

Inheritance Education of Wuzhou Liubao Tea to Promote Cultural Tourism

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Abstract

Wuzhou Liubao Tea, a distinctive dark tea from Guangxi Province, China, represents more than a regional beverage—it embodies centuries of cultural knowledge, artisanal craftsmanship, and community identity. As modernization accelerates, the traditional practices surrounding Liubao Tea are increasingly at risk of being lost. This study investigates how inheritance education can be effectively implemented to preserve Liubao Tea culture while promoting cultural tourism in Wuzhou. The research was conducted in Liubao Town, Guangxi, using a qualitative ethnographic approach. Data were collected through field observations, semi-structured interviews with 40 informants, including educators, artisans, community members, and tourism professionals, as well as document analysis of educational materials and policy frameworks. Thematic analysis revealed five significant findings: the integration of tea culture into early and primary education, the development of vocational education pathways, strong school–enterprise collaboration, a direct educational impact on cultural tourism, and significant implementation challenges, including resource inequality and a lack of curriculum standardization. Results suggest that localized, experiential learning models foster intergenerational transmission and create authentic cultural experiences that enhance tourism. However, sustainability depends on unified educational frameworks, improved teacher training, and coordinated planning among the educational and tourism sectors. The study recommends expanding the model to other regions, enhancing educator support, and investigating the long-term effects on student identity and tourism development.

Keywords: inheritance education, Liubao Tea, cultural tourism, intangible heritage, Guangxi Province

1. Introduction

Wuzhou Liubao Tea, a treasured dark tea from Guangxi Province, embodies more than just a beverage it represents centuries of cultural tradition, local craftsmanship, and community identity. However, as society rapidly modernizes, the traditional knowledge and practices surrounding Liubao Tea face the risk of being lost. This research focuses on the role of inheritance education as a bridge between cultural preservation and tourism development. By integrating tea culture into educational systems, this study examines how communities can preserve their intangible heritage while fostering economic growth through cultural tourism.

1.1 Introduce the Problem

Wuzhou Liubao Tea, a traditional fermented dark tea originating from Guangxi, China, has long been regarded as more than just a local beverage; it is a symbol of community identity, pride in heritage, and artisanal mastery. However, the traditional practices that sustain the production of this unique tea are under increasing threat. As globalization and modernization transform rural societies, the customs once passed down orally or through apprenticeships are now being replaced or overlooked (Feng et al., 2023; Lin et al., 2022). The number of young people willing to commit to the intricate, time-consuming process of traditional tea production is steadily decreasing. What was once an everyday activity embedded in community life has now become a niche practice confined to a shrinking number of families and specialized producers. As Wuzhou embraces economic development, particularly through tourism, the disconnect between traditional craftsmanship and modern industry is growing (Zhang et al., 2021; Zheng & Huang, 2024).

1.2 The Importance of the Problem

The challenges facing Liubao Tea preservation are not unique to Wuzhou; they reflect a broader global concern about the sustainability of intangible cultural heritage in the modern era. However, in Wuzhou's case, the importance of this issue is magnified by the tea's strong association with regional identity and its potential role in driving cultural tourism (Lan et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2023). If left unaddressed, the erosion of tea-making traditions could lead to the commodification of the product, where tourists encounter only superficial representations stripped of cultural depth and community connection. This not only diminishes the visitor experience but also reduces opportunities for meaningful community participation and economic benefit. At the same time, the emerging tourism sector in Wuzhou offers a powerful opportunity. By incorporating Liubao Tea culture into educational programs, communities can empower young people to become active carriers of their heritage. In doing so, they can create a dynamic, living culture that contributes to tourism development while maintaining authenticity. The future of Wuzhou's tourism identity hinges on its ability to integrate heritage with innovation, and heritage education provides a practical and sustainable means to achieve this integration (Blapp & Mitas, 2019; Tiberghien et al., 2017; Thravalou & Philokyrou, 2023).

1.3 Relevant Scholarship and Hypotheses

Cultural education, particularly when applied through community-based programs and formal schooling, has proven to be an effective means of cultural transmission. Studies in related fields have shown that education rooted in local tradition not only reinforces identity and pride but also opens economic avenues, especially when aligned with tourism (Cai et al., 2025; Yousaf et al., 2025; Zhao et al., 2025). In the case of Liubao Tea, initial steps have already been taken by local institutions, such as incorporating tea culture into early childhood lessons and vocational training. These efforts reflect a growing awareness that education can serve both cultural and economic functions (LeVine & White, 2017; McGrath et al., 2015). Based on this understanding, the study proposes a key hypothesis: that structured, locally relevant inheritance education programs, whether implemented in schools, cultural centers, or community workshops, will significantly enhance the preservation of Liubao Tea practices while also strengthening Wuzhou's appeal as a cultural tourism destination. The underlying assumption is that education, when properly designed and integrated, can transform cultural heritage from a static legacy into a living, evolving resource that benefits both the community and visitors (Nag & Mishra, 2024; Zhang et al., 2025).

