

From Temples to the Soul: Exploring the Social Drivers and Psychological Depths of Young People's Temple Tourism Phenomenon

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Abstract: Temple tourism has gradually emerged among young people, becoming a new cultural phenomenon. Based on the theory of cultural semiotics, this study explores the social drivers and deeper psychological meanings behind the phenomenon of temple tourism, revealing the psychological needs and social identity of young people in this form of tourism. Using a qualitative research approach, in-depth interviews with 15 young tourists were conducted to analyze the recreation and reinterpretation of temples as cultural symbols within the young demographic. The findings suggest that temple tourism not only meets the young people's need for spiritual solace and emotional healing, but also serves as an important means of self-exploration and cultural identity. Meanwhile, the widespread dissemination of social media has turned temples into key spaces for young people to express themselves, seek a sense of belonging, and receive emotional support. This phenomenon reflects a process of re-creation of traditional culture and history by young people, as well as their strong need for spiritual solace. By uncovering the social drivers and psychological mechanisms behind young people's participation in "temple tourism," this study contributes new insights to the destination marketing literature. Furthermore, the findings provide strategic recommendations for the development and marketing of temple and religious tourism destinations.

Keywords: Temple Tourism; Cultural Semiotics; Psychological Needs; Social Drivers.

1. Introduction

As cultural consumption habits among young people in China and East Asia have shifted in recent years, an increasing number of young individuals have embraced a new form of tourism known as "temple tourism". Unlike traditional pilgrimage tourism, temple tourism extends beyond religious faith and rituals, evolving into a phenomenon imbued with diverse cultural and social significance. This trend is particularly evident among younger generations, who seek religious experiences, emotional solace, cultural identity, and opportunities for social expression. The rapid rise of temple tourism represents a reinterpretation of traditional religious sites and a "modernized" recreation of traditional culture by young people [1, 2]. The strong informational capabilities of Generation Z have positioned social media as a "catalyst" for this phenomenon, particularly platforms like Weibo, TikTok, and Instagram. Through these platforms, young people share photos and videos of their temple visits, transforming temples into new "check-in" landmarks. This behavior reflects their interest in traditional religious sites and their desire for cultural identity and social interaction [1]. The popularity of temple tourism highlights a broader societal yearning for cultural recognition and self-expression [2]. Amid rapid urbanization and the mounting pressures of modern life, young people increasingly turn to traditional culture for psychological solace. With their rich historical and cultural symbolism, temples serve as ideal "spiritual sanctuaries" [3]. Temple tourism has thus become more than a tourism phenomenon—it serves as a medium for young people to explore their identities, seek belonging, and experience emotional healing [4]. By visiting temples, young people are

not only seeking spiritual comfort but also striving to reconnect with their cultural heritage and historical roots. In this process, the significance of temples as cultural symbols transcends their religious functions, transforming them into vital spaces for self-exploration and social identity for the younger generation.

Theoretically, temple tourism involves multiple academic disciplines, including cultural studies, tourism behavior, psychology, and semiotics. Cultural semiotics theory posits that cultural symbols carry social significance and historical heritage, and temples hold profound symbolic meanings as carriers of cultural symbols. The behavior of young people in temple tourism can be seen as a reinterpretation and recreation of these symbols. Temple tourism is an expression of religious faith and an exploration of culture, history, and self-identity [5]. In the field of tourism research, previous studies have indicated that the motivations for modern tourism have shifted from simple leisure and entertainment to more complex psychological needs, such as a sense of belonging, emotional healing, and self-discovery [4, 6]. These needs are particularly evident in temple tourism. Temples, as spaces rich in spiritual symbolism, provide young people with a unique emotional sanctuary, allowing them to escape the pressures of daily life and attain inner peace and tranquility. Although some scholars have explored the economic benefits, religious significance, and cultural heritage preservation of temple tourism, research on "temple tourism" remains relatively limited. Questions such as why young people choose temples as travel destinations, how temple tourism meets their psychological needs, and how this phenomenon reflects the cultural consumption trends of the younger generation have yet to be thoroughly examined.

