table 4. 8 Convergent Validity

Variables	Items	standardized Loading	Cronbach's α	AVE	CR
Experience	EX1	0.800	0.856	0.611	0.862
	EX2	0.820			
	EX3	0.843			
	EX4	0.650			

Table 4.8 (Continued)

Variables	Items	standardized Loading	Cronbach's α	AVE	CR
Cultural Identity	CI1	0.954	0.854	0.769	0.929
	CI2	0.949			
	CI3	0.877			
	CI4	0.704			
Characteristics and Preferences	CP1	0.604	0.783	0.421	0.740
	CP2	0.794			
	CP3	0.515			
	CP4	0.652			
Intention	IN1	0.809	0.866	0.617	0.829
	IN2	0.786			
	IN4	0.761			

* Cronbach's α values were recalculated after removing item IN3; CR and AVE were computed based on the final measurement model.

Cronbach's α values were recalculated after removing item IN3; CR and AVE were computed based on the final measurement model. The reliability and convergent validity of the measurement scales were evaluated, and the results are summarized in Table 4.8. Cronbach's α coefficients for all constructs exceed the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency (Experience = 0.856; Cultural Identity = 0.854; Characteristics and Preferences = 0.783; Intention = 0.866). Composite Reliability (CR) values range from 0.740 to 0.929, all above the recommended 0.70 cutoff, confirming construct reliability.

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values indicate adequate convergent validity for Experience (0.611), Cultural Identity (0.769), and Intention (0.617). The AVE for Characteristics and Preferences is 0.421, which is slightly below the conventional threshold of 0.50. However, given that the CR for this construct is acceptable (0.740) and all individual item loadings exceed 0.50, the construct was retained in the final model following standard practices in social science research (Hair et al., 2010).

All standardized factor loadings are above 0.50, indicating that each item significantly contributes to its corresponding construct. Specifically, loadings for Experience items range from 0.650 to 0.843 (EX1 = 0.800, EX2 = 0.820, EX3 = 0.843, EX4 = 0.650), for Cultural Identity items from 0.704 to 0.954 (CI1 = 0.954, CI2 = 0.949, CI3 = 0.877, CI4 = 0.704), for Characteristics and Preferences items from 0.515 to 0.794

(CP1 = 0.604, CP2 = 0.794, CP3 = 0.515, CP4 = 0.652), and for Intention items from 0.761 to 0.809 (IN1 = 0.809, IN2 = 0.786, IN4 = 0.761). Item IN3 was removed during model refinement due to high residual correlation and semantic inconsistency with other intention items; CR and AVE reported here are computed based on the final measurement model.

4.3.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

(1) Factor loadings

Confirmatory Factor Analysis was conducted to assess the adequacy of the measurement model. All standardized factor loadings met the recommended level of 0.50, indicating that each item contributed significantly to its intended construct. The loadings for Experience ranged from 0.650 to 0.843, while the loadings for Identity were all above 0.700, with several exceeding 0.900, demonstrating very strong measurement quality. The remaining constructs, Intention and Characteristics and Preferences, also showed acceptable item loadings after refinement. Item IN3 was removed due to low conceptual consistency and high residual correlations with other intention items, resulting in improved factor loadings and a more coherent construct structure.

(2) Model Fit Indices of CFA

Table 4. 9 Measurement Model Fit Indices

Fit Indices	χ^2/df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Reference Standard	< 3.0	> 0.90	> 0.90	< 0.08
Result	2.22	0.958	0.942	0.078

The overall fit of the measurement model was evaluated using multiple commonly accepted indices. The final model demonstrated a good level of fit, with CFI is 0.958 and TLI is 0.942, both exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.90. The RMSEA value of 0.078 falls within the acceptable range of 0.05 to 0.08, and the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (CMIN/DF is 168.931 / 76 approximately equal to 2.22) is below the recommended maximum of 5. These results collectively indicate that the measurement model fits the data well and is suitable for further structural analysis.

(3) Modification Process

During the CFA refinement process, both statistical evidence and theoretical considerations were used to adjust the model. Item IN3 was removed because it exhibited a high residual correlation with other intention items and lacked semantic consistency, as it measured comparative preference rather than behavioral intention. In addition, several correlated error terms were added based on strong Modification Index (MI) suggestions, particularly for items with overlapping content. These modifications were theoretically justified and significantly improved the overall model fit. After implementing these adjustments, all constructs met acceptable reliability and validity standards, and the refined measurement model was adopted for subsequent SEM testing.

4.4 Structural Equation Model

The structural model was then tested to examine the hypothesized relationships among constructs. The model exhibited satisfactory fit indices (Table 4.9). The path coefficients are shown in Table 4.10.

Experience had a strong positive influence on Cultural Identity ($\beta = 0.834$, $p < 0.001$). Cultural Identity significantly influenced tourists Intention ($\beta = 0.262$, $p < 0.001$), supporting the mediating role of cultural attachment. Preferences had a strong positive effect on Intention ($\beta = 0.887$, $p < 0.001$).

The direct path from Experience to Intention was not significant ($\beta = –0.052$, $p > 0.05$), indicating that the effect of Experience operates mainly through the mediating variable Identity. This result aligns with the theoretical model and previous studies emphasizing the role of cultural identification in shaping behavioral intention.

4.4.1 Structural Model Fit

Since the structural model was built upon the refined measurement model, the overall model fit indices remain consistent with those reported in Section 4.4.2.

The structural model was evaluated using several widely accepted goodness-of-fit indices. As shown in Table 4.9, the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (CMIN/DF) is 2.22, which falls well below the recommended cutoff of 3.00, indicating an acceptable level of overall model fit. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI) are 0.958 and 0.942 respectively, both exceeding the threshold value of 0.90, demonstrating strong incremental fit of the model.

The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 0.078, which lies within the conventionally accepted range of 0.05–0.08, suggesting a reasonable approximation of the model to the sample data. These results collectively confirm that the final structural model provides a satisfactory fit and is appropriate for testing the hypothesized relationships among the constructs.

4.4.2 SEM Path Coefficients

Table 4. 10 SEM Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Item	Path	Estimate (β)	p-value	Result
H1	Experience → Identity	0.834	***	Accepted
H2	Identity → Intention	0.262	***	Accepted
H3	Experience → Intention	–0.052	n.s.	Not Accepted
H4	Characteristics and Preferences → Intention	0.887	***	Accepted

* indicates $p < 0.001$; n.s. = non-significant. Path coefficients are standardized.

