

Developing Cultural Resources and Cultural Tourism in Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

Vietnam is a country with a long history of development and has great potential and advantages for developing cultural tourism with many recognized cultural relics and heritages. Among more than 40000 relics in Vietnam, there are more than 10000 provincial relics, more than 3621 national relics, 130 special national relics; along with 15 intangible cultural heritages recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This study analyzes the practice of cultural tourism and factors affecting cultural tourism in Vietnam, including human resources and cultural products. The author builds a theoretical research model and surveys the opinions of 350 managers of 180 tourism and cultural agencies and organizations in a number of localities, including Hanoi (North), Hue (Central) and Ho Chi Minh City (South). The research results show that Vietnam has advantages in human resources which are factors promoting the development of cultural tourism; however, cultural products are not diverse and do not have breakthroughs to promote the development of cultural tourism, from which the author discusses policy issues for reference and application to many localities of Vietnam in the current context.

Keywords: Cultural tourism; Human resources; Cultural products; Vietnam.

1. INTRODUCTION

Vietnam is a country in Southeast Asia, with a long history of development through many feudal dynasties for more than 1,000 years from the 10th century to the current democratic era. The rich history and many heritages are Vietnam's advantages for developing cultural tourism, specifically: 15 intangible cultural heritages recognized by UNESCO; more than 40000 relics, including more than 10000 provincial relics, more than 3621 national relics, 130 special national relics (RNP, 2024).

Despite the advantages in developing cultural tourism, according to the general assessment, the development of Vietnam in the current integration process is posing new requirements for the preservation and promotion of cultural values to realize the goal of developing cultural tourism. According to Dong, T.Q. (2025), Vietnamese cultural products have not really created a spectacular breakthrough, have not left a strong impression on the international public.

The above reality is both an opportunity and a challenge for managers to develop cultural tourism. This suggests a need for related research to provide empirical information for managers in Vietnam. And this is also the reason that attracts the author's attention in this study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural tourism in Vietnam and many countries with a long history of development is identified as the main form of tourism in the socio-economic development strategy. According to the current popular understanding, cultural tourism is a form of tourism related to the participation of tourists to experience the culture of a country or region, especially the lifestyle of people in geographical areas, the history of those people, art, architecture, and other factors that have helped shape their way of life. The World Tourism Organization defines cultural tourism similarly to the

above content, which is tourism activities with the main goal/motivator being to research and explore culture. This definition was developed by Anh, T.T. (2014) in his research, that cultural tourism is the activity of tourists to enjoy, experience, and discover new and different things about culture. Further explaining the connotation of cultural tourism, Hanh, D.H. (2015) emphasized the research and exploration of culture through many forms: Participating in research programs on cultural events; participating in research and experiencing festivals, performing arts, historical relics... Or as Xu, P.H. et al (2017) affirmed that cultural tourism is a type that mainly focuses on planning, programming, and designing tours to visit cultural works.

From another perspective, some researchers explain that cultural tourism serves the goals of economic development, political and social goals. Accordingly, the development of cultural tourism is related to the exploitation of heritages and cultural values of the nation, contributing to the preservation and promotion of traditional cultural values, honoring new cultural values of humanity and developing the economy, politics and society (Binh, V.T., 2007). Similarly, Hung, N.P. (2017) affirmed that cultural tourism is the activity of exploiting and using cultural resources to create cultural tourism products to serve the needs of enjoyment, experience and discovery of tourists, aiming at the goal of economic development and other political and social goals. Cuong, D.M. (2023) emphasized that culture creates attraction for tourism, so developing cultural tourism is exploiting the values of cultural heritage to create tourism products, not only for the purpose of satisfying the needs of tourists, but also bringing economic benefits, contributing to cultural preservation.