This study explores the cultural codes and psychological

motivations underlying young people's participation in "temple tourism." Specifically, it addresses the following research questions: (1) What motivates young people to engage in temple tourism? (2) How do they perceive and interpret temples as cultural symbols? For young people, is temple tourism a form of cultural exploration, psychological healing, or social expression? And (3) what social and psychological trends are reflected in the phenomenon of temple tourism? This study enriches the theoretical frameworks of cultural tourism and psychology by exploring the cultural symbols and psychological motivations behind young people's participation in temple tourism. It provides new perspectives on how modern young people navigate the balance between traditional culture and contemporary life. Furthermore, the findings offer practical insights for temple tourism destination managers, cultural heritage custodians, and tourism marketing strategists, equipping them to attract young visitors better and meet their diverse psychological needs and cultural expectations.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Cultural Symbols and Tourism Behavior

Semiotics theory emphasizes the relationship between symbols and cultural meanings by examining how symbols convey significance within society. Symbols are not merely linguistic or visual elements; they transmit profound values and beliefs within specific cultural contexts. Eco (1979) posited that cultural symbols carry socially constructed meanings, gaining power through collective understanding among community members [7]. Temples, as cultural symbols, embody not only religious faith but also profound historical, cultural, and social significance. In "temple tourism," temples are reinterpreted by young people, acquiring new meanings beyond their traditional role as sites of religious activity. Instead, they function as vessels for cultural self-identity and emotional experiences. Through visiting temples, young people redefine their cultural significance in modern society, positioning them as dynamic spaces of personal exploration and social connection [8].

In tourism behavior studies, the role of cultural symbols is indispensable. Cultural symbols shape destination images and cultural experiences, influencing tourists' choices and behaviors [9]. With the advancement of globalization, young people's interest in cultural tourism has shifted towards experiential cultural consumption. They seek to reconnect traditional culture with modern life through immersive travel experiences [10]. As an integral part of traditional culture, temples hold profound symbolic significance, attracting an increasing number of young individuals searching for cultural identity and emotional solace. Research suggests that the appeal of temples to young people stems not only from their religious context but also from their multifaceted symbolic functions as cultural icons [11].

The study of cultural tourism reveals this shift, with scholars pointing out that cultural tourism is not just the consumption of cultural products, but also the reshaping of cultural identity and the recognition of social values [12]. The behavioral patterns of young people in temple tours reflect their new interpretation and recreation of traditional culture [13].

2.2. Psychological Needs and Experiential Studies

Tourists' behaviors are influenced not only by external environmental factors but also by internal psychological needs. The psychological needs of young people in temple tourism, including a sense of belonging, emotional healing, and identity affirmation, are important motivators for their travel behavior. Cohen (1979) pointed out that tourism behavior is shaped by personal inner needs, particularly when seeking spiritual comfort and emotional release, making tourism a pathway for emotional healing [4]. Temples, as places of symbolic and spiritual significance, can meet the need for psychological solace among young people in a rapidly developing modern society. As "spiritual sanctuaries," temples become ideal places for young people to regain peace amidst the fast pace of life. Goossens (2000) proposed a tourism experience model, suggesting that the core needs of tourists in travel are belonging and emotional support, which temples, as cultural and religious spaces, are well-suited to fulfill [14].

Moreover, the need for identity affirmation is another significant psychological motivation for young people's participation in temple tourism. Tourism experiences are not merely about enjoying the external world; they also serve as a means of personal identity construction and self-expression [15]. In temple tourism, young people interact with cultural symbols to redefine their identity and social roles. The significance of this experience goes beyond religious rituals, reflecting young people's reinterpretation of traditional culture and reaffirming their self-worth.

2.3. Contextual Analysis of Emerging Social Phenomena

The rise of social media and network culture has undoubtedly played a significant role in driving "temple tourism." In recent years, social media and network culture have become critical forces behind promoting temple tourism. Platforms such as Weibo, TikTok, and Instagram have transformed how information is disseminated and influenced young people's travel choices and preferences [16]. Temples, as sites rich in cultural symbolism, have leveraged social media to become new "check-in" hotspots, attracting many young visitors seeking unique experiences and social identity. The dissemination power of social media reinforces temples' cultural symbolic significance and transforms temple tourism into a public space for displaying personal identity and social connections.