1.4 Research Objective

To propose guidelines for the inheritance education of Wuzhou Liubao Tea to promote cultural tourism.

1.5 Research Question

How can the inheritance education of Wuzhou Liubao Tea be effectively implemented to enhance cultural tourism in Wuzhou, Guangxi?

2. Method

This study adopted a qualitative research methodology designed to explore the educational practices surrounding the inheritance of Wuzhou Liubao Tea culture and its connection to cultural tourism development (Bi, 2024; Deng et al., 2023; Polat, 2018). The research was conducted in Wuzhou City, specifically in Liubao Town, Guangxi Province, a region deeply rooted in the production, history, and evolving cultural significance of Liubao Tea. A combination of ethnographic fieldwork, semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis was used to collect diverse, in-depth data from multiple stakeholders (Brown & Danaher, 2019; Halme et al., 2016). The aim was to develop a grounded understanding of how educational initiatives can support the inheritance of Liubao Tea traditions while enhancing cultural tourism.

2.1 Research Design and Setting

The research design was structured around three primary data collection approaches:

2.1.1 Field observations and ethnographic visits to Liubao Town Central Kindergarten, Tangping Primary School, and Wuzhou Liubao Tea Industry-Education Integration College to examine real-time tea education activities.

2.1.2 Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a total of 40 informants representing diverse community roles.

2.1.3 Review and analysis of relevant documents, including teaching materials, policy documents, tourism promotion plans, and curriculum outlines.

2.2 Informant Selection and Grouping

The sampling method employed was purposeful sampling, focusing on individuals who could provide rich, experience-based insights into tea culture, education, and tourism. A total of 40 informants were selected and grouped into three categories, as shown below:

Table 1. Participants and Sampling

Group	Number	Description	Selection Criteria
Key Information	10	Experts, policymakers, artisans, and cultural heritage bearers with authoritative knowledge of Liubao Tea culture and education	Were selected for their institutional or practical expertise (e.g., tea masters, policy officials, education administrators)
Casual Information	10	Community members including elders, youth, performers, and villagers with lived experience in Liubao Tea practices and festivals	Contributed intergenerational and experiential perspectives from local life and tea-related tourism activities
General Information	20	Tourists, media professionals, tea industry workers, and cultural researchers offering external and cross-sector perspectives	Brought valuable outsider and consumer viewpoints, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of how Liubao Tea education is perceived and experienced by broader audiences

2.3 Data Collection Methods

Data were gathered over multiple field visits across key educational and cultural sites in Liubao. The steps were as follows:

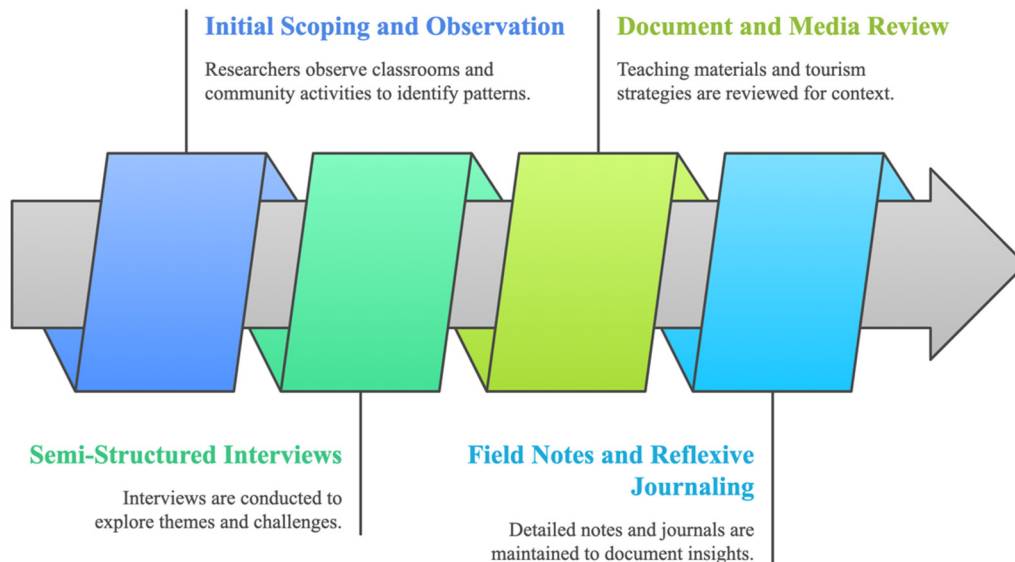


Figure 1. Data Collection Methods

The data collection process in this qualitative study incorporated four key steps to ensure comprehensive insight into the inheritance education of Wuzhou Liubao Tea. First, initial scoping and observation were conducted in classrooms and community settings to identify teaching patterns and cultural engagement. Next, semi-structured interviews were held with 40 informants, including teachers, students, tea artisans, and cultural officers, to explore educational challenges and perspectives. Field notes and reflexive journaling allowed researchers to record observations and personal reflections throughout the process. Finally, the document and media review involved analyzing teaching

materials, policy documents, and tourism development plans to contextualize educational practices within the objectives of cultural tourism.

2.4 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following these steps:

2.4.1 Data Familiarization: Transcripts, notes, and documents were repeatedly read to ensure familiarity.

2.4.2 Initial Coding: Codes were generated based on recurring themes such as “intergenerational learning,” “experiential tea education,” “community-teacher collaboration,” and “tourism engagement.”

2.4.3 Theme Development: Codes were grouped into broader categories, which formed the basis for identifying key patterns across different stakeholder perspectives.

2.4.4 Interpretation: The themes were interpreted in relation to the research objective, identifying both challenges and opportunities for integrating tea heritage education with tourism development.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided informed consent before their participation. Their identities were kept confidential, and data were anonymized in transcripts and publications. The study adhered to ethical research standards to ensure respect, privacy, and cultural sensitivity.

3. Results

Data from interviews, classroom observations, focus groups, and documents reveal both achievements and challenges. Informants emphasized that embedding Liubao Tea culture into education is not merely about preserving tradition but about building a sustainable cultural tourism ecosystem. The findings are summarized under five themes: integration into early and primary education, vocational pathways, community engagement, tourism impact, and challenges.

3.1 Integration of Liubao Tea Culture into Early Childhood and Primary Education

At the early childhood level, Liubao Town Central Kindergarten demonstrates how heritage can be introduced through playful methods. Children participate in the “Tea Fun Supermarket,” role-playing as merchants and buyers, which familiarizes them with trade concepts and the cultural significance of tea while fostering an early appreciation for tradition. Figure 2 illustrates children joyfully holding tea-related items, showing how play-based pedagogy nurtures bonds with heritage.



Figure 2. Children Joyfully Holding Tea-Related Items

Teachers noted that while children cannot yet master tea-making, they quickly absorb values of respect, sharing, and community. Parents also observed children retelling tea stories and songs at home, stimulating intergenerational dialogue and reinforcing cultural memory.

At Tangping Primary School, students engaged in tea-making activities from plucking leaves to roasting and packaging (Figure 4). These hands-on lessons not only teach technical skills but also cultivate patience, teamwork, and respect for craftsmanship. Complementary activities, such as storytelling and folk music in local dialects,

connect classroom learning to Wuzhou's broader cultural landscape, ensuring that tea culture is taught as a living practice rather than static knowledge.

In addition to practical exercises, cultural enrichment was provided through storytelling and folk music. Informants recalled how traditional songs sung in the local dialect helped students situate tea within the broader cultural and historical landscape of Wuzhou. This pedagogical strategy integrates intangible cultural heritage with formal education, ensuring that knowledge is transmitted not as static information but as living practice.

Table 2. The Key Elements of Early and Primary Education Integration

Level	Educational Activity	Cultural Element	Outcomes for Students
Kindergarten	"Tea Fun Supermarket" role play	Trade, community, sharing	Early appreciation, intergenerational dialogue
Primary School	Hands-on tea-making	Craftsmanship, patience	Skills development, cultural pride, teamwork
Both Levels	Storytelling, dialect folk songs	Oral traditions, identity	Emotional connection, cultural awareness

3.2 Establishment of Vocational Pathways

The Wuzhou Liubao Tea Industry-Education Integration College (Figure 3) represents a major step in linking education with industry. The college offers courses in tea science, marketing, cultural studies, and tourism management, designed to balance traditional knowledge with market-oriented skills. Students gain practical experience through internships and mentorships with artisans, bridging theory with real-world practice.



Figure 3. The Unveiling Ceremony of This Institution Marked a New Stage

The college offers a broad curriculum combining tea science, marketing, cultural studies, and tourism management. Informants, including students and instructors, emphasized the practical orientation of the courses. Internships with tea companies and mentorship under senior artisans bridge theoretical knowledge with industry practices. One student explained that learning marketing strategies alongside traditional tea-making provided them with a dual skill set valuable for both heritage preservation and entrepreneurial success.