The above studies clearly demonstrate the implications of the main contents of cultural tourism, including the human factor - the subject of management, exploitation, and experience of cultural tourism; conditions for the development of cultural tourism - cultural products exploited from cultural heritages and other cultural values; the goal of cultural tourism - preserving, promoting, honoring cultural values and developing the economy, politics, and society. On that basis, the author builds the "Cultural tourism" (CT) scale, including implications about the meaning for local development: Local cultural tourism develops, enhances cultural values and enhances people's understanding of the cultural values of the nation and community (CT1); Local cultural tourism develops, preserves and promotes the cultural values of the nation and community - people enjoy and experience many cultural products of the nation and community (CT2); Local cultural tourism develops, honors the cultural values of the nation and community and realizes political, economic and social goals (CT3).

Vietnam has advantages for developing cultural tourism with diversity and many valuable historical heritages, bearing the unique features of the nation and community. Therefore, the viewpoint of developing cultural tourism is determined by the Party and State of Vietnam in association with preserving and promoting the values of cultural heritage; developing cultural tourism into a cultural industry, effectively transforming rich resources into soft power of Vietnamese culture (PM, 2016). To achieve the goal of developing cultural tourism, leaders need to promote the potential of cultural tourism, in which priority is given to promoting the participation and efforts of businesses and people to sustainably exploit the cultural values of the nation and community. This is an issue related to the strategy and policy of developing cultural resources, including developing human resources and developing cultural products.

- Firstly, human resource development - the main factor participating in the process of developing cultural tourism. Human resource development has been affirmed by many studies as having the significance of developing an important cultural resource, deciding the strategic goal of developing cultural tourism of the country and locality. Thang, H.Q. (2015) and Hanh, D.T.H. (2018) affirmed that human resources include knowledge, skills, and moral qualities crystallized in each individual to develop into human resources with intelligence, culture, and humanity; is the main factor deciding the success of social activities, including cultural tourism. Therefore, human resource development to realize the goal of developing cultural tourism is associated with propaganda, education, training, and fostering so that each person has knowledge and understanding of the cultural values of the nation and community; From there, they have the awareness to protect and promote cultural values, exploit cultural values to create cultural tourism products. On that basis, the author builds the scale "Developing human resource" (DHR) which implies the following contents: Local people are educated and propagated about the cultural values of the nation and community and have the level and understanding of developing cultural tourism towards the goal of economic, political and social development (DHR1); Local people are educated and propagated about the cultural values of the nation and community and have the awareness to protect and promote cultural values to develop cultural tourism

towards the goal of economic, political and social development (DHR2); Local people are educated and propagated about the cultural values of the nation and community and have the awareness to honor and sustainably exploit cultural values to develop cultural tourism towards the goal of economic, political and social development (DHR3).

- Second, developing cultural products - the content factor forming cultural tourism, which is the cultural values exploited to become cultural tourism products. Khanh, N.T. (2023) affirmed that cultural products are an existing cultural resource, exploited from cultural heritages and other cultural values; this resource determines the strategic goal of developing cultural tourism, becoming a resource for cultural tourism activities serving the socio-economic development of the country and locality. Similarly, Cuong, D.M. (2023) said that cultural products contain tangible and intangible cultural values, exploited to become cultural tourism products such as sightseeing services, experiences of historical relics, scenic spots, traditional products, arts... are the power that directly impacts the development of the country and locality. Therefore, each locality needs to implement well the policy of preserving and promoting cultural values - carry out well the propaganda, education, training and fostering work so that each person has knowledge and understanding of the cultural values of the nation and community; exploit sustainably to honor, promote and maintain cultural values to serve the development of cultural tourism. With that interpretation, the author builds the scale "Developing cultural products" (DCP) implying the content of requirements for preserving and promoting cultural values, sustainably exploiting cultural values to develop local cultural tourism, including: The locality does a good job of educating and preserving the cultural values of the nation and community (historical relics, scenic spots, traditional products, arts, etc.) to develop cultural tourism (DCP1); The locality sustainably exploits the cultural values of the nation and community; diversifies cultural products (visiting and experiencing historical relics, scenic spots, traditional products, arts, etc.) to develop cultural tourism (DCP2); The locality does a good job of propagating, promoting, and honoring the cultural values and cultural products (visiting and experiencing historical relics, scenic spots, traditional products, arts, etc.) of the nation and community to develop cultural tourism (DCP3).