The rise of network culture has made young people increasingly inclined to choose travel destinations that reflect their personal traits and cultural identity. Temples, as traditional cultural symbols, have been reinterpreted through social media, becoming a medium for young people to express themselves, seek a sense of belonging, and affirm their identity [17]. This phenomenon not only reflects young people's interest in the revival of traditional culture but also highlights their pursuit of personalized and emotionally resonant experiences. As the pace of modern life accelerates, young people yearn to find inner peace through travel while simultaneously using it as a way to showcase their cultural identity.

Moreover, young people's values have shifted, placing greater emphasis on self-expression and the need for personalization, aligning with temples' diversity and openness

as cultural symbols. Temples are no longer solely religious sites but have evolved into a system of cultural symbols. By participating in temple tourism, young people redefine themselves, seeking a balance between the individual and society and between tradition and modernity [18]. This cultural revival and personalized exploration trend reflects a new understanding of traditional culture among young people. It reveals their longing for cultural roots and spiritual solace in a rapidly changing modern society.

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to deeply explore the motivations, perceptions, and experiences of young people participating in temple tourism. Qualitative research, known for its flexibility and depth, effectively captures individuals' behaviors, perceptions, and emotional responses, making it an essential tool for understanding complex social phenomena [19]. Given that the phenomenon of temple tourism involves young people's reinterpretation of traditional culture and exploration of personal identity, qualitative research is particularly suitable for uncovering this phenomenon's underlying psychological needs and cultural drivers. Moreover, qualitative research provides detailed case analysis, enabling a multi-dimensional deconstruction of young people's understanding of temples as cultural symbols and their experiential patterns in tourism.

3.2. Data Collection

This study employed in-depth interviews as the primary data collection method to gain an in-depth understanding of the motivations, perceptions, and experiences of young people participating in temple tourism. In-depth interviews allow researchers to capture the multidimensional aspects of individuals' perceptions, emotions, and behaviors during their engagement with temple tourism. They also uncover the cultural and psychological drivers behind these experiences. The participants in the interviews were young tourists whose perspectives and experiences provide a comprehensive, multi-angled understanding of the phenomenon of temple tourism.

3.3. Sample Selection and Interview Process

This study employed purposive sampling to select participants based on age, tourism experience, and cultural background. The sampling criteria included the following: first, participants had to be young tourists aged 18 to 35 to ensure the study accurately reflected the perceptions and needs of the younger generation regarding temple tourism; second, participants must have engaged in temple tourism at least once. Additionally, to provide diverse perspectives, the study included interviews with temple management personnel and cultural researchers, who offered professional insights into temple culture and visitor behavior. A total of 15 young tourists were interviewed. The participants came from diverse backgrounds to ensure the data's richness and representativeness. Each interview lasted approximately 20 to 35 minutes and was conducted in a semi-structured format. Before the interviews, researchers explained the study's purpose, participation details, and data confidentiality to the participants. All participants signed informed consent forms and were informed of their rights and the option to withdraw from the study anytime. During the interviews, researchers

used open-ended questions to encourage participants to express themselves freely, allowing for a thorough understanding of their experiences and emotional responses. To ensure the quality of the interviews, researchers followed up with probing questions based on participants' answers to explore deeper motivations and emotions. This approach helped uncover nuanced insights into participants' engagement with temple tourism.

3.4. Data Organization and Analysis

All interviews were audio-recorded upon completion and transcribed verbatim afterward. The transcribed texts were anonymized by removing all personal identifiers to ensure data confidentiality. Following each interview, researchers conducted a preliminary analysis of the content to confirm their understanding of participants' perspectives and to lay the groundwork for subsequent coding and thematic analysis.

During the data analysis process, two researchers independently analyzed the transcripts. Each researcher identified potential themes and codes within the text and categorized the interview content accordingly. After the initial analysis, the researchers compared and discussed their findings to ensure the integration of different perspectives and interpretations. In cases of disagreement, a third researcher was invited to review and mediate the analysis, ensuring that all viewpoints and interpretations were reconciled and consistent. This approach ensured a rigorous and balanced analysis of the data.