From the perspective of cultural officers, vocational education ensures that the younger generation views Liubao Tea not just as a heritage but also as a viable career path. They emphasized that producing graduates skilled in both tradition and innovation strengthens Wuzhou's competitiveness in the tea industry.

The vocational pathway also includes certification programs that qualify students to serve as tea culture instructors, ensuring a multiplier effect whereby trained graduates can return to schools and communities to disseminate their knowledge. This system supports a cycle of sustainable heritage education.

Table 3. Vocational Pathway Structure

Program Area	Content Example	Outcomes for Students
Tea Science	Fermentation, blending, storage	Technical expertise, quality assurance
Marketing	Branding, tourism promotion	Business acumen, entrepreneurial opportunities
Cultural Studies	Tea history, heritage laws	Heritage appreciation, cultural literacy
Tourism Management	Event planning, hospitality	Integration with cultural tourism sector

3.3 Community Engagement and School–Enterprise Collaboration

Inheritance education extends beyond the classroom into dynamic partnerships among schools, enterprises, and cultural institutions. Informants from schools reported that collaboration with local tea enterprises enriched curriculum design. For example, students were taken on field visits to plantations, tea factories, and museums, where they observed the production chain in real settings. Such fieldwork activities deepened their understanding of how Liubao Tea connects heritage with modern economic practices.

Local artisans frequently visited classrooms to demonstrate traditional skills. Teachers observed that students were more attentive when artisans performed tasks such as hand-roasting or basket fermentation, compared to textbook-based instruction. This aligns with the principles of experiential education, where lived demonstrations foster deeper learning.

Community engagement also provided a platform for students to serve as cultural ambassadors. Informants noted how children and adolescents participated in local tea festivals, performing tea ceremonies and folk songs for tourists. These activities, often documented in public exhibitions, turned students into living conduits of cultural transmission.

An integration between school and enterprise has also led to the creation of co-branded initiatives. For instance, tea companies developed educational materials for schools, while schools provided performance groups for corporate tourism events. Both sides benefited: enterprises gained authenticity in their branding, and schools gained access to real-world platforms for cultural education.

3.4 Educational Impact on Cultural Tourism Development

Findings show that inheritance education directly enhanced Wuzhou’s cultural tourism appeal. Visitors described student-led tea performances, exhibitions, and guided demonstrations as authentic and meaningful. At major festivals, students performed tea ceremonies in traditional attire, sang folk songs, and showcased simple processing methods, adding vibrancy to events and attracting media coverage.

Figure 4 highlights students participating in tea roasting activities that also serve as tourism attractions. Tourists valued learning from students, noting that youth participation gave them confidence in the continuity of traditions. This intergenerational exchange became a distinctive feature of Wuzhou’s cultural tourism, differentiating it from more commercialized destinations.



Figure 4. Students Practice Tea Roasting

Interviews with tourists confirmed that they valued opportunities to learn directly from students. Many remarked that children’s involvement gave them a sense of optimism about the continuity of traditions. This intergenerational

interaction created a powerful impression, distinguishing Wuzhou's tourism from other destinations.

3.5 Identified Challenges

Despite these successes, several challenges were consistently reported by informants. First, there is an uneven distribution of resources. Schools in central Liubao Town had access to trained artisans and government support, while those in peripheral areas struggled with limited teaching staff and materials. This led to inconsistencies in program quality across schools.

Second, teacher training remains a bottleneck. Informants noted that many teachers lacked formal training in tea culture and had to rely on ad-hoc resources. While artisans provided some support, systematic professional development was still needed to ensure sustainability.

Third, curriculum standardization was identified as a gap. While schools experimented with various activities, there was no unified framework aligning tea culture education with regional or national standards. This made it difficult to measure learning outcomes consistently.

Finally, the integration between education and tourism strategies was not always seamless. Tourism planners sometimes viewed educational activities as supplementary rather than central, leading to missed opportunities for integration. Informants emphasized the need for joint planning committees that bring together schools, enterprises, and tourism offices to align strategies more effectively.