Standardized path coefficients (β) are reported to facilitate comparison of the relative strength of the structural relationships. The structural model was examined to test the hypothesized relationships between the constructs. Table 4.10 presents the standardized path coefficients and their significance levels. The path from Experience to Identity is positive and highly significant ($\beta = 0.834$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that visitors' cultural landscape experience strongly enhances their cultural identity. Identity also shows a positive and significant effect on Intention ($\beta = 0.262$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that stronger identity leads to higher intention to visit cultural landscape gardens.

Preferences demonstrate the strongest influence on Intention ($\beta = 0.887$, $p < 0.001$), implying that youth characteristics and preferences are a key determinant of visit intention. However, the direct path from Experience to Intention is not statistically significant ($\beta = –0.052$, $p > 0.05$). This indicates that the effect of experience on intention occurs indirectly through cultural identity rather than directly shaping behavioral intention.

Overall, three out of four hypothesized relationships are supported, confirming the central role of cultural identity and youth preferences in predicting tourists intention.

4.4.3 Final Model Diagram

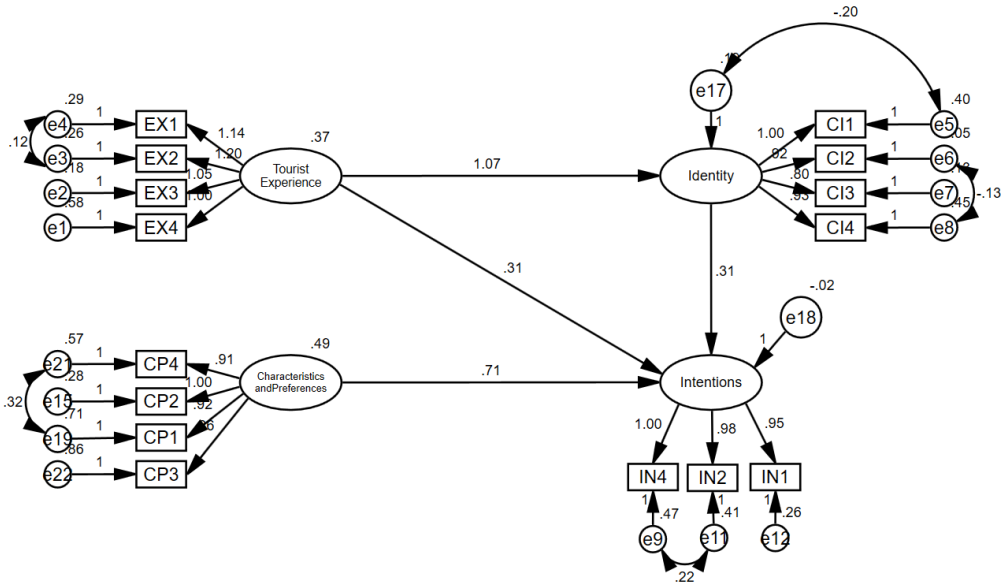


Figure 4. 1 Final Structural Equation Model

Figure 4.1 presents the final structural equation model derived from the confirmatory factor analysis and subsequent model refinement. The diagram visually summarizes both the measurement structure and the validated structural relationships among the latent constructs, providing an integrated representation of how cultural landscape factors influence youth tourists intention.

The final model consists of four latent variables—Experience, Identity, Characteristics and Preferences, and Intention- each measured by multiple observed indicators with satisfactory standardized factor loadings. All retained indicators exhibit strong loadings on their respective constructs, indicating that the measurement model adequately captures the underlying theoretical concepts. The removal of item IN3 further strengthened construct reliability and improved overall model fit, resulting in a more parsimonious and stable model.

From a structural perspective, the diagram illustrates a clear and theoretically consistent pattern of relationships among the latent variables. Experience exerts a strong and positive direct effect on Identity, suggesting that engagement with cultural landscape

elements in Chinese gardens enhances young visitors' sense of cultural identification. Identity, in turn, has a significant positive influence on Intention, indicating that cultural identity functions as a key psychological mechanism translating experience into behavioral willingness. In contrast, the direct path from Experience to Intention is weak and not statistically significant, visually reinforcing the mediating role of Identity within the model.

Characteristics and Preferences show the strongest direct effect on Intention among all structural paths, highlighting the dominant role of individual preferences and value orientations in shaping youth tourists decisions. This relationship, clearly depicted in the diagram, underscores that youth tourists intention is not solely driven by cultural experience but is strongly influenced by how well cultural destinations align with personal interests and lifestyle preferences.

In addition, the final model incorporates several correlated error terms between specific measurement items. These correlations were added based on high modification indices and were theoretically justified, as the paired items share similar wording or closely related content. The inclusion of these correlated errors improves model fit while preserving the integrity of the original conceptual framework, and they do not alter the substantive interpretation of the latent constructs or structural paths.

Overall, the final model diagram provides a coherent and visually intuitive summary of the empirical findings. It demonstrates that youth tourists intention toward cultural landscape gardens is shaped through an indirect experiential pathway mediated by cultural identity, alongside a strong direct influence from individual characteristics and preferences. As such, the model offers a comprehensive depiction of the psychological and behavioral mechanisms underlying youth tourists behavior in the context of Chinese garden landscapes.

4.5 Hypothesis Testing and Summary

4.5.1 Hypothesis Test Results

Table 4. 11 Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Structural Path	Result
H1	Experience → Identity	Accepted
H2	Identity → Intention	Accepted
H3	Experience → Intention	Not Accepted
H4	Characteristics and Preferences → Intention	Accepted

The results of hypothesis testing are summarized in Table 4.11 The findings indicate that three out of the four proposed hypotheses are supported by the empirical data. Specifically, the relationships between Experience and Identity (H1), Identity and Intention (H2), and Characteristics and Preferences and Intention (H4) are statistically significant. However, the direct relationship between Experience and Intention (H3) is not accepted.

4.5.2 Summary of Findings

This chapter presented the empirical results of the study based on Structural Equation Modeling. The measurement model demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity, with all constructs exhibiting acceptable levels of internal consistency, composite reliability, and convergent validity. The confirmatory factor analysis and subsequent model refinement resulted in a well-fitting measurement model.

The structural model showed an overall good fit to the data, indicating that the proposed model is suitable for examining youth tourists intention in the context of cultural landscape gardens. The SEM results revealed that Experience has a significant positive effect on Identity, while Identity and Characteristics and Preferences both exert significant positive influences on Intention. Among these relationships, Characteristics and Preferences emerged as the strongest predictor of youth tourists intention.