4. Findings

4.1. Core Motivations of Young People

4.1.1. Echoes of Culture: Finding Identity and Belonging on a Temple Tour

The manuscript should include a conclusion. In this section, summarize what was described in your paper. Future directions may also be included in this section. Authors are strongly encouraged not to reference multiple figures or tables in the conclusion; these should be referenced in the body of the paper.

Young people's motivations for temple tourism go beyond religious worship; they profoundly reflect their connection to traditional culture. Temples have become carriers of cultural identity and a sense of belonging. Through their experiences in temples, young people attempt to connect with historical legacies and engage in a spiritual dialogue with past cultures. For them, temples are not merely geographical spaces but vessels of cultural resonance and profound identity affirmation.

For instance, Participant 1 shared:

"Every time I step into a temple, I feel as though I am touching the pulse of history. Even though I don't fully adhere to religious beliefs, the serene atmosphere makes me feel immersed in a broader cultural context."

Similarly, Participant 8 expressed:

"Temples give me a sense of historical depth—not just through their architecture but through the cultural power they embody. They remind me, as a young person, to respect and understand our traditional culture."

These responses illustrate that temple tourism serves as a pathway for young people to seek cultural roots and affirm their identity. Through this process, they feel not only part of modern society but also connected, in some measure, to history and culture.

4.1.2. A Sanctuary for the Soul: Seeking Inner Peace and Healing in Temples

In the high-pressure environment of modern society, young people often experience anxiety and unease, making temple tourism a sought-after refuge for inner peace and emotional healing. Temples, as spaces for spiritual cleansing, provide solace that transcends the realities of everyday life, offering a sanctuary where individuals can find tranquility in spiritual detachment. Every waft of incense and every quiet corner seems to cleanse the mind of its burdens, helping young people reclaim their sense of self amidst stress.

For example, Participant 3 shared:

"I often feel overwhelmed by the pressures of life, but every time I visit a temple and see the tranquil structures and incense, I feel deeply at peace, as if all my worries can momentarily disappear."

Similarly, Participant 6 described a comparable experience:

"Temples give me a sense of spiritual healing. There is no noise from modern life, just a space allowing calm reflection."

These remarks highlight that temples are not merely places of religious worship; they also provide young people with an opportunity to alleviate psychological stress and restore inner peace.

4.1.3. Social Mirror: Constructing Self and Cultural Display in the "Check-in Culture"

In the era of social media, temples have evolved beyond being spaces for individual spiritual solace to become stages for young people to showcase their social identities. The act of "checking in" on social media is not merely a record of visiting a physical space but a form of cultural self-presentation. Through this practice, young people engage in a dialogue with traditional culture and in shaping their cultural identity and social status within the context of globalization and digital connectivity.

As Participant 10 remarked:

"Temples are great places to take photos with my friends, especially with their beautiful architecture and decorations. I enjoy posting these pictures on social media and seeing the likes and comments—it makes me feel like I am part of something meaningful."

Similarly, Participant 12 noted:

"The appeal of temple tourism is not just about the spiritual fulfillment but also about sharing the experience on social media and demonstrating respect for traditional culture with friends."

This phenomenon highlights that temples serve as sanctuaries for personal spirituality and spaces for social interaction and identity expression among young people.

4.2. Attractiveness of Cultural Symbols

4.2.1. Symbolism and Ritual: Temples as Cultural Symbolic Spaces

Temples, as cultural symbols, captivate young people with their architectural styles, rituals, and the symbolic significance of incense. Each sculpture, pillar, and temple festival serves as a link to past cultures, enabling young visitors to experience the weight of history and the power of cultural heritage. Temples are not merely places of worship; they are symbolic spaces that carry the memory of history and culture.

Participant 2 shared:

"The architectural style of temples always reminds me of ancient cultures. They are not just buildings but cultural symbols—every pillar and every stone tablet tells a story."

Participant 4 emphasized the symbolic meaning of rituals and incense:

"Lighting incense and offering prayers in the temple give me a sense of connection between the past and the future. The rising smoke feels like a dialogue with our ancestors."

