Article

A Comparative Study of Cultural and Arts Marketing Strategies in Chinese and American Language Museums

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Abstract: ***Background:*** As museums increasingly emphasize public engagement and visitor experience, language museums face an important challenge: how to use cultural and arts marketing to translate specialized, abstract linguistic knowledge into accessible, participatory cultural experiences while balancing knowledge dissemination with public appeal. ***Purpose:*** This study systematically compares the cultural and arts marketing strategies of the World Language Museum at Shanghai International Studies University and Planet Word in the United States, focusing on differences between their strategies and the factors underlying those differences. ***Methods:*** Using case study and comparative analysis, this study draws on the resource-based view and applies Value, Rarity, Imitability, and Organization (VRIO), the Product, Price, Place, and Promotion (4P) marketing mix, and Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis to examine the institutional resources and marketing strategies of the two museums. ***Results:*** The findings show that the two museums have developed distinct marketing approaches centered respectively on interactive experience and academic resources, and that these differences are closely related to their resource endowments and operating environments. ***Conclusion:*** Cultural and arts marketing in language museums should be grounded in each institution's own resources and mission, while seeking an appropriate balance between knowledge dissemination and public experience.

Keywords: Language museums; Resource-based view; Cultural and arts marketing; Museum marketing; Comparative study

1. Introduction

As museums increasingly emphasize public engagement and visitor experience, enhancing public appeal while fulfilling their educational mission has become an important concern in museum management (Liu, 2017). Museums not only preserve and disseminate knowledge but also shape how visitors understand and construct knowledge and cultural meaning through exhibitions and interpretative practices (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000). At the same time, museum studies have gradually shifted from a primary focus on collections and displays toward greater attention to visitor engagement, learning, and experience, making visitor experience an important consideration in museum management and exhibition design (Falk & Dierking, 2013). This issue is particularly relevant to language museums. Language museums are research and cultural education institutions that use physical objects and digital media to collect, produce, and display speech samples and related written materials of historical, cultural, and intellectual value (Ouyang, 2019). Language is not only a fundamental means of human communication and thought but also an important carrier of culture and civilization. Its complexity and abstract nature pose distinctive challenges for exhibition design and public communication in language museums (Duan & Pan, 2023). Consequently, transforming abstract linguistic knowledge into

cultural experiences that the public can understand and engage with has become an important priority for the development and public engagement strategies of language museums.

The development of digital technologies has further transformed how museums preserve knowledge, present content, and communicate with the public. Digital media are used not only in collections management but increasingly in exhibition spaces and to expand opportunities for online communication, interaction, and knowledge interpretation (Parry, 2010). For language museums in particular, audio, video, speech recognition, and interactive media can facilitate the transformation of abstract linguistic knowledge into dynamic experiences. Planet Word, for example, employs audio, augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and speech-recognition technologies to engage visitors in language learning and interactive experiences (Duan & Pan, 2023). Nevertheless, systematic research on the digital development and coordinated advancement of language museums remains limited (Yang & Wu, 2025). Existing research on museum marketing emphasizes the need to develop marketing strategies in accordance with institutional missions, resources, and audience needs, with particular attention to attracting and retaining audiences (Kotler et al., 2008). Research on museum and performing arts marketing has likewise evolved from an early emphasis on the application of marketing tools toward strategic marketing, with increasing attention to audiences and their relationships with cultural institutions (Rentschler, 2002).

Existing studies have developed a number of discussions on the role of digital technologies in improving museum display and interaction, the importance of visitor experience in enhancing public engagement, and the significance of institutional missions, resource conditions, and audience needs in museum marketing. However, much of this research has examined digitalization, visitor experience, and marketing management from relatively different perspectives, and the relationships among museums' internal resource bases, organizational contexts, and specific marketing strategies have not yet been systematically integrated or explained. In the field of specialized language museums in particular, existing studies have not sufficiently explained how different types of resources are translated into specific marketing practices across the dimensions of product, price, place, and promotion, nor have they adequately compared how such resource transformation pathways differ across national and institutional contexts. Therefore, further research is needed to examine the relationships among resource endowments, organizational contexts, and cultural and arts marketing strategies, and to explore various marketing pathways associated with different resource configurations under different institutional environments.