From the characteristics of cultural tourism, it can be seen that the human factor (subjects participating in cultural tourism processes) and the cultural product factor (cultural values exploited to become cultural tourism products) are two main factors, playing the role of internal driving force promoting the development of cultural tourism. With this argument, the author establishes a research viewpoint with the hypotheses that: *Developing human resource (H1) and Developing cultural product (H2) are two main factors, playing the role of internal driving force promoting the development of cultural tourism.*

Through the overview study, the author has built a theoretical framework for research on cultural resource development and cultural tourism. The research model is designed to assess the impact of cultural resource development on cultural tourism, including 02 independent scales/variables "Developing human resource" (DHR), "Developing Cultural product" (DCP) and 01 dependent scale/variable "Cultural tourism" (CT). The scales include 09 observed variables for which the author designed a survey form with 09 corresponding questions and measured using a 5-level Likert scale: 1 - Strongly disagree; 2 - Disagree; 3 - No opinion; 4 - Agree; 5 - Strongly agree (Table 1, Figure 1).

Table 1. Theoretical framework

No	Scales	Encode	Rating levels				
			1	2	3	4	5
I	Developing human resource	DHR					
1	Local people are educated and propagated about the cultural values of the nation and community and have the level and understanding of developing cultural tourism towards the goal of economic, political and social development.	DHR1					
2	Local people are educated and propagated about the cultural values of the nation and community and have the awareness to protect and promote cultural values to	DHR2					

	develop cultural tourism towards the goal of economic, political and social development.						
3	Local people are educated and propagated about the cultural values of the nation and community and have the awareness to honor and sustainably exploit cultural values to develop cultural tourism towards the goal of economic, political and social development.	DHR3					
II	Developing cultural products	DCP					
4	The locality does a good job of educating and preserving the cultural values of the nation and community (historical relics, scenic spots, traditional products, arts, etc.) to develop cultural tourism.	DCP1					
5	The locality sustainably exploits the cultural values of the nation and community; diversifies cultural products (visiting and experiencing historical relics, scenic spots, traditional products, arts, etc.) to develop cultural tourism.	DCP2					
6	The locality does a good job of propagating, promoting, and honoring the cultural values and cultural products (visiting and experiencing historical relics, scenic spots, traditional products, arts, etc.) of the nation and community to develop cultural tourism.	DCP3					
III	Cultural tourism	CT					
7	Local cultural tourism develops, enhances cultural values and enhances people's understanding of the cultural values of the nation and community.	CT1					
8	Local cultural tourism develops, preserves and promotes the cultural values of the nation and community - people enjoy and experience many cultural products of the nation and community.	CT2					
9	Local cultural tourism develops, honors the cultural values of the nation and community and realizes political, economic and social goals.	CT3					

Source: Compiled by the author through the review

Research model

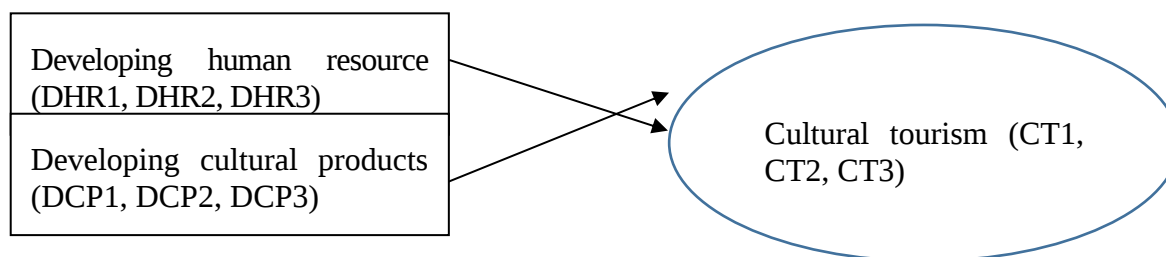


Figure 1. Research model

3. RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the qualitative method is implemented through the collection and analysis of secondary data, including published documents. The author synthesizes and analyzes related research contents and builds a theoretical

research framework with a 3-scale model: "Developing human resource" (DHR); "Developing cultural products" (DCP); "Cultural tourism" (CT).