These responses highlight the multifaceted significance of temples as cultural symbols. Through interacting with these elements, young people experience the enduring strength of history and tradition.

4.2.2. Reinterpreting Tradition: How Young People Assign New Contexts and Modern Meanings to Temples

Although temples are deeply rooted in traditional culture, young people no longer see them solely as religious sites but as places imbued with new cultural meanings. Through a modern lens, young people assign temples new lifestyles and trendy values, viewing them as fashionable social landmarks and cultural experience venues. Here, traditional culture intertwines with modern social needs, transforming temples into platforms for self-expression and cultural identity.

Participant 5 remarked:

"Temples are not just places for prayers; they are spaces with ancient charm and a sense of modern style. Some temples' architecture and surrounding landscapes are perfect spots for travel photos."

Participant 9 echoed this sentiment:

"Many young people now love taking pictures at temples. Their unique landscapes and atmosphere make them ideal social media check-in landmarks, representing culture and a sense of fashion."

This phenomenon illustrates the evolving role of temples as cultural symbols in the minds of young people. They retain their traditional cultural value while being imbued with new, fashionable significance, reflecting the dynamic interplay between heritage and modernity.

4.3. Psychological and Behavioral Patterns

4.3.1. From Experience to Action: How Temple Tourism Reshapes Behavioral Intentions and Cultural Transmission

Temple tourism is not merely a travel experience; it profoundly influences the behavioral patterns of young people. Many young individuals express a willingness to revisit temples and recommend the experience to others. The spiritual healing effect of temple tourism transforms it into a social activity, sharing not only the destination itself but also the associated cultural and emotional values. Through this process, temples become mediums of cultural transmission, and young people emerge as active agents in promoting this cultural phenomenon.

Participant 7 shared:

"Every time I visit a temple, I feel a sense of comfort. I will definitely come back, especially when I need to find inner peace."

Similarly, Participant 13 noted:

"I recommend temple tourism to my friends, especially those seeking relaxation or spiritual solace. The serene and comforting atmosphere of temples makes them truly worth revisiting."

These responses demonstrate that temple tourism not only satisfies young people's spiritual needs but also encourages them to revisit and share their experiences with others. This behavior highlights the role of temples as cultural hubs and the active participation of young people in the dissemination

of cultural and emotional connections.

4.3.2. The Dialectical Unity of Spirituality and Enjoyment: Young People's Dual Pursuits in Temple Tourism

Temple tourism is not solely a response to spiritual needs; it also encompasses young people's pursuit of worldly enjoyment. Their behaviors during temple visits reflect a delicate balance between spiritual aspirations and secular pleasures. On one hand, they seek inner peace and self-reflection; on the other, they find relaxation and joy through social and recreational activities. This dialectical unity makes temple tourism more than a religious symbol—it becomes a multifaceted cultural experience that spans multiple dimensions of life.

Participant 14 shared:

"While temple tourism gives me inner peace, it does not mean I cannot enjoy taking pictures with friends, trying local snacks, and exploring the nearby markets. Temple tourism feels like a mix of spiritual pursuit and recreational relaxation."

Similarly, Participant 15 remarked:

"Temple tourism is a way to unwind—not just a purely religious activity. You can feel a sense of tranquility here, but also enjoy wonderful moments with friends."

These statements highlight how young people balance their spiritual pursuits with their desire for leisure during temple visits. They often view temple tourism as a diverse cultural experience that satisfies both their spiritual needs and their appetite for relaxation and social interaction.

5. Discussion

This study delved into the multidimensional motivations and psychological needs driving young people's participation in temple tourism, revealing how traditional cultural symbols evoke new meanings in modern society. From cultural identity and emotional solace to the construction of social attributes, our research not only reaffirms the traditional understanding of temples as cultural symbols but also uncovers their evolving role in contemporary social dynamics. In particular, this study highlights how temples, as traditional symbols, are "recreated" in the minds of young people, aligning with their spiritual needs and social behaviors in modern contexts. This process illustrates the dynamic interplay between traditional cultural symbols and the realities of modern society, offering a nuanced understanding of their relevance and adaptability.