In view of this, this study examines the World Language Museum at Shanghai International Studies University in China and Planet Word in the United States. Although both are museums devoted to language, they differ substantially in their resource bases, operating environments, and approaches to exhibition. Planet Word emphasizes immersive, interactive, and technology-enhanced language experiences, whereas the World Language Museum at Shanghai International Studies University reflects a stronger academic orientation (Duan & Pan, 2023). This combination of cases with similar thematic orientations but different organizational contexts provides a useful basis for comparing the relationships between different resource configurations and marketing practices within a relatively consistent specialized field. It also provides an opportunity to examine the role of institutional environments and organizational characteristics in translating institutional resources into marketing strategies. On this basis, this study adopts the resource-based view as its theoretical foundation and integrates the VRIO, 4P, and SWOT frameworks to conduct a cross-

national comparison of two specialized language museums in China and in the United States, examining the relationships among resource endowments, institutional environments, and cultural and arts marketing strategies. The innovation of this study lies in integrating these three dimensions into a unified analytical framework and further examining how different resource configurations relate to differences in marketing approaches across varying organizational contexts, thereby extending the cross-cultural perspective of research on cultural and arts marketing in specialized language museums.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Cultural and Arts Marketing

Cultural and arts marketing is not simply the application of conventional commercial marketing principles to the arts; rather, it is a specialized practice shaped by the distinctive characteristics of cultural and artistic products and their consumption. As the field has developed, research on arts marketing has expanded from the application of traditional marketing tools to broader issues concerning arts consumption, consumer behavior, and the theory and practice of arts marketing (Colbert & St-James, 2014). Unlike conventional marketing approaches that generally begin with market demand, cultural and arts marketing places greater emphasis on the artistic product and its cultural value, identifying appropriate audiences for existing products and subsequently developing markets for them (Yin, 2024). Cultural and arts marketing, therefore, is concerned not merely with stimulating demand or consumption, but more importantly with establishing meaningful connections between cultural and artistic objectives and audiences. Audiences are not simply passive recipients of cultural products; through participation and experience, they also contribute to the process of value creation, thereby strengthening the relationship between artistic value and public engagement (Boorsma, 2006).

This characteristic is particularly evident in nonprofit cultural institutions such as museums. Museum marketing does not pursue the maximization of economic returns as its sole objective; rather, it makes cultural resources accessible to broader audiences through exhibitions, cultural products, branding, and multimedia communication (Li, 2024). For language museums, this challenge is further complicated by the specialized and abstract nature of linguistic knowledge. Simply "displaying knowledge" is insufficient to establish effective communication with the public. Transforming specialized content into cultural experiences that visitors can understand, experience, and engage with is therefore also an important concern of cultural and arts marketing. Accordingly, language museum marketing needs to preserve professional knowledge and its public educational value while also considering how audiences understand and engage with exhibitions and related activities. Balancing knowledge dissemination with visitor experience thus represents a significant issue for the cultural and arts marketing strategies of language museums.

2.2 Resource-Based View

The resource-based view (RBV) explains differences among organizations by focusing on their internal resources. It assumes that organizational resources are heterogeneous and that not all resources can generate sustained competitive advantages. Only resources characterized by value, rarity, and difficulty of imitation are likely to provide an important basis for maintaining long-term organizational advantages (Barney, 1991). As the resource-based view developed, the strategic value

of resources came to be examined in terms of value, rarity, imitability, and organization, giving rise to the widely used VRIO approach.

Although the resource-based view was initially developed primarily in the field of strategic management, it has subsequently been applied to explain differences in resource allocation and organizational capabilities across various types of organizations. In museums, resources include not only tangible assets, such as collections, buildings, and financial resources, but also intangible resources, particularly professional knowledge, brand reputation, academic networks, curatorial capabilities, and digital technologies. Differences in these resources and how they are organized and deployed can further shape museums' exhibition, educational, and communication activities. Accordingly, this study adopts the resource-based view as its theoretical basis and uses the VRIO framework to compare the representative resource endowments of the two museums, providing a foundation for the subsequent analysis of their cultural and arts marketing strategies.

2.3 The 4P Marketing Mix and SWOT Analysis

The 4P marketing mix is a classic framework in marketing research that examines marketing activities through four dimensions: product, price, place, and promotion (McCarthy, 1960). In the museum context, product can encompass exhibitions, educational programs, and cultural experiences; price can include admission fees, free admission, and other forms of participation; place covers both physical venues and digital platforms; and promotion includes public programs, media communication, and audience engagement. The 4P marketing mix therefore provides specific analytical dimensions for examining how museums organize and communicate their cultural offerings.