In addition, the quantitative method was implemented through the collection and analysis of primary data by surveying 350 managers of 180 tourism and cultural agencies and organizations in several localities in Vietnam. The survey was conducted in two steps: Preliminary survey and official survey.

- Preliminary survey: This study conducted exploratory factor analysis and regression analysis to test the theoretical model and test the correlation of the scales. In quantitative research, according to Hair, J.F. et al. (2009), the minimum sample size required for exploratory factor analysis for a model of 3 scales and 9 observed variables is $N = 9 \times 5 = 45$. First, the author conducted a preliminary survey at 50 tourism and cultural agencies and organizations in Hanoi with a sample size of $N = 100$ managers ($N > 45$). The preliminary survey results showed that all 3 scales and 9 observed variables achieved reliability to be used in an official survey on a larger scale.

- Official survey: The author conducted an official survey at 180 tourism and cultural agencies and organizations of several localities representing three regions of Vietnam, including Hanoi (North), Hue (Central) and Ho Chi Minh City (South), with a sample size of $N = 350$ managers ($N > 45$). Respondents were selected, including managers with experience in the field of culture and tourism for 3 years or more. The survey was conducted with the consent of the respondents and the results obtained 350/350 valid responses, achieving a valid response rate of 100%.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the data of 350 collected survey forms, the author conducted Cronbach' Alpha test to identify the reliability of the scales and observed variables in the research model. According to Hair, J.F. et al. (2009), the scales are reliable when meeting the standard condition: Cronbach'alpha > 0.6 ; the observed variables are reliable when meeting the standard condition: Corrected Item-Total Correlation > 0.3 . The test results show that all 3 scales and 9 observed variables are reliable enough to continue to perform the following analyses (Table 2).

Table 2. Statistical results and testing results of the scale

Scales	Observed variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach' Alpha	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
1. Developing human resource (DHR)	DHR1	350	1	5	4.22	.579	.712	DHR1 = .517
	DHR2	350	1	5	4.11	.602		DHR2 = .489
	DHR3	350	1	5	4.16	.598		DHR3 = .505
2. Developing cultural products (DCP)	DCP1	350	1	5	4.04	.643	.685	DCP1 = .395
	DCP2	350	1	5	3.96	.702		DCP2 = .342
	DCP3	350	1	5	3.99	.696		DCP3 = .401
3. Cultural tourism (CT)	CT1	350	1	5	4.09	.649	.643	CT1 = .446
	CT2	350	1	5	4.05	.655		CT2 = .427
	CT3	350	1	5	4.10	.661		CT3 = .483
Valid N (listwise)		350						

Source: Author's survey results

Data in Table 2 shows that observations on the scales "Developing human resource" (DHR), "Developing cultural products" (DCP), "Cultural tourism" (CT) are all rated at an average level of Mean ≥ 3.96 , statistically significant according to the determined Likert scale (1-5). In particular, the observed variables of the scale "Developing human resource" (DHR) are rated at the highest level with Mean (DHR1) = 4.22, Mean (DHR2) = 4.11, Mean (DHR3) = 4.16,

showing that managers of tourism and cultural agencies and organizations in Vietnam highly appreciate the factor of human resource development to promote cultural tourism development. Accordingly, propaganda and education on cultural values are well implemented; Local people are educated and informed about the cultural values of the nation and community and have the level and understanding of cultural tourism development; have the awareness to protect and promote cultural values; have the awareness to honor and sustainably exploit cultural values to develop cultural tourism towards the goal of economic, political and social development. This is an internal resource and an important factor, having a direct impact, promoting the development of cultural tourism in Vietnamese localities.

Data in Table 2 also shows that the observed variables of the scale "Developing cultural products" (DCP) are rated at the lowest level with Mean (DCP1) = 4.04, Mean (DCP2) = 3.96, Mean (DCP3) = 3.99, indicating that managers of tourism and cultural agencies and organizations in Vietnam have low ratings for the factor of developing cultural products to promote cultural tourism development. Accordingly, many localities have not done a good job of educating, propagating, promoting, honoring and preserving the cultural values of the nation and community (historical relics, scenic spots, traditional products, arts, etc.) to develop cultural tourism; have not sustainably exploited the cultural values of the nation and community to create a diversity of cultural products (visiting and experiencing historical relics, scenic spots, traditional products, arts, etc.) to develop cultural tourism.