5.1. The Modern Transformation of Traditional Symbols: The Interplay of Culture and Individuality

Previous studies have suggested that traditional cultural heritage, particularly religious sites such as temples, primarily serve as symbols of cultural heritage and religious faith [20]. However, this study presents a more complex picture: temples are not merely spaces for cultural identity and religious activities. They have also evolved into multifaceted venues for personal expression, emotional healing, and social display among modern young people. This finding challenges the static and singular understanding of traditional cultural symbols. As symbolic spaces, temples in contemporary society retain their cultural and spiritual significance and have become tools for young people to shape their self-identity and showcase their social personas. Young people's interpretation

of temples has moved beyond traditional religious or cultural meanings. They have redefined temples as "trendy landmarks," transforming them into complex sites where culture meets individuality, tradition blends modernity, and spirituality intertwines with enjoyment.

This study addresses a core issue in cultural semiotics: the evolution of symbols in modern society is not a simple process of erosion or disappearance. Instead, symbols are continually endowed with new social meanings, becoming vessels for diverse societal needs. Eco (1979) argued that symbols are not static but can be reimagined in different historical contexts [7]. Temples as cultural symbols exemplify this "recreation" process, embodying the dynamic interaction between historical significance and contemporary relevance.

5.2. A Sanctuary for the Soul: Young People's Yearning for Inner Peace Amid Modern Anxiety

The discovery of temples as "sanctuaries for the soul" fundamentally reflects young people's growing spiritual anxiety and their desire for spaces of emotional healing in modern society. With the accelerated pace of modernization, the rhythm and pressures of social life increasingly challenge individual mental health. The significance of traditional religious and spiritual practices has not disappeared in the minds of young people; instead, under the weight of modern life's pressures, they have become more relevant. This study further reveals young people's "healing" needs during temple tourism and provides a deeper cultural analysis of this phenomenon. Young people's attraction to temples is not necessarily a return to traditional religious rituals but rather a pursuit of emotional healing—a response to the loneliness, anxiety, and fragmented nature of modern life in search of peace and belonging. Underlying this is a tension between modern anxiety and the restorative power of tradition. Modern society, focusing on individualism and functionalism, often neglects emotional needs, leaving many young people in spiritual confusion and disconnection. The sacred and tranquil nature of temples offers a space to escape the pressures of reality, serving as an "emotional refuge" for those seeking relief.

This reveals a profound societal shift: In the context of rapid social development, young people increasingly yearn to "low down" and find reconciliation with themselves and society. Temples, as cultural symbols, provide a space for this reconciliation, bridging the gap between modern fragmentation and the enduring need for spiritual and emotional connection.

5.3. Social Attributes and Cultural Consumption: The Cultural Essence of "Check-in Culture"

This study not only confirms the role of social media in shaping tourism behavior but also explores the deeper social interactions and cultural consumption drivers embedded within social media culture [16]. The engagement of young people in temple tourism transcends mere religious and cultural experiences, embodying a form of contemporary "cultural consumption." Against the growing prevalence of "check-in culture," temples have transformed into socialized cultural experience venues. Temple tourism serves not only as a means of emotional release but also as a platform for self-presentation and the construction of social identity. The

functional transformation of temples as cultural symbols is particularly striking. From their traditional role as carriers of cultural faith, they have evolved into social platforms and symbols of "cultural capital." Through social media, temples are repackaged and reinterpreted, becoming tools for young people to establish cultural identity and facilitate social interaction.

This phenomenon highlights the fluidity and adaptability of symbols in cultural consumption, particularly how traditional symbols acquire new vitality within the context of digital social networks. It represents not merely a "modernization" of traditional culture but also the active practice of young people leveraging cultural symbols to shape individual and group identities in a rapidly changing societal structure. This reimagining of temples underscores their evolving significance as dynamic and multifaceted cultural spaces in contemporary society.