SWOT analysis examines an organization's strategic environment in terms of internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats. Its primary function is to align internal capabilities with the external environment and thereby inform strategic choices (Helms & Nixon, 2010). This study combines SWOT analysis with the 4P marketing mix to examine how the two museums develop cultural and arts marketing strategies in relation to their available resources and external environments across the dimensions of product, price, place, and promotion. This combined approach provides the analytical basis for comparing the marketing strategies of the two museums.

3. Research Design and Research Cases

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative comparative case study approach, focusing on Planet Word in the United States and the World Language Museum at Shanghai International Studies University. The two museums share similarities in thematic orientation, period of establishment, and public educational functions, while differing substantially in governance models, funding structures, exhibition approaches, and operating environments, thereby providing a meaningful basis for comparison. The study draws primarily on materials published from the opening of the two museums through October 2026, including official websites, annual reports, institutional news, official social media, exhibition and event information, and relevant academic literature. Materials were selected based on their relevance to the research questions and the verifiability of the information provided. The analysis first uses the VRIO framework to identify and compare the museums' core resources, then applies the 4P framework to examine product, price, place, and promotion strategies, and finally

employs SWOT analysis to assess internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats. Key factual information concerning resource allocation, operational support, and specific marketing activities was cross-checked across different types of publicly available sources where possible to enhance the transparency and reliability of the analysis.

3.2 Research Cases

1) Planet Word

Planet Word is an immersive museum dedicated to language. It officially opened on October 22, 2020, in Washington, D.C., and is housed in the historic Franklin School, which was built in 1869. The museum comprises three floors and 12 exhibition areas (Duan & Pan, 2023). Unlike traditional museums centered primarily on physical collections and static displays, Planet Word treats language itself as the principal subject of exhibition. Through digital technologies such as speech recognition, motion sensing, augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality (VR), it transforms abstract linguistic knowledge into experiences that visitors can hear, explore, and actively engage with (Duan & Pan, 2023). The major exhibition themes on each floor are presented in Table 1. Its exhibitions address various dimensions of language, including spoken and signed languages, vocabulary, songwriting, comedy, and public speaking, while interactive corridors and voice-activated installations encourage visitors to explore how language is created and used and how it functions in social and cultural contexts. Representative exhibits such as the "Speaking Willow" use motion sensing and multilingual audio feedback to engage visitors directly in linguistic interaction. Rather than presenting language as a static body of knowledge, Planet Word places it within concrete contexts of sound, space, and interaction through participatory exhibition design, offering a direct expression of its vision of bringing language to life.

Table 1. Exhibition Themes at Planet Word

Location	Exhibition Theme
First Floor	I'm Sold!
	Words Matter
	Immigrant Food Restaurant
Second Floor	Unlock the Music
	Joking Around
	Word Worlds
	The Library
	Lend Me Your Ears
Third Floor	First Words
	Where Do Words Come From?
	The Spoken World
	Lexicon Lane

2) World Language Museum at Shanghai International Studies University

The World Language Museum at Shanghai International Studies University (SISU) opened in December 2019 and is China's first academic museum dedicated to world language diversity (Shanghai International Studies University, 2022b). Drawing on the academic and research resources of SISU, the museum takes "world language diversity" as its central theme and embraces the motto "Words, Worlds." Grounded in linguistics and related interdisciplinary fields, it presents linguistic knowledge, promotes public education, and fosters cultural exchange. The exhibition design draws on the structural logic of the Chinese character "语" and is organized into three thematic sections: "Speaking," "Writing," and "Translating." The exhibitions address the origins and evolution of language, writing systems, linguistic communication, and translation, presenting linguistic diversity within the broader context of human culture and

intercivilizational exchange. The museum's main exhibition areas and spatial layout are presented in Table 2. Unlike museums that focus primarily on physical collections, the World Language Museum emphasizes the systematic organization and academic interpretation of linguistic knowledge. It also uses knowledge visualization and multimedia formats to make specialized content more accessible to the public. As a university museum, its functions extend to teaching, academic exchange, and the public dissemination of language and culture, reflecting its distinctive academic and public educational orientation.

