

# Old Han Kou of China: Collective memory and space for nostalgia in the context of contemporary society



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**Abstract** This study explores the urban space and historical development changes in Old Han Kou within the context of modernization, focusing on the collective memory and spatial transformations of old buildings in Old Han Kou from the late Qing Dynasty colonial period to the modernization era of New China. Furthermore, it delves into the nostalgic space consumption related to the collective memory of Old Han Kou. This research primarily employs qualitative research methods, utilizing literature analysis, questionnaire surveys, and in-depth interviews to collect extensive data and conduct systematic induction, analysis, and inference. The study's findings reveal that Old Han Kou is not merely a physical space but also carries profound historical, cultural, and emotional values. It holds irreplaceable significance for nostalgic spaces and collective memory. It serves as a bridge connecting the past for contemporary individuals while also providing valuable resources for the sustainable development of communities and society. Experiencing nostalgic spaces through consumption offers a new perspective for gaining a deeper understanding of the historical, cultural, and spatial values of Old Han Kou. Moreover, it provides robust theoretical support for future preservation and inheritance efforts.

**Keywords:** Old Han Kou, collective memory, nostalgic space consumption, contemporary society

## 1. Introduction

Old Han Kou, located in the heartland of China at the confluence of the Yangtze and Han rivers, enjoys a strategic geographical advantage and is a pivotal hub for land and water transportation within inland China. The city's development has followed the course of the Yangtze and Han rivers, which, due to geographical factors, has endowed it with exceptional geographical characteristics (Liang & Zhu, 2005). Old Han Kou, owing to its prime location and thriving market environment, attracted significant attention from foreign nationals. A substantial influx of Western immigrants introduced Western culture and ideas to the city. Simultaneously, Old Han Kou enticed imperialist powers to establish concessions here, driven by the pursuit of lucrative economic interests. The Opium War, for instance, saw countries like Britain employing gunboat diplomacy to breach China's feudal fortresses, compelling the Qing government to grant freedom of residence to the British in several treaty ports (Zhang & Li, 2012). This marked the formation of concessions and brought Western culture and an international ambiance to Old Han Kou.

Old Han Kou has experienced multiple significant epochs throughout its history, each reflecting the region's political, social, economic, and cultural developments. Old Han Kou possesses rich geographical, political, and economic resources in a pivotal zone, with its historical evolution and openness closely tied to its unique geographical location. During the semi-colonial and semi-feudal period in the mid to late 19th century, Hankou experienced foreign incursions, resulting in the establishment of concessions by various nations. These concessions accelerated Hankou's modernization and facilitated the fusion and collision of Chinese and Western cultures. During the era of democratic revolution in the early to mid-20th century, Hankou's concessions witnessed China's transition from a feudal system to democracy (Zhang & Li, 2012). During this period, foreign influence in the concessions gradually diminished, significantly changing Hankou's social structure and cultural atmosphere. Following the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Old Han Kou was officially reintegrated. In the subsequent decades, Hankou underwent extensive changes in its social structure and economic system. Simultaneously, its rich historical and cultural heritage received better preservation and inheritance. However, as Old Han Kou embarked on the path of modernization, many traditional buildings and streets were reconstructed or demolished, prompting concern in society about the loss of historical and cultural heritage. In the backdrop of modernization, there has been a growing urgency among people to preserve traditional culture and history. Entrepreneurs and developers seized upon this market demand, incorporating nostalgic elements to offer consumers unique products and services (Dongye, 2007). For example, old buildings have been transformed into distinctive hotels and restaurants. This consumption model, rooted in



historical and cultural contexts, not only fulfills the emotional needs of citizens for cultural history but also brings new opportunities and vitality to the city.

The main research focuses on how the spatial form of old Hankou buildings formed, developed, and changed throughout history. It explores how different historical backgrounds contributed to the creation and construction of controversial places like concessions. Additionally, it examines the economic, political, and cultural agendas hidden behind the distinctly different collective memories associated with the concessions. The study also looks into how various social groups participate in the construction of collective memories related to the concessions, shaping the collective memory of old Hankou and Wuhan. Furthermore, it considers local memories and nostalgic space consumption regarding the old Hankou concessions. Finally, using the Jiangnan Museum as an example, the research illustrates how collective memory is strategically presented.

## 2. Research Purpose

This study aims to delve deeply into the natural space evolution of Old Han Kou and its close relationship with historical development. Through an in-depth analysis of the collective memory and spatial transformations from the late Qing Dynasty colonial period to the modernization era of New China, it seeks to reveal the underlying socio-cultural significance and historical value. Additionally, this research will specifically focus on the collective memory and nostalgic spaces within the Han Kou Concession, further exploring the importance of Old Han Kou as a form of nostalgic space consumption. It will also examine its impact and value concerning collective memory, nostalgic spaces, and cultural heritage preservation.

## 3. Literature Review

Since the 1960s, European and American countries have initiated research on preserving historical