5.4. The Dual Balance of Spiritual Needs and Secular Enjoyment

This study also reveals the complex psychological balance that young people seek during temple tourism: they long for spiritual solace while simultaneously pursuing secular enjoyment. Observations of their behavioral patterns indicate that the allure of temple tourism lies not only in its spiritual and cultural significance but also in its ability to provide a pleasurable and recreational experience. This dual demand reflects a profound inner contradiction: in a society dominated by materialism and consumerism, young people crave emotional comfort through cultural practices, yet they are reluctant to forgo the pleasures and social interactions of modern life.

Temples, as cultural symbols, fulfill this dual need by embodying both spiritual and secular functions. They serve as sanctuaries for inner peace and as dynamic spaces for leisure, cultural exploration, and social connection.

This contradiction highlights an important psychosocial phenomenon: the diverse demands of modern society drive traditional symbols to continually evolve beyond their original functions to accommodate the complex psychological and behavioral patterns of younger generations. In this process, temples, as cultural symbols, transcend their traditional roles. They become multifunctional cultural experience spaces that simultaneously address spiritual needs, cultural consumption, and social interaction. This transformation underscores their enduring relevance and adaptability in contemporary life.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Theoretical Significance

By integrating the theoretical frameworks of semiotics and psychology, this study deepens the understanding of young people's cultural consumption behaviors. Specifically, a detailed analysis of the phenomenon of temple tourism uncovers the multifaceted meanings of cultural symbols and their intersection with the psychological needs, behavioral patterns, and social demands of young people in modern society. Semiotics offers a lens to comprehend how young people seek identity and cultural belonging through temples as cultural symbols. Meanwhile, psychological theories, particularly those focusing on emotional healing and self-identity, help explain how young people find spiritual solace and inner peace in these traditional cultural spaces. By

combining these dimensions, this study not only extends the understanding of temples as cultural symbols but also provides new theoretical insights into young people's emotional needs and consumption behaviors regarding traditional culture in contemporary society.

Additionally, this research provides empirical support for integrating semiotics and tourism behavior studies, illustrating how symbols transform the cultural consumption of contemporary society. From "check-in culture" to "spiritual solace," temples as traditional cultural symbols satisfy young people's needs for self-identity and cultural belonging while simultaneously serving as multifunctional platforms for social identity and emotional restoration. Thus, this study offers new insights and extensions for applying semiotics and psychological theories in cultural tourism, advancing the discussion of the diversification and complexity of cultural consumption behaviors.

6.2. Practical Significance

This study offers practical recommendations for temple management and related tourism operators on attracting young visitors. Traditional religious sites often focus solely on religious experiences, but young people's interest in temples extends beyond the religious domain. To better engage this demographic, temple managers can adapt to modern societal needs by optimizing the visitor experience. For instance, incorporating interactive social media elements, providing experiences centered on emotional healing and spiritual solace, and blending traditional culture with modern trends can transform temples into "trendy landmarks." This approach caters to young people's dual desire for cultural enrichment and social engagement. Temples can also introduce innovative cultural activities, such as cultural festivals or traditional craft workshops, to attract young visitors. These initiatives can enhance their sense of participation and deepen their cultural identity, making temples dynamic spaces that resonate with the aspirations and lifestyles of the younger generation.

6.3. Research Limitations and Future Directions

The sample in this study primarily focused on young tourists, which may introduce a bias and limit the findings' applicability to other age groups, social strata, or cultural backgrounds. Future research could expand the sample to include participants from diverse age ranges, social contexts, and cultural backgrounds to obtain more comprehensive and multidimensional perspectives. Additionally, this study concentrated on temple tourism within a specific geographic region, limiting the diversity of research contexts. Future research could conduct cross-cultural comparative studies to explore variations in temple tourism across different cultural backgrounds. The cultural traditions, social structures, and religious contexts of different countries and regions may influence the motivations, behaviors, and experiences associated with temple tourism. Cross-cultural research could provide valuable insights into the global dynamics of temples as cultural symbols and their transformations in various sociocultural settings. Such a perspective would enhance our understanding of the interaction between universal and context-specific elements in cultural tourism. Moreover, this approach could further explore how traditional cultural symbols are modernized and how young people's cultural needs converge and diverge in a globalized world.

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