Table 2. Exhibition Layout of the SISU World Language Museum

Location	Main Area
First Floor	Speaking: Communicating with the World
	Writing: Recording the World
	Translating: Interpreting the World
	Multipurpose Hall
	VIP Reception Room
Second Floor	SISU History Museum
	Temporary Exhibition Area
	SISU STORY Bookstore

4. Resource Endowments and Value Creation in Language Museums From a Resource-Based Perspective

4.1 Experiential Innovation and Resource Integration at Planet Word

From the perspective of the resource-based view, one of Planet Word's most valuable resources lies in the integration of digital technology and experience design. The museum incorporates technologies such as speech recognition, immersive projection, and augmented reality into its language exhibitions, making abstract linguistic knowledge more tangible and accessible. The interactive poetry wall in "The Library" uses voice activation and visual feedback to allow visitors to experience the rhythm and cadence of poetry through reading aloud. The "Word Worlds" exhibit uses touch-based and visual interfaces to illustrate the historical evolution of words, while installations such as the "Speaking Willow" further connect sound, space, and visitor interaction. The significance of these technologies extends beyond making exhibitions more engaging. More importantly, they reshape the relationship between linguistic knowledge and visitors, transforming language from an object to be observed and interpreted into content that can be directly experienced through participation. In terms of the value dimension of VRIO, this approach lowers the barriers to understanding specialized linguistic knowledge and responds to the growing emphasis on participation and experience in contemporary museums.

From the perspectives of rarity and imitability, however, speech recognition, projection technologies, and interactive installations are not inherently scarce resources, nor are they sufficient on their own to generate a sustained advantage. As the first language museum in North America built around a fully interactive concept, Planet Word is differentiated by its ability to integrate linguistic content, digital technologies, interactive storytelling, and spatial design into a coherent visitor experience. This resource configuration requires collaboration among professionals in content development, technology, and experience design, and has evolved through ongoing curatorial practice. At the same time, the idea of "bringing language to life" runs throughout the museum's exhibition content and spatial design, linking individual exhibits to a unified experiential theme rather than presenting them as isolated attractions. Its location in Washington, D.C., and its connection to the city's cultural and tourism environment further reinforce the context-specific advantage of these integrated resources. From the VRIO dimensions of rarity and imitability, therefore, what is difficult to replicate at Planet Word is not any

particular technology or installation but the established combination of technology, content, space, and brand positioning.

In terms of organization, Planet Word draws on multiple sources of operational support, including public donations, corporate support, and venue rentals, which help sustain its exhibitions, technology maintenance, and public programs. Interactive technologies and experience design are therefore not isolated resources; rather, they are continuously incorporated into exhibitions and public services through the museum's institutional infrastructure and funding. A more integrated assessment across the four VRIO dimensions suggests that the strategic value of Planet Word does not primarily derive from any single digital technology, but from the combination of technology, linguistic content, experience design, and organizational support. In terms of value, interactive technologies reduce the barriers to understanding abstract linguistic knowledge and enhance visitor participation. In terms of rarity, technologies such as speech recognition, projection, and augmented reality are not inherently rare; rather, greater differentiation lies in the museum's ability to continuously integrate these technologies with language learning, narrative design, and spatial experience. In terms of imitability, individual technologies can be adopted by other cultural institutions, whereas accumulated curatorial experience, content-development capabilities, brand positioning, and cross-professional collaboration mechanisms require longer-term development. Organizationally, donations, corporate support, program income, and other operational resources support exhibition renewal and public programs (Planet Word, 2024). Planet Word's resource advantage can therefore be understood more appropriately as an integrated experiential capability composed of multiple resources rather than as a purely technological advantage.

4.2 Academic Foundations and Resource Transformation at the World Language Museum of Shanghai International Studies University

In contrast, the resource base of the World Language Museum at Shanghai International Studies University is characterized by strong academic institutionalization, with its core strengths rooted in its close integration with the higher education system. One of the museum's most important resources is the authoritative academic network on which it draws. As China's first museum dedicated to world language diversity, the museum benefits from the linguistic disciplines of Shanghai International Studies University, providing continued access to research findings, expert support, and multilingual academic resources in linguistics and related interdisciplinary fields. This academic foundation not only ensures the professionalism and systematic organization of its exhibitions but also enhances the museum's credibility in language education and academic communication. Its overall exhibition structure, organized around such dimensions as the origins, genealogies, structures, writing systems, cultures, societies, education, and future of language, effectively constructs a systematic body of linguistic knowledge for the public, thereby generating substantial cognitive and educational value.