In contrast, the direct effect of Experience on Intention was not statistically significant. Overall, the hypothesis testing results indicate that three of the four proposed hypotheses are supported. These findings provide a clear empirical foundation for the discussion of theoretical implications and practical recommendations in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

5.1 Basic information conclusion

According to the data analysis, the characteristics of the survey samples and the views on tourism innovation in Chinese garden can be summarized as follows:

Gender distribution: Male accounted for 38.5% and female accounted for 61.5%. The significantly higher proportion of women indicates that young women show a stronger willingness to participate in the aesthetic value and cultural experience of classical gardens.

Age distribution: 51% of the respondents were aged 22-28, and 26% were aged 28-35. The sample was concentrated in the "Generation Z" group aged 20-30, and young people in this stage are more inclined to find their personal style through cultural consumption driven by social media.

Occupation distribution: The sample showed that ordinary employees accounted for the largest proportion at 46.5%, followed by students at 28%. This indicates that the main audience for classical garden tourism consists of young professionals with a certain degree of economic autonomy and students with academic curiosity, who are the main force behind cultural consumption.

Monthly income: The respondents' monthly income was mainly concentrated below 5,000yuan, accounting for 71% of the total, with 37% earning less than 3,500 yuan and 34% earning between 3,500 and 5,000 yuan. This reflects that the target group is mostly in the early stages of their careers, and their travel intentions are driven by both "high cost-effectiveness" and "emotional value," making them somewhat sensitive to ticket prices and cultural and creative consumption.

Number of participants: 71.5% of respondents chose to travel in groups of 2-4. This strongly demonstrates that classical garden tourism has a strong social media attribute among young people, who often travel for group activities or social sharing (such as taking photos and checking in). This is consistent with the strong driving force of "youth preference" on tourist intention ($\beta = 0.887$).

Times of trips per year: 44% of respondents travel 1-2 times a year. This indicates that classical gardens, as high-level cultural landscapes, align with young people's stable, low-frequency but quality-oriented annual travel plans. Garden management should focus on how to leverage "cultural identity" to capture their choice of travel destination within limited travel frequency.

Visitation distribution of the Four Great Classical Gardens:

The visitation data further reveal clear differences in the popularity and spatial reach of the Four Great Classical Gardens among young tourists. The Summer Palace recorded the highest visitation rate, with 112 respondents reporting prior visits, indicating its strong national visibility, accessibility, and representative status within China's classical garden system. As the most iconic imperial garden, it serves as a primary gateway through which young tourists become familiar with classical garden culture.

Chengde Mountain Resort ranked second, with 87 respondents having visited the site. Despite its relatively remote location, its World Cultural Heritage status and strong historical symbolism continue to attract a substantial number of young visitors, suggesting that heritage value and imperial narratives remain influential in shaping youth travel choices.

In contrast, the Humble Administrator's Garden (64 respondents) and the Lingering Garden (58 respondents) showed comparatively lower visitation frequencies. As representative private gardens located in Suzhou, these sites are more closely associated with refined literati aesthetics and regional tourism. The lower visitation levels indicate that young tourists are less likely to encounter such gardens through casual travel and are more dependent on deliberate cultural or in-depth heritage-oriented trips.

Overall, the visitation pattern demonstrates a clear hierarchical structure among the Four Great Classical Gardens, shaped by factors such as location accessibility, heritage branding, and tourism infrastructure. At the same time, the fact that all four gardens were visited by a considerable proportion of respondents suggests that young tourists possess diverse exposure to different types of classical garden landscapes. This diversity provides a solid empirical foundation for analyzing variations in cultural landscape experience and their subsequent influence on cultural identity formation and tourism intention.

Through the analysis of these data, we can better understand the audience characteristics of tourism innovation in Chinese garden, and provide more in-depth exploration and explanation for subsequent research.

According to the results of descriptive analysis, the views on tourist intention Chinese garden can be summarized as follows:

The cultural landscape of the garden has a unique architectural style and strong traditional cultural characteristics: The average score is 4.40, indicating a high degree of consensus among young tourists regarding the physical characteristics of Chinese gardens as carriers of traditional culture.

The landscape design of the garden (such as water features, rockery, and plant arrangements) is pleasing to the eye: The average score is 4.39, reflecting the strong visual attraction of garden aesthetics to young people, forming the basis for tourism intention.

The cultural displays in the gardens (such as couplets, plaques, and guided tours) can help me understand traditional culture: The average score is 4.40, indicating that the existing garden interpretation system plays a positive role in knowledge dissemination and meets the cognitive needs of highly educated young people.

The interactive experience of the garden (such as guided tours, handicraft experiences, and immersive activities) makes me more willing to explore garden culture: The average score is 4.13, a slightly lower score, indicating that while interactive experiences are appreciated, there is still room for improvement in their breadth or depth.

Visiting Chinese gardens has made me more interested in traditional Chinese culture: The average score was 4.34, indicating that garden tourism has a significant cultural and educational function, effectively stimulating young people's desire to explore traditional culture.

The cultural atmosphere of the garden inspires my pride in traditional culture: The average score was 4.47, one of the highest-scoring items, showing that garden landscapes successfully resonated with young tourists' national pride on an emotional level.

The cultural experience of the garden has enhanced my identification with Chinese culture: The average score was 4.47, again a high-scoring item, further confirming that cultural identity is the core psychological gain for young tourists from their garden experiences.

My experience visiting the gardens has made me more willing to share traditional cultural knowledge with friends and family: The average score was 4.20, reflecting the strong social attributes and dissemination potential of garden cultural experiences, which contributes to the word-of-mouth promotion of traditional culture.

When choosing a travel destination, I attach great importance to its historical and cultural value: The mean score is 4.03, indicating that historical and cultural depth is a fundamental consideration for young tourists when selecting destinations.

I prefer to choose scenic spots that can provide immersive experiences: The mean score is 4.30, which is one of the higher scores in this section, reflecting a strong demand among the younger generation for experiential and "living" heritage rather than static observation.

When traveling, I will actively participate in cultural interactive activities (such as garden tours and handicraft experiences): The mean score is 3.71, the lowest in this set, suggesting that while interest exists, current interactive offerings may not yet fully align with youth expectations or accessibility.

I tend to choose scenic spots with a strong cultural atmosphere rather than purely entertainment-oriented ones: The mean score is 4.11, demonstrating a clear preference for destinations with intellectual and cultural substance over those focused solely on amusement.