The survey results also reflect the current status of cultural resource development and cultural tourism in Vietnam, similar to the comments and assessments of many experts and managers. According to Hang, C.T. (2021), Vietnamese cultural products are still not diverse compared to their potential; they have not met the increasing cultural needs of all classes of people. Dong, T.Q. (2025) assessed that Vietnamese cultural products have not really created a spectacular breakthrough, have not left a strong impression on the international public. That has limited the development and breakthrough impact of cultural resources on the development of cultural tourism in Vietnam.

The results of reliability testing of the scales and observed variables in Table 2 have provided the author with a scientific basis for conducting exploratory factor analysis. Exploratory factor analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted to preliminarily assess the unidimensionality, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the scales to provide further basis for drawing research conclusions on the suitability of the theoretical research model, in order to verify the initial theoretical research model. The results of exploratory factor analysis are shown in Table 3 and Table 4 below.

Table 3. Total Variance Explained

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.752
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square	2181.230
df	36
Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.510	38.999	38.999	3.510	38.999	38.999	2.859	31.764	31.764
2	2.973	33.037	72.036	2.973	33.037	72.036	2.718	30.202	61.967
3	1.058	11.753	83.790	1.058	11.753	83.790	1.964	21.823	83.790

4	.506	5.622	89.411					
5	.426	4.728	94.140					
6	.185	2.052	96.192					
7	.169	1.880	98.071					
8	.120	1.335	99.407					
9	.053	.593	100.000					
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.								

Source: Author's survey results

Table 4. Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated Component Matrix ^a				
Scales	Observed variables	Component		
		1	2	3
1. Developing human resource (DHR)	DHR1	.816		
	DHR2	.782		
	DHR3	.804		
2. Developing cultural products (DCP)	DCP1		.768	
	DCP2		.755	
	DCP3		.787	
3. Cultural tourism (CT)	CT1			.788
	CT2			.775
	CT3			.796
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.				
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.				
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.				

Source: Author's survey results

Exploratory factor analysis in quantitative research is performed in accordance with the data set through the values of KMO, Eigenvalue, Total Variance Explained, Factor Loading. According to Hair, J.F. et al. (2009), the conditions for exploratory factor analysis to be performed in accordance with the data set are the values: $0.5 \leq \text{KMO} \leq 1$; Bartlett's test has an observed significance level $\text{Sig.} < 0.05$; Eigenvalue ≥ 1 ; Total Variance Explained $\geq 50\%$; Factor Loading ≥ 0.5 . The data in Table 3 and Table 4 show that:

- KMO coefficient = $0.752 > 0.5$, confirming that exploratory factor analysis is appropriate for the data set; Bartlett's test has an observed significance level of $\text{Sig.} = 0.000 < 0.05$, showing that the observed variables have a linear correlation with the representative factor. Total Variance Explained with Cumulative % = $83.790\% > 50\%$ (Table 3), showing that 83.790% of the variation of the representative factors is explained by the observed variables; the observed variables all have Factor Loading > 0.5 (Table 4), showing that the observed variables have good statistical significance. The theoretical research model initially proposed is consistent with the survey research practice.

- The observed variables were extracted into 03 factors corresponding to the 03 initial factors with Eigenvalues > 1 (Table 3), continuing to confirm the suitability of the initial research model. And the initial research model was kept intact, including: 02 independent variables "Developing human resource" (DHR), "Developing cultural products" (DCP) and 01 dependent variable "Cultural tourism" (CT) with a total of 9 observed variables with good statistical significance, which can perform multivariate linear regression analysis to examine the relationship of the scales in the model. The results of the regression analysis are shown in Table 5, which is the basis for the author to draw research conclusions.

Table 5. Multivariate regression results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	VIF
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	1.125	.126		12.365	.000	
	Developing human resource (DHR)	.644	.302	.549	10.564	.000	1.811
	Developing cultural products (DCP)	.425	.284	.488	9.927	.000	1.765
a. Dependent Variable: Cultural tourism (CT) Adjusted R Square: 0.732; Durbin-Watson: 2.103							

Source: Author's survey results

The data in Table 5 shows that:

+ R Square = 0.732, confirming that the scales "Developing human resource" (DHR), "Developing cultural products" (DCP) explain 73.2% of the variation in the scale "Cultural tourism" (CT); VIF = 1.811 and VIF = 1.765 ($1 < VIF < 2$), showing that the regression model does not have multicollinearity; Durbin-Watson = 2.103 ($1 < d < 3$), showing that the regression model does not have autocorrelation, confirming that the scales "Developing human resource" (DHR), "Developing cultural products" (DCP) are independent and have the same impact on the scale "Cultural tourism" (CT), confirming the suitability of the theoretical research model with the survey data set.

+ The regression coefficients of the two independent variables "Developing human resource" (DHR), "Developing cultural products" (DCP) are both statistically significant Sig. = 0.000 (Sig. < 0.05) and have positive values: B(DHR) = 0.644 and B(DCP) = 0.425, confirming the positive relationship between the two independent variables "Developing human resource" (DHR), "Developing cultural products" (DCP) and 01 dependent variable "Cultural tourism" (CT); hypotheses H1, H2 are accepted; the initial research model continues to be confirmed to be appropriate.

Trên cơ sở mô hình hồi quy khái quát của Hair, J.F. et al. (2009): $Y = B_0 + B_1 \cdot X_1 + B_2 \cdot X_2 + \dots + B_i \cdot X_i$, tác giả xác định được mô hình hồi quy đa biến của nghiên cứu này như sau: $CT = 1.125 + 0.644 \cdot DHR + 0.425 \cdot DCP$

Based on the regression coefficient, it can be seen that the correlation level of the independent variables and the dependent variables in decreasing order is: "Developing human resource" (DHR), "Developing cultural products" (DCP). That contributes to further confirming the results of empirical research in Vietnam:

- Firstly, human resource development is an important content, because this is an internal resource and an important factor, directly influencing and promoting the development of cultural tourism in Vietnamese localities. And in fact, the propaganda and education work on cultural values is well implemented; local people are propagated and educated about the cultural values of the nation and community and have the level and understanding of cultural tourism development; have the awareness to protect and promote cultural values; have the awareness to honor and sustainably exploit cultural values to develop cultural tourism towards the goal of economic, political and social development.

- Second, developing cultural products has an impact on promoting the development of cultural tourism. However, many localities have not done a good job of educating, propagating, promoting, honoring and preserving the cultural values of the nation and community (historical relics, scenic spots, traditional products, arts, etc.) to develop cultural tourism; have not sustainably exploited the cultural values of the nation and community to create a diversity of cultural products (visiting and experiencing historical relics, scenic spots, traditional products, arts, etc.) to develop cultural tourism. This is also the reason why Vietnam's cultural products are still not diverse compared to their potential; have not met the increasingly high cultural needs of the people (Hang, C.T., 2021); and Vietnamese cultural products have not really created a spectacular breakthrough, have not left a strong impression on the international public (Dong, T.Q., 2025). That has limited the development and breakthrough impact of cultural resources on the development of cultural tourism in Vietnam.

From the above research results, the author suggests the management issues of Vietnamese localities to promote the development of cultural tourism, which is to develop diverse, unique, high-quality cultural tourism products, suitable for market demand and associated with the preservation of cultural values of the nation and community; exploit the advantages of typical products, suitable for social needs to attract the participation of tourists and people in enjoying cultural values. Because cultural resources can transform each other and can be transformed into other resources during use; diverse cultural products when exploited and used have a meaningful impact on the development of people's spiritual life, and when exploited and used by people, cultural products turn into other valuable social resources. With the above research implications, the author recommends that localities need to prioritize the development of diverse cultural products to enhance cultural values to serve the development of cultural tourism; In addition, it is necessary to promote research and implementation of public-private partnership models in investment, operation and exploitation of cultural tourism products.

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