Within China's public cultural system, specialized museums centered on "world language diversity" remain relatively rare. The museum's close connection with the university's teaching and research system also enables academic resources to be continuously incorporated into exhibitions and public education. The long-term collection, organization, and accumulation of linguistic documents, cultural artifacts, and audiovisual materials further reinforce the distinctiveness of its specialized collections. At the same time, disciplinary traditions, expert networks, and academic reputation depend on sustained knowledge production and talent development and therefore cannot be established through short-term investment. As an extension of university teaching and academic exchange, the museum has consequently developed a resource base that is difficult for other types of cultural institutions to replicate.

Through its close integration with the university's governance system, the museum maintains stable access to and allocation of academic resources. Its operational objectives,

organizational structure, and resource allocation are closely aligned with the university's teaching and research missions, allowing academic expertise to be continuously mobilized for public education and cultural communication. This institutional arrangement provides considerable stability and consistency in the long-term dissemination of knowledge and the presentation of specialized academic content. From a VRIO perspective, the strategic resources of the SISU World Language Museum are primarily reflected in the combination of university-based linguistic disciplines, specialized knowledge, expert networks, and institutional support. In terms of value, these resources provide a relatively stable knowledge base for the professional interpretation of linguistic knowledge, exhibition development, and public education. In terms of rarity, its focus on world language diversity, combined with a multilingual disciplinary system, gives its resource configuration a distinctive academic character. In terms of imitability, disciplinary traditions, expert networks, academic reputation, and accumulated teaching and research resources are path-dependent and cannot easily be reproduced through short-term investment. In terms of organization, the university governance system provides relatively stable connections among teaching, research, and public cultural services. The museum's strategic value therefore lies not only in the linguistic knowledge it possesses, but also in the institutional capacity of the university to organize, transform, and continuously communicate these knowledge resources to the public.

4.3 Differences in Resource Endowments and Value Creation Between the Two Museums

A comparative analysis based on the VRIO framework shows that the core resources of both museums possess considerable value, although that value is realized in different ways. Planet Word promotes public engagement by integrating digital technologies, linguistic content, and interactive experiences, whereas the World Language Museum at Shanghai International Studies University relies on disciplinary resources and specialized knowledge to strengthen knowledge dissemination and public education. In terms of rarity and imitability, Planet Word's advantage lies not in any single technology, but in its accumulated capability to integrate content, technology, and visitor experience. By contrast, the advantages of the World Language Museum are rooted more deeply in its disciplinary foundations, professional networks, and institutional affiliation with the university. These resources are likewise cumulative in nature and difficult to replicate.

The two museums also differ in how their resources are organized and transformed into cultural value. Planet Word draws on its institutional infrastructure and funding to continuously incorporate interactive technologies into exhibitions and public engagement, while the World Language Museum relies on the university's teaching, research, and public service systems to transform academic resources into exhibitions, educational programs, and cultural communication. The VRIO analysis therefore reveals more than a simple contrast between "technological advantages" and "academic advantages." Rather, it demonstrates how the two museums draw on different organizational conditions to transform valuable, rare, and difficult-to-imitate resources into tangible capacities for cultural communication. These differences in resource transformation are associated with different choices in cultural and arts marketing strategies.

5. Comparative Analysis of Cultural and Arts Marketing Strategies From a 4P-SWOT Perspective

5.1 Differentiated Resource Transformation in Product Strategies

Planet Word's strengths lie primarily in its interactive technologies and experience design. Technologies such as speech recognition and augmented reality are integrated into interactive settings to present linguistic knowledge in an engaging form. Exhibits such as the interactive poetry wall in "The Library" and the "Word Worlds" interactive

installation do more than simply add digital technologies to conventional museum displays. Instead, participatory design changes the way linguistic knowledge is presented, transforming relatively abstract content into exhibits that visitors can actively explore and experience. This product strategy links Planet Word's existing strengths in interactive experience design with growing public demand for participatory and immersive cultural experiences, thereby transforming technological resources into exhibition content that prioritizes active visitor engagement. At the same time, technology-based exhibitions require continuous equipment maintenance, content renewal, and institutional funding, while the increasing diffusion of interactive technologies across cultural institutions may gradually reduce the distinctiveness of individual technological elements.