Table 4. Challenges in Inheritance Education

Challenge	Description	Impact
Resource Inequality	Uneven access to materials and experts	Inconsistent program quality
Limited Teacher Training	Lack of structured training for educators	Weak pedagogy, reliance on artisans
Lack of Standardization	No unified curriculum framework	Difficulty in evaluating outcomes
Weak Education–Tourism Link	Poor alignment between schools and tourism plans	Missed opportunities for integrated development

4. Discussion

The findings of this study reinforce the proposition that inheritance education serves as a viable bridge between cultural preservation and tourism development, particularly in the context of Wuzhou Liubao Tea. Consistent with the existing literature on cultural sustainability and educational transmission, integrating Liubao Tea culture into early childhood, primary, and vocational education has proven to be a strategic and practical approach (LeVine & White, 2017; McGrath et al., 2015). The study's ethnographic insights demonstrate that even age-appropriate, play-based activities can instill emotional and cultural attachment in young learners, which echoes Blapp and Mitas's (2019) assertion that authenticity in cultural experience can be nurtured from a young age through immersive practices.

Furthermore, the vocational pathways established through the Wuzhou Liubao Tea Industry-Education Integration College affirm the principle that heritage education should not be limited to preservation but also adapted to modern socio-economic frameworks (Nag & Mishra, 2024). This resonates with Kruss et al. (2015), who emphasize the importance of aligning educational initiatives with economic development to ensure sustainability. The combination of tea science, marketing, and tourism in the curriculum reflects a holistic model where students are not only heritage transmitters but also potential entrepreneurs and cultural ambassadors.

Notably, the school–enterprise collaborations and student-led performances highlighted in the results section provide concrete examples of how education-based cultural activities can directly enhance the tourist experience. These findings align with Tiberghien et al. (2017) and Zhao et al. (2025), who highlight that meaningful cultural interactions between locals and tourists significantly improve perceptions of authenticity and value. The students' role in festivals and demonstrations contributed to the intergenerational transmission of culture, while simultaneously positioning Wuzhou as a vibrant cultural tourism destination.

When compared with similar cultural heritage education models, Wuzhou's case demonstrates both unique strengths and broader transferability. For example, Fujian Province's Anxi tea education programs emphasize vocational

certification and trade skills but devote less attention to cultural storytelling or early childhood immersion (Ou & Chen, 2025; Yu & Huang, 2024). In Japan, the Way of Tea is integrated into school-based aesthetic and moral training but remains largely formalized and detached from tourism frameworks (Steele, 2014). Meanwhile, in Korea, tea etiquette is taught in cultural centers and universities, yet often without a clear connection to local tourism development (Hornig & Tsai, 2010). These international models tend to prioritize discipline and tradition preservation, whereas the Wuzhou approach combines community-based experiential learning with economic integration. This hybrid educational-tourism framework, grounded in both intergenerational transmission and commercial participation, makes the Wuzhou case particularly adaptable to other regions seeking to revitalize intangible heritage through education and tourism.

However, the study also reveals key inconsistencies and challenges that mirror broader theoretical concerns in cultural education and community-based tourism, as Polat (2018) notes, teacher preparedness and curriculum consistency are often neglected in heritage education initiatives. Similarly, this study identifies the lack of a standardized curriculum and uneven distribution of resources as significant barriers to the widespread adoption of this approach. The limited integration between tourism policy and educational programming, as observed in some schools, suggests a need for more comprehensive policy alignment and stakeholder collaboration (Thravalou & Philokyrou, 2023; Zhang et al., 2025).

5. Conclusion

The heritage education of Wuzhou Liubao Tea presents a compelling model for integrating intangible cultural heritage into both formal and informal educational settings, thereby advancing cultural tourism. By embedding localized and practice-oriented tea education into schools and community programs, tradition is revitalized as a dynamic cultural economy. However, sustaining this success requires addressing inequalities in access, enhancing teacher training, and establishing standardized educational frameworks that align more closely with tourism development strategies.

While the findings offer rich insights into the effectiveness of Wuzhou's education-tourism model, this study is not without limitations. The research is regionally focused on Liubao Town and surrounding educational institutions, which may limit the generalizability of its findings to other regions with different cultural, institutional, or socio-economic contexts. Additionally, although purposive sampling ensured a diverse range of informants, the relatively small sample size ($n = 40$) may not fully capture all community perspectives, particularly from less-represented or peripheral schools.

For future research, it would be valuable to investigate the long-term effects of tea-based heritage education on students' identity formation and career trajectories through longitudinal studies. Comparative research across other tea-producing regions in China, such as Yunnan, Sichuan, or Fujian, could identify broader trends, regional adaptations, or unique challenges in integrating tea heritage into education. Moreover, future studies could apply mixed-method approaches, combining ethnographic data with survey-based or statistical analysis to enhance representativeness. It is also recommended to examine the scalability and sustainability of school-enterprise partnerships in promoting both tourism branding and educational equity, primarily through cross-sector policy analysis. Finally, digital transformation strategies such as AR/VR-based tea culture education could be explored as innovative pathways for broadening access and engaging young people in learning about intangible heritage.

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