I would like to visit or recommend the garden to friends or family in the future: The mean score is 4.01, showing a high level of loyalty and a positive inclination toward word-of-mouth promotion among the youth demographic.

Compared with other types of scenic spots, I prefer cultural garden scenic spots: The mean score is 4.11, confirming the competitive advantage of Chinese gardens in the cultural tourism market specifically for young travelers.

If new cultural experience projects are launched, I would like to visit the garden again: The mean score is 4.10, indicating that "innovation" and "new content" are key drivers for repeat visitation among the younger generation.

These results reveal the participants' multifaceted views on tourism innovation in Chinese garden and help to gain a deeper understanding of their attitudes and views on tourist intention in Chinese garden.

5.2 Explain Research Questions and Objectives

5.2.1 Answer Research Questions

This study aims to explore how the cultural landscape architecture of Chinese gardens influences youth tourists intention, with particular attention to the roles of tourist experience, cultural identity, and youth characteristics and preferences. Based on the empirical results of the structural equation modeling analysis in Chapter 4, the research questions are addressed as follows.

Question 1: What issues do conservation and development face in the current cultural landscape architecture of Chinese gardens?

The model results of this study provide important insights. While Chinese gardens possess significant advantages in terms of cultural symbolism and aesthetic value, they still exhibit marked shortcomings in experiential design targeting young tourists. Empirical results show that cultural landscape experiences have a significant impact on young tourists' cultural identity and travel intentions, indicating that a lack of effective experiential design in conservation and development practices may weaken the dissemination effect of cultural landscapes. Specifically, this study reveals three main challenges: First, an overemphasis on physical protection while neglecting visitor interaction and participation; second, a lack of innovative interpretation and display methods, making it difficult for young tourists to understand and identify with the cultural connotations; and third, a relatively passive approach to cultural presentation, limiting tourists' independent exploration and emotional investment. These problems suggest that without improvements in experiential design and cultural presentation methods, the potential of gardens in disseminating cultural values may not be fully realized, and their function may remain at the level of static heritage protection rather than becoming active cultural landscapes.

Question 2: What are the characteristics and preferences of young tourists?

The analysis reveals that youth characteristics and preferences exert a significant positive influence on tourists intention. This indicates that young tourists are not a homogeneous group but are characterized by strong preferences for experiential participation, emotional resonance, and personalized cultural engagement. The questionnaire data further suggest that young visitors value immersive experiences, interactive interpretation, and opportunities for cultural expression over traditional, knowledge-oriented

sightseeing. These findings align with the experience-oriented and identity-driven travel behavior commonly observed among younger generations and highlight the importance of considering youth-specific preferences in cultural landscape tourists planning.

Question 3: How does the cultural landscape of Chinese gardens affect young people's tourists intentions?

The structural equation model demonstrates that cultural landscape experience has both direct and indirect effects on youth tourists intention. Directly, a positive cultural landscape experience enhances young tourists' willingness to visit and revisit Chinese gardens. Indirectly, cultural landscape experience significantly strengthens cultural identity, which in turn positively influences tourists intention. This mediating effect confirms that cultural identity serves as a key psychological mechanism through which cultural landscapes shape youth travel decisions. In other words, Chinese garden landscapes influence tourists intention not merely through visual appreciation but by fostering emotional connection, cultural understanding, and identity alignment.

Question 4: How can the cultural landscape of gardens be optimized to better attract young tourists?

In addition to the structural equation modeling results, this study draws on supplementary evidence from open-ended questionnaire responses to further elaborate this research question. The findings indicate that effective optimization of Chinese garden cultural landscapes should be grounded in experiential enhancement, identity relevance, and youth-oriented innovation, while maintaining ecological and cultural authenticity.

First, a dominant theme emerging from the open-ended responses is the strong demand for interactive and immersive experiences. Young respondents frequently mentioned activities such as immersive performances, role-playing experiences, script-based games, interactive devices, virtual reality tours, and hands-on participation in conservation or gardening-related activities. These suggestions directly align with the quantitative finding that tourist experience significantly influences both cultural identity and tourists intention. From the perspective of Cultural Landscape Theory, this reflects a shift from viewing gardens as static heritage objects toward understanding them as living cultural landscapes where meaning is produced through engagement and participation.

Second, digitalization and social media–oriented design were repeatedly emphasized. Respondents expressed preferences for internet-famous check-in points, spaces suitable for photography and video creation, digital tour guides, mobile applications, and online promotion through self-media platforms. This suggests that young tourists tend to integrate cultural consumption with social expression. From the lens of Cultural Identity Theory, such practices allow young visitors to perform and communicate identity through cultural landscapes, transforming garden visits into symbolic acts of self-representation and cultural affiliation.

Third, many respondents highlighted the importance of youth-oriented cultural creativity and IP development, including the creation of garden-themed intellectual properties, cultural and creative products, peripheral merchandise, and collaborations with popular cultural elements. These suggestions indicate that young tourists are more likely to form emotional attachment when cultural heritage is translated into contemporary cultural products. This supports the mediating role of cultural identity identified in the model, as creative reinterpretation helps bridge traditional culture and modern youth values.

Fourth, respondents also emphasized infrastructure quality, comfort, and accessibility, such as clear guidance systems, complete facilities, rest areas, indoor visiting spaces, cafés, snack shops, and reasonable crowd control. These practical considerations reflect the influence of youth characteristics and preferences on tourists intention, as validated by the quantitative analysis. A comfortable and well-organized environment enhances experiential satisfaction and supports sustained engagement with cultural landscapes.

Finally, despite the strong call for innovation, a significant number of responses stressed the necessity of ecological protection and cultural authenticity, including preserving natural vegetation, avoiding excessive commercialization, and respecting historical integrity. This highlights young tourists' awareness of sustainability and authenticity, suggesting that optimization strategies should balance innovation with conservation. Such balance reinforces cultural identity by ensuring that modern reinterpretations remain grounded in historical and ecological continuity.

In conclusion, the integration of quantitative modeling and qualitative feedback indicates that optimizing Chinese garden cultural landscapes requires a comprehensive

strategy that combines immersive experience design, digital engagement, cultural creativity, infrastructural support, and sustainable conservation. By aligning these elements with the characteristics and preferences of young tourists, cultural landscapes can more effectively foster cultural identity and enhance youth tourists intention.

Overall, the empirical findings confirm that the cultural landscape architecture of Chinese gardens influences youth tourists intention through a combined mechanism of experiential engagement, cultural identity construction, and individual preference alignment, providing a coherent empirical response to the research objectives of this study.