By contrast, the product offerings of the World Language Museum at Shanghai International Studies University are grounded more heavily in the university's linguistic disciplines, specialized knowledge, and academic resources. Its three major exhibition sections, "Speaking," "Writing," and "Translating," together with eight thematic chapters, organize exhibition content according to the internal logic of linguistic knowledge, emphasizing the completeness and scholarly depth of the knowledge system. Rather than replicating the technology-driven approach of experience-oriented museums, its product strategy focuses on making specialized knowledge more accessible to the public while retaining its academic strengths. The essential difference between the two museums' product strategies therefore lies in how cultural resources are transformed: Planet Word primarily converts technological resources into participatory experiences, whereas the World Language Museum transforms academic resources into systematically organized presentations of knowledge.

From the product dimension of the 4P framework, the differences between the two museums concern not only exhibition formats but also the ways in which cultural product value is presented. Planet Word emphasizes transforming linguistic knowledge into participatory cultural experiences through interactive and immersive design, with product value driven by active visitor engagement. The SISU World Language Museum, by contrast, draws on specialized knowledge and disciplinary resources to organize linguistic content into systematic knowledge presentations, with greater emphasis on scholarly rigor and public education. Although both museums take language as their central content, they therefore represent differentiated product approaches centered respectively on "experiencing language" and "understanding language."

5.2 Pricing Strategies and the Realization of Public Value

Planet Word offers free admission and receives part of its operational support through voluntary donations. On the one hand, this approach lowers the financial barrier to museum access; on the other, it extends visitor participation to voluntary support for the institution, creating a connection between public accessibility and community-funded support. From a SWOT perspective, free admission enhances Planet Word's public accessibility; however, its operations also rely on voluntary donations, corporate support, and other external resources. The stability of such external support therefore remains critical to the museum's continued operation.

The World Language Museum at Shanghai International Studies University also offers free admission, but its operations rely more heavily on university and institutional resources. Its free-admission policy therefore represents an extension of academic resources into public cultural services. Although both museums adopt free-admission policy, the underlying mechanisms of value realization differ. Planet Word seeks to balance public participation with operational needs by linking free access with voluntary public donations, whereas the World Language Museum promotes public access to linguistic knowledge and academic resources through institutional support. A comparison of their pricing strategies should therefore extend beyond whether admission is charged and consider the funding models and mechanisms through which public value is realized.

A closer comparison shows that although both museums offer free admission, the funding structures underlying their pricing strategies differ. Planet Word's free public access is supported by donations, corporate support, and other operational income (Planet Word, 2024), reflecting a balance between public accessibility and operational sustainability. Free admission at the SISU World Language Museum, by contrast, is more closely supported by university and institutional resources and represents an extension of academic resources into public cultural services (Shanghai International Studies University, 2022b). The same free-admission policy therefore corresponds to different funding sources and mechanisms of public value realization.

5.3 Place Strategies and Audience Access

Planet Word combines the onsite visitor experience with digital access. Its location within the urban cultural environment, interactive exhibitions, and digital platforms together form a communication network oriented toward broader public audiences. Planet Word also offers a free digital guide through Bloomberg Connects, providing floor maps, exhibit information, and public program details that allow visitors to engage with museum content before, during, and after their visit (Planet Word, 2024). In this way, the museum extends audience access beyond the physical exhibition space and connects onsite visits with continued digital engagement.

The World Language Museum at Shanghai International Studies University, by contrast, is more closely embedded in the university setting and its educational networks. Its communication channels are supported by the university's educational system and professional networks, while digital communication further extends the reach of its educational services (Shanghai International Studies University, 2023). The development of digital platforms and collaboration between museums and schools provides additional opportunities to expand the dissemination of linguistic knowledge. The two museums therefore differ in their approaches to audience access: Planet Word relies more heavily on the combination of urban cultural space and digital platforms, whereas the World Language Museum at Shanghai International Studies University builds on the university environment and educational networks to extend its reach to wider audiences.

5.4 Promotion Strategies and Audience Relationship Building

The strong visual and participatory qualities of Planet Word's interactive exhibits allow experiences within the museum to extend into online communication. Its 2024 annual report indicates that the museum expands its reach through YouTube, Bloomberg Connects, and social media, with 21,310 Instagram followers and 70,800 annual YouTube views (Planet Word, 2024). At the same time, competition for audience attention in the digital media landscape is becoming increasingly intense. Whether experiential content can maintain its distinctive appeal also depends on the continuous renewal of exhibition content and communication approaches.

Audience relationships at the World Language Museum at Shanghai International Studies University are more closely rooted in educational and professional communities. Through academic conferences, collaboration between museums and schools, and educational programs, the museum maintains ongoing connections with these groups. The museum extends the university's academic resources to primary and secondary education through programs such as "World Culture Expo" and "A Multilingual World" (Shanghai International Studies University, 2023). It also promotes outreach through initiatives such as the "Mobile Museum on Campus" (Shanghai International Studies University, 2022a). These educational and academic networks provide the museum with a relatively stable foundation for communication, although a communication model centered on the university setting and professional networks may also limit its reach among broader public audiences.

5.5 Integrated 4P-SWOT Comparison

The preceding analysis shows that the 4P and SWOT frameworks perform different but connected functions in this study. The 4P framework identifies the specific marketing practices adopted by the two museums across product, price, place, and promotion, while SWOT provides a further basis for interpreting the internal capabilities and external environments associated with these practices. SWOT is therefore not treated as a separate classification added to the 4P analysis, but as a framework for understanding why different marketing practices present different strengths, constraints, and development opportunities under particular resource and institutional contexts.

For Planet Word, strengths in interactive technology, experience design, and digital communication correspond closely with its experience-oriented product strategy and digitally oriented promotional activities. At the same time, the continuing need for content renewal, technology maintenance, and external support creates internal constraints, meaning that free public access and experience-based products depend on consistent funding. The development of digital media, urban cultural tourism, and public demand for immersive experiences provides opportunities for its place and promotion strategies, whereas the diffusion of interactive technologies across cultural institutions and increasing competition for audience attention may weaken differentiation.

The SISU World Language Museum, by contrast, draws its major strengths from disciplinary resources, specialized knowledge, expert networks, and university support. These resources correspond with its knowledge-oriented products, free public-service model, and education-centered promotional networks. Although the university environment and professional networks provide a relatively stable foundation for communication, they may also constrain access to broader public audiences. The expansion of digital platforms, school partnerships, and public cultural education therefore provides important opportunities to broaden its place and promotion strategies. The differences between the two museums can consequently be understood as different strategic configurations associated with internal resources, institutional constraints, and external environments, rather than as the result of any single marketing instrument or resource factor. Their comparative SWOT characteristics are summarized in Table 3.

The marketing strategies of the two museums are not isolated choices within the individual dimensions of product, price, place, or promotion, but are closely related to the ways in which each institution organizes and uses its existing resources. Planet Word combines experience design, digital communication, and diversified operational support to form a marketing system that prioritizes broad public participation and sustained audience engagement, whereas the SISU World Language Museum combines academic knowledge, university networks, and educational partnerships to form a marketing system that emphasizes knowledge communication and public education. Strengths in one marketing dimension may also create opportunities and constraints in other dimensions. For example, a strong reliance on interactive technology can enhance visitor participation, but it can also increase the need for continuous content updates and institutional funding, while a strong academic foundation can enhance professional credibility but may require additional communication channels to reach broader public audiences. Therefore, the strategic value of cultural and arts marketing lies not only in selecting appropriate marketing tools, but also in aligning these tools with institutional resources, audience characteristics, and operational capacities so that different marketing activities can support one another within a coherent overall strategy.