5.2.2 Answer Research Objectives

This study successfully identified the key challenges faced by the cultural landscape architecture of Chinese gardens in the context of heritage conservation and tourism development. The findings reveal that while traditional gardens possess high historical and aesthetic value, existing conservation practices tend to prioritize physical preservation over experiential engagement, resulting in limited appeal to young tourists. This objective clarifies the structural tension between heritage protection and youth-oriented cultural activation.

Objective 1: To exploring the Current Situation and Challenges

This study successfully identified the key challenges faced by the cultural landscape architecture of Chinese classical gardens in the context of heritage conservation and tourism development. The findings reveal that while traditional gardens possess high historical and aesthetic value, existing conservation practices tend to prioritize physical preservation over experiential engagement, resulting in limited appeal to young tourists. This objective clarifies the structural tension between heritage protection and youth-oriented cultural activation.

Objective 2: To analyzing the Characteristics of Young Tourists

The research achieved a clear understanding of the behavioral characteristics and preferences of young tourists aged 18-35. The results demonstrate that this group places strong emphasis on experiential participation, emotional resonance, and contemporary forms of cultural consumption. These insights confirm that young tourists represent a distinct visitor segment whose preferences significantly shape their travel intentions and cultural engagement patterns.

Objective 3: To constructing and Verifying the Influence Mechanism

This study successfully constructed and empirically verified an influence mechanism explaining how cultural landscape experience affects youth tourists' travel intention. The findings confirm that cultural identity plays a central mediating role, indicating that cultural landscape experiences influence travel intention primarily by fostering cultural understanding, emotional attachment, and identity recognition rather than through direct experiential stimulation alone.

Objective 4: To propose optimization strategies and paths

Based on the validated influence mechanism and the identified needs of young tourists, this study proposed a set of targeted and operational optimization strategies for Chinese garden cultural landscapes. These strategies emphasize experience-oriented design, identity-based interpretation, and youth-friendly innovation while maintaining cultural authenticity and ecological sustainability, thereby providing a practical pathway for the youth-oriented revitalization of traditional Chinese gardens.

5.3 Discussion

The finding that the direct path from Cultural Landscape Experience to Tourism Intention is non-significant ($\beta = -0.052$, $p > 0.05$) challenges the conventional "stimulus-response" model often found in early environmental psychology and tourism literature. Discussion & Literature Comparison: Traditional heritage tourism studies (e.g., Poria et al., 2003) have long posited that the tangible attributes of a landscape - its scale, historical authenticity, and architectural grandeur - are the primary drivers of site attractiveness. However, the results of this study align more closely with Vong & Ung (2012), who argued that simple cognitive exposure to heritage sites is insufficient to trigger long-term behavioral intentions. For contemporary youth, the "tangible landscape" serves as a baseline rather than a motivator. As Urry (2002) noted in The Tourist Gaze, in an era where high-definition digital imagery of world heritage is ubiquitous, the physical presence of a site has lost its monopoly on tourism motivation. The non-significant direct path suggests that for the 18-35 age group, "looking at a garden" is a low-involvement activity; the transition from "seeing" to "wanting to visit" requires a deeper catalyst that transcends the physical form.

The identified full mediation effect of Cultural Identity (β= 0.834$ and β= 0.262) underscores that the landscape functions as a psychological mirror for young visitors. This finding strongly supports Bond & Falk's (2013) view that identity construction is a core driver of modern tourism motivation. This study further confirms this logic with quantitative data. Compared to Palma et al.'s (2017) research on European cultural landscapes, young Chinese tourists exhibit a stronger drive for "national cultural identity." This may be attributed to the recent rise of the "Guochao" (national trend) culture in China, which transforms traditional gardens from outdated museums into dynamic spaces where "Authoritative Heritage Discourse (AHD)"- as defined by Smith (2006) - engages in dialogue with young people's personal identities.

The overwhelming direct effect of Youth Preferences ($\beta = 0.887$, $p < 0.001$\$) indicates a significant shift in the power dynamic between heritage sites and visitors. This finding echoes the "value co-creation" theory proposed by Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2004). In the context of gardens, young visitors are no longer passive recipients but co-creators of the experience. Compared to Timothy's (2011) emphasis on the educational function of heritage, this study shows that contemporary youth are more inclined to express "lifestyle." If a landscape cannot align with their personal preferences (such as the need for social media sharing and interactivity), its cultural value will be difficult to activate. This aligns with Glover's (2003) view that the success of a cultural landscape lies not only in its historical depth but also in its relevance to contemporary life.

The integrated model of this study moves beyond the traditional Satisfaction-Loyalty framework (e.g., Oliver, 1999). This study shifts the theoretical focus from physical "space" to psychological "sense of place." By introducing identity variables, this research complements Antrop's (2005) theory on cultural landscape change, proposing the value of traditional gardens as a "cultural anchor" for the psychological stability of young people in the context of rapid urbanization and globalization. This shift from functional evaluation to emotional connection provides a more explanatory psychological dimension for cultural landscape research.

5.4 Theoretical and Practical Implications

Based on the key findings summarized above, this study yields several important implications that contribute to both theoretical discourse and practical management in the field of cultural landscape tourism.

As initially proposed in the research significance of Chapter 1, this study successfully addresses the dual needs of theoretical expansion and practical optimization. The content is as follows:

5.4.1 Theoretical Implications

This study offers several theoretical implications for research on cultural landscape architecture, youth tourism behavior, and cultural identity formation. By integrating experiential, psychological, and individual factors into a unified structural model, the research extends existing theories in cultural tourism and provides a more nuanced understanding of how cultural landscapes influence youth tourists intention.

First, this study contributes to cultural tourism theory by clarifying the role of cultural landscape experience in shaping tourism behavior. While previous studies have often assumed a direct relationship between experience and behavioral intention, the findings of this research demonstrate that cultural landscape experience does not directly influence youth tourists intention. Instead, its effect operates primarily through cultural identity. This insight refines experiential tourism theory by emphasizing the importance of psychological mediation processes and suggests that experience must be internalized as identity to meaningfully affect behavioral outcomes.

Second, the study advances theoretical understanding of cultural identity within the context of cultural landscape tourism. The results confirm that cultural identity serves as a key mechanism linking experiential engagement with behavioral intention among young tourists. This finding extends identity-based theories in tourism by highlighting the active role of cultural landscapes in identity formation, particularly for younger generations who are in the process of constructing personal and cultural self-concepts. The study thus positions cultural identity not merely as an outcome of tourism experience, but as a central explanatory variable in youth tourism decision-making.

Third, this research contributes to youth tourism literature by explicitly incorporating characteristics and preferences as a core determinant of tourists intention. The strong influence of youth characteristics and preferences underscores the importance

of individual-level factors in shaping tourism behavior, suggesting that youth tourists intention cannot be fully explained by experiential or cultural factors alone. By integrating these individual dimensions into the structural model, the study broadens the theoretical scope of cultural tourism research and highlights the need for more demand-oriented perspectives in youth tourism studies.

Finally, by focusing on cultural landscape architecture of Chinese gardens, this study enriches the theoretical discourse on place-based tourism and cultural landscapes. The findings demonstrate that cultural landscapes function not only as physical or aesthetic environments, but also as symbolic spaces that facilitate cultural meaning-making and identity construction. This perspective contributes to the theoretical integration of landscape studies and tourism research, offering a framework through which cultural landscapes can be understood as dynamic interfaces between heritage, experience, and tourist behavior.

Overall, the theoretical implications of this study lie in its clarification of the indirect mechanisms through which cultural landscapes influence youth tourists intention and in its integration of experience, identity, and individual preferences into a coherent explanatory framework. These contributions provide a foundation for future theoretical development in cultural tourism, youth tourism, and cultural landscape studies.

5.4.2 Practical Implications

The findings of this study provide several practical implications for the planning, management, and promotion of cultural landscape gardens, particularly in relation to the youth tourism market. By clarifying how cultural experience, identity, and individual preferences influence tourists intention, the study offers evidence-based insights for optimizing cultural landscape strategies in Chinese gardens.

First, from the perspective of garden planning and landscape design, the results suggest that cultural landscape optimization should go beyond physical preservation and aesthetic enhancement. While traditional garden elements remain essential for maintaining cultural authenticity, planners should place greater emphasis on designing immersive and interpretable experiences that facilitate cultural identity formation. Interpretive signage, interactive exhibitions, and storytelling-oriented spatial layouts can help young visitors better understand the cultural meanings embedded in garden landscapes, thereby strengthening their emotional and cognitive engagement.

Second, the findings have important implications for cultural landscape management. The indirect effect of experience on tourists intention indicates that management strategies should focus on deepening visitors' psychological connection to cultural landscapes rather than merely increasing exposure or visitation frequency. Programs such as guided cultural tours, themed cultural events, and participatory activities can encourage young tourists to actively engage with cultural narratives, transforming passive sightseeing into meaningful cultural experiences that resonate with their identity and values.

Third, from a youth tourism marketing perspective, the strong influence of characteristics and preferences on tourists intention highlights the need for market segmentation and targeted promotion strategies. Garden managers and tourism marketers should develop differentiated products and communication strategies that align with the interests, lifestyles, and consumption habits of young tourists. Digital media, social networking platforms, and experiential marketing approaches can be effectively used to present cultural gardens as destinations that are both culturally meaningful and personally relevant to younger audiences.

In addition, the findings suggest that cultural garden tourism development should balance conservation objectives with innovation-oriented strategies. While safeguarding the historical and cultural integrity of garden landscapes remains a priority, adaptive approaches that incorporate contemporary cultural expressions and youth-oriented experiences can enhance destination attractiveness. Such strategies may include the integration of creative cultural activities, seasonal events, and cross-disciplinary collaborations that connect traditional garden culture with modern youth culture.

Overall, the practical implications of this study emphasize the importance of aligning cultural landscape planning and management with the psychological characteristics and preferences of young tourists. By adopting identity-oriented design, experiential management, and youth-focused marketing strategies, cultural landscape gardens can enhance their appeal to young visitors while supporting sustainable cultural tourism development.

5.5 Implications and Future Directions

5.5.1 Limitations and Future Research

Although this study provides meaningful insights into the influence of cultural landscape architecture of Chinese gardens on youth tourists intention, several limitations should be acknowledged. Recognizing these limitations not only enhances the transparency of the research but also offers directions for future studies.

First, this study focuses on young tourists and is based on data collected from visitors to four selected Chinese gardens. While this sampling strategy allows for an in-depth examination of youth tourism behavior in cultural landscape settings, it may limit the generalizability of the findings to other age groups or cultural tourism contexts. In addition, although the initial sample size estimation suggested a larger number of responses, this study obtained 200 valid questionnaires for empirical analysis. While this sample size satisfies the basic requirements for structural equation modeling, it may still constrain the representativeness of the results. Future research could expand the sample size, include youth tourists from different regions and backgrounds, or incorporate other age cohorts to enhance external validity.

Second, the conceptual model employed in this study includes cultural landscape experience, cultural identity, youth characteristics and preferences, and tourists intention. Although the model demonstrates satisfactory explanatory power, it does not incorporate other potentially relevant variables, such as emotional attachment, perceived authenticity, or tourist satisfaction. Future studies may extend the model by introducing additional mediating or moderating variables to further explore the complex mechanisms underlying youth tourists intention.

Third, this study relies on cross-sectional survey data and self-reported measures, which may be subject to common method bias and limit the ability to infer causal relationships. Longitudinal research designs or mixed-method approaches, such as combining surveys with in-depth interviews or observational data, could provide a more dynamic understanding of how cultural identity and tourists intention evolve over time.

Finally, this study is situated within the specific context of Chinese garden landscapes, which possess distinctive cultural, historical, and aesthetic characteristics. While this context enriches the analysis, it may also limit the applicability of the findings to other types of cultural landscapes or geographic settings. Future research could

conduct comparative studies across different cultural landscapes or countries to examine whether the identified relationships hold in diverse cultural contexts.

Despite these limitations, this study offers a valuable foundation for future research on cultural landscape tourism and youth behavior. By addressing the identified limitations, future studies can further deepen theoretical understanding and provide more comprehensive insights into the sustainable development of cultural landscape tourism.

Overall, this study demonstrates that youth travel intention toward Chinese gardens is shaped not only by landscape aesthetics but also by meaningful cultural experiences and identity formation. By integrating Cultural Landscape Theory and Cultural Identity Theory, the research highlights the mediating role of cultural identity between tourist experience and travel intention. These findings underscore the importance of experiential and interpretive strategies in activating cultural landscapes for younger generations and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of youth cultural tourism behavior.

5.5.2 Practical Suggestions

Based on the empirical findings of this study, several practical suggestions are proposed to enhance the attractiveness of Chinese garden cultural landscapes to young tourists and to promote the sustainable development of cultural landscape tourism.

First, cultural landscape planning and interpretation should shift from a purely aesthetic-oriented approach toward an identity-oriented experience framework. The results demonstrate that cultural landscape experience influences youth tourists intention primarily through cultural identity formation rather than direct experiential stimulation. Therefore, garden managers and planners are encouraged to strengthen interpretive systems that clearly convey cultural narratives, philosophical meanings, and historical symbolism embedded in garden spaces. Through coherent storytelling, thematic spatial organization, and accessible interpretive content, young visitors can more effectively internalize cultural meanings and develop a stronger sense of cultural identification.

Second, immersive and participatory cultural experiences should be prioritized in garden management practices. Given the experiential preferences of young tourists, passive sightseeing alone is insufficient to sustain long-term interest. Gardens should introduce interactive programs such as guided thematic tours, traditional craft workshops, cultural performance experiences, and scenario-based activities that encourage active

engagement. These participatory experiences can transform visitors from observers into participants, deepening emotional resonance and reinforcing identity-based connections with the cultural landscape.

Third, youth-oriented product development and market segmentation strategies should be strengthened. The strong influence of youth characteristics and preferences on tourists intention indicates that cultural landscape attractions must align with the lifestyles, values, and consumption habits of younger generations. Garden managers and tourism marketers are advised to design differentiated cultural products and services tailored to youth segments, including cultural creative products, themed events, and experiential packages. At the same time, digital media platforms and social networking channels should be effectively utilized to communicate garden culture in a format that resonates with young audiences, thereby enhancing visibility and engagement.

Finally, cultural landscape development should balance heritage conservation with innovative and adaptive strategies. While the protection of historical authenticity and cultural integrity remains fundamental, appropriate integration of contemporary elements—such as digital interpretation tools, intelligent navigation systems, and seasonal cultural activities—can enhance visitor experience without compromising heritage values. By adopting a balanced approach that respects tradition while embracing innovation, Chinese garden cultural landscapes can better respond to the evolving expectations of young tourists and support the long-term sustainability of cultural tourism development.

Overall, these suggestions emphasize the importance of aligning cultural landscape planning, management, and promotion with the psychological mechanisms and experiential preferences of young tourists. By translating empirical findings into actionable strategies, this study provides practical guidance for the youth-oriented revitalization of Chinese garden cultural landscapes.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

APPENDIX A: Questionnaire

As young tourists become a significant consumer force in the cultural tourism market, their aesthetic preferences and experiences are evolving. How can traditional Chinese gardens effectively attract this emerging demographic through the development of cultural landscapes? This has become a key issue in the integration of culture and tourism. This questionnaire investigates young tourists' perceptions of the cultural landscapes, cultural identification, and travel intentions of China's four famous gardens (the Summer Palace, the Mountain Resort, the Humble Administrator's Garden, and the Lingering Garden). Through your honest feedback, this study aims to analyze the role of garden cultural landscapes in attracting young tourists and fostering cultural identification. All data will be used for academic research purposes only and remain strictly confidential. Please provide your responses based on your experiences. Thank you for your participation and support!

Questionnaire Content

Part 1 Basic personal information

Age

1.18-22 2. 23-28 3. 28-35 4. Over 35

Gender

1.Male 2. Female

Occupation

1.Student 2.Employee 3.Civil servant 4.Other occupation

Income (Per month/Yuan)

1. Under 3500 2. 3500-5000 3. 5100-10000 4. Over 1w

Times of trips per year

1. Under 1 2. 1-2 3. 3-4 4. Over 5

Number of participants

1.Alone 2. 2-4 people 3. 5-8 people 4.More than 8 people

Have ever visited the Chinese garden?

1.Yes 2. No

Which graden have you been to visit?（Multiple Choice Questions）

1.The Summer Place（颐和园）

2. Chengde Mountain Resort（承德避暑山庄）

3.The Humble Administrator's Garden（拙政园）

4.The Lingering Garden（留园）

Part 2 The questionnaire survey

Likert 5-point scale distribute: the assessment values ranged from “Strongly disagree”(1 point) to “Strong agree”(5 points).

The questionnaire surveys

	No.	Question					
Experience of Chinese Garden Culture Landscape	1	The cultural landscape of the garden has a unique architectural style and strong traditional cultural characteristics.	1	2	3	4	5
	2	The landscape design of the garden (such as water features, rockery, and plant arrangements) is pleasing to the eye.	1	2	3	4	5
	3	The cultural displays in the gardens (such as couplets, plaques, and guided tours) can help me understand traditional culture.	1	2	3	4	5
	4	The interactive experience of the garden (such as guided tours, handicraft experiences, and immersive activities) makes me more willing to explore garden culture.	1	2	3	4	5
Cultural Identity	5	Visiting Chinese gardens has made me more interested in traditional Chinese culture.	1	2	3	4	5
	6	The cultural atmosphere of the garden inspires my pride in traditional culture.	1	2	3	4	5
	7	The cultural experience of the garden has enhanced my identification with Chinese culture.	1	2	3	4	5
	8	My experience visiting the gardens has made me more	1	2	3	4	5

		willing to share traditional cultural knowledge with friends and family.					
Youth Tourists Characteristics and Preferences	9	When choosing a travel destination, I attach great importance to its historical and cultural value.	1	2	3	4	5
	10	I prefer to choose scenic spots that can provide immersive experiences.	1	2	3	4	5
	11	When traveling, I will actively participate in cultural interactive activities (such as garden tours and handicraft experiences).	1	2	3	4	5
	12	I tend to choose scenic spots with a strong cultural atmosphere rather than purely entertainment-oriented ones.	1	2	3	4	5
Youth Tourists Intentions	13	I would like to visit or recommend the garden to friends or family in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
	14	The cultural experience of Chinese gardens will influence my choice of travel destination.	1	2	3	4	5
	15	Compared with other types of scenic spots, I prefer cultural garden scenic spots.	1	2	3	4	5
	16	If new cultural experience projects are launched, I would like to visit the garden again.	1	2	3	4	5

Part 3 Open-ended questionnaire questions

How do you think the garden cultural landscape should be optimized to better attract young tourists?

Answer:.....

Part 4 Comment from

How do you think the garden cultural landscape should be optimized to better attract young tourists?

Comment from

NO.	NO. of answer	Comment
1	5	Increase more publicity
2	8	Keep up with the trend, collaborate with IPs, etc.
3	13	I don't want the crowd to be too large, you can provide more introductions.
4	15	Combine modern elements to attract more tourists.
5	18	Free tickets
6	22	Entertainment integration
7	26	Script Killing
8	27	cheaper
9	29	Create internet-famous attractions, promote them more on social media, and increase photography check-in spots.
10	30	Increase interactive experience
11	34	Promote more
12	38	Release a film
13	41	Designing Park IP, creating surrounding cultural tourism products, etc., expanding the cultural industry chain.
14	44	Cultural creative products
15	46	Preserve ecology and cherish the natural environment.
16	47	Add some pattern designs.
17	48	It can attract people just like popular social media check-ins.
18	52	Can increase interesting cultural and creative products.
19	53	Diverse development
20	55	Greening is more innovative and the environment is comfortable; I hope more young people will like it.
21	57	Scenic areas need to have their own unique style, rather than the monotonous 'I miss you in xx'. Combining local cuisine and convenient transportation can attract more young tourists. The environment of the scenic area should be clean, with complete infrastructure, and an area for tourists to rest and enjoy the scenery.
22	58	Adding some IP-themed landscape decorations appropriately may attract young tourists better.
23	60	Enhancing greening and creating landscape highlights
24	61	Snack shop coffee shop
25	62	Focus on youthfulness

26	63	The scenery is nice, with mountains and water.
27	65	It would be great to have a place for children to play.
28	68	Fun and great for check-ins
29	69	Protect the environment
30	71	More things from before.
31	73	The original forest must be well protected, inherit and innovate the positioning pattern of gardens, develop the cultural heritage of natural gardens, and introduce foreign experience and technical standards.
32	76	More green plants
33	79	Increase accompanying experience projects or performances, referring to the lion dance of the ancestral temple.
34	82	Don't give a dull explanation.
35	84	Integrating with popular elements
36	87	Attract young people by combining trendy events such as music festivals and concerts.
37	90	It would be great if we could visit indoors; it's very hot outside in the summer.
38	93	Equipped with a more comprehensive artificial tour guide program.
39	96	Each point is arranged for a guide to explain.
40	99	Well-developed infrastructure with places that are able to produce films.
41	101	Broaden employment pathways in landscaping
42	104	Organic integration with history
43	107	More reasonable park entry guidelines
44	109	Some representative check-in points are very important.
45	112	Keeping pace with the times, taking its essence.
46	115	Have more activities.
47	118	Shape a form that balances aesthetics and functionality, interacting with elements of modern technology.
48	121	Create cultural and creative products related to garden landscapes.
49	124	Good looking
50	126	All is well!
51	127	Younger, distinctive, more promotion, create IP
52	128	Hold new types of activities
53	129	Clear guidance, enhance the craft experience, and properly control the flow of people.

54	131	Do a good job of online promotion and promote the surrounding products of your own garden attractions.
55	132	Hold some prize-winning science popularization activities.
56	135	Close to the local culture
57	137	Self-media
58	142	Be more innovative.
59	143	It's too noisy when there are small children around.
60	144	Some traditional performances that incorporate modern young elements.
61	147	Combined with technology
62	149	On the basis of preserving and not damaging historical sites, some highly interactive activities are introduced, such as virtual reality explanations and immersive guided tours, or setting up some self-participation mini-games related to gardening knowledge for visitors. Additionally, small theaters can be added to make visiting gardens more vivid and three-dimensional by presenting cultural customs and historical events through live performances or video screenings.
63	150	Without damaging the ecological environment and the gardens, incorporate methods that appeal to young people, such as setting up stamp points at famous scenic spots for visitors to collect stamps, etc.
64	152	Use internet traffic to attract.
65	154	Set up more interesting activities.
66	155	Increase check-in points, increase online traffic.
67	158	Stars lead the way
68	159	Combine with traditional culture
69	160	Each garden can create an IP and produce cultural and creative peripheral products.
70	163	Add some interactive segments based on young people's preferences, such as shooting, participating in conservation, and repair activities.
71	164	Don't set "I miss you very much in xx".
72	169	It's okay.
73	172	The tickets are cheaper or directly free of charge.
74	173	Increase explanations
75	179	Strengthen the popularization of garden culture.
76	180	Increase publicity and promotion
77	182	Interesting activity experience
78	184	I personally think that parks that can produce videos will attract young tourists better.

79	188	good
80	189	Add interactive device performances
81	191	Do more cultural and creative peripheral products
82	193	Highlight the importance of the long-standing history of Chinese garden culture, so that more young people can be aware of it.
83	194	Organize the site's unique history, literature, folklore, or philosophical culture (such as the reclusive culture of Jiangnan gardens or the royal culture of imperial gardens). Develop a clear theme and unfold it through a sequence of landscapes in a storytelling manner, creating a coherent narrative.
84	197	Don't be uniform; have your own characteristics. It would be best to connect with the trends of the new era.
85	198	A miniature landscape of a certain scenic spot in the garden can be created for promotional purposes.

มหาวิทยาลัยเทคโนโลยีราชมงคลรัตนโกสินทร์

APPENDIX B

Acceptance Letter

APPENDIX B: Acceptance Letter

RICE

Date: 26 January 2026

Dear Author Jiayu Chen,

I'm writing to inform you that your paper titled "The Influence of Cultural Landscape Architecture of Chinese Gardens on Youth Tourists Intentions: Case of Four Gardens in China" submitted to RICE Journal of Creative Entrepreneurship and Management," is now accepted for the preliminary review of the journal and will be assigned to Volume 7 Number 1 (January-April 2026).

Thank you for your kind contribution to our journal.

Truly yours,

Wichai Siriteerawasu, Ed.D.
Editor-in Chief

RICE Journal of Creative Entrepreneurship and Management (RJCM)
Rattanakosin International College of Creative Entrepreneurship (RICE)
Rajamangala University of Technology Rattanakosin (RMUTR)
Thanon Putthamonthon Sai 5
Salaya, Nakhon Pathom 73170, Thailand
Tel +662-441-6000 ext 2790
Mobile +6681-436-1303
https://rice.rmutr.ac.th/

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name-Surname	Jiayu Chen
Date of Birth	25 June 2000
Place of Birth	GuangZhou, GuangDong
Address	Haizhu North Road, Yuexiu District, Guangzhou City, Guangdong Province, China
Workplace	-
Telephone Number	+86 13622230453
Email Address	ilpescestar17@gmail.com

Education Background

2024-present	Master Degree in Crestive industries Management Rajamanagala University of Technology Rattanakosin, Thailand
2019-2023	South China Institute of Software Engineering, GU (China), Landscape Architecture

Work Experience

2023	China Mobile Communications Group Co., Ltd.