Table 3. SWOT Comparison of the Two Language Museums

SWOT Dimension	Planet Word	SISU World Language Museum
Strengths	Integration of interactive technology, experience design, and linguistic content; strong digital communication	Strong disciplinary resources, specialized knowledge, academic networks, and university support

SWOT Dimension	Planet Word	SISU World Language Museum
Weaknesses	High requirements for technology maintenance and content renewal; reliance on external support	Communication channels concentrated in university and professional networks; broader public reach may be relatively limited.
Opportunities	Growing demand for immersive cultural experiences; expansion of digital media and cultural tourism	Development of digital platforms, museum-school collaboration, and public cultural education
Threats	Diffusion of interactive technologies may reduce differentiation; increasing competition for audience attention	Increasing competition for public attention; rising expectations for interactive and digital experiences

6. Conclusion

6.1 Research Conclusions

Drawing on the resource-based view and integrating VRIO, the 4P marketing mix, and SWOT analysis, this study compares the cultural and arts marketing practices of the World Language Museum at Shanghai International Studies University and Planet Word in the United States. The findings show that although both museums focus on the exhibition and communication of language and culture, they display clear differences in product presentation, public access, communication channels, and promotional approaches. These differences are closely associated with their respective internal capabilities, institutional characteristics, and operating environments.

More specifically, the World Language Museum at Shanghai International Studies University draws on the disciplinary resources, specialized knowledge, and academic networks accumulated within the university. Its exhibitions prioritize the systematic organization and scholarly interpretation of linguistic knowledge, while free admission reflects a strong public educational orientation. Its place and promotion activities rely primarily on the university's educational system, academic activities, and collaboration networks between museums and schools. Planet Word, by contrast, emphasizes integrating interactive technologies, experience design, and linguistic content, transforming abstract linguistic knowledge into participatory cultural experiences. It further broadens public access through free admission, social support, digital guides, and social media communication.

From a resource-based perspective, these differences can be understood as different forms of resource transformation under distinct resource configurations and organizational contexts. Planet Word focuses on transforming experiential resources into public engagement and digital communication, whereas the World Language Museum at Shanghai International Studies University emphasizes transforming academic resources into knowledge dissemination and public education. This study is based primarily on a qualitative comparison of publicly available materials. Accordingly, the relationships identified here should be interpreted as explanatory associations derived from the case evidence rather than as causal relationships established through formal causal inference. Within these evidentiary limits, the findings suggest that cultural and arts marketing in language museums is more appropriately developed in accordance with each institution's internal capabilities, institutional mission, cultural content, and target audiences, rather than through the simple replication of an existing model.

6.2 Practical Implications

The comparison suggests that language museums should develop cultural and arts marketing strategies based on their own resource foundations and institutional positioning rather than simply replicating existing models. For academic language museums, such as the World Language Museum at Shanghai International Studies University, maintaining the accuracy, scholarly rigor, and systematic organization of knowledge while making specialized content more accessible through interactive storytelling, auditory experiences, and participatory displays. Universities can also

leverage their strengths in teaching, research, international exchange, and human resources to transform academic achievements into exhibitions, courses, and educational programs for the public.

For museums that emphasize visitor experience, such as Planet Word, interactive technologies can enhance public engagement and the quality of the visitor experience, but technological innovation alone cannot replace linguistic knowledge and cultural content. As immersive and digital exhibitions become increasingly common across cultural institutions, the distinctive advantages created by technological formats alone may gradually weaken. Sustained public appeal therefore depends more on the effective integration of technology, content, and narrative. While continuing to update interactive formats, museums should also strengthen the intellectual content of exhibitions so that experiential and educational value can be combined more effectively.

More broadly, both types of museums need to establish stronger connections between their existing core strengths and the needs of their target audiences. Academic museums can enhance public participation and digital communication while maintaining scholarly depth, whereas museums that emphasize visitor experience can strengthen the intellectual depth of exhibition content while preserving a high level of participation. Language museum marketing should therefore not aim to imitate a single successful model but should develop product, price, place, and promotion approaches that correspond to each institution's internal capabilities, mission, target audiences, and strategic trajectory.

6.3 Research Limitations and Future Research

This study employs a comparative qualitative approach based on two cases and relies primarily on publicly available museum materials and relevant literature. The limited number of cases and data sources, together with the overlap between national differences and institutional characteristics, makes it difficult to fully distinguish the effects of cultural and institutional factors. Moreover, both museums have operated for a relatively short period, making it difficult to observe changes in their operations and marketing strategies over time. The absence of direct audience data further limits the assessment of the actual outcomes of the marketing strategies examined.

Future research could expand to language museums across diverse national and institutional settings, integrating surveys, interviews, and visitor behavior data to assess impacts on experience, knowledge acquisition, and engagement, and examine whether AI and emerging technologies enhance knowledge dissemination and public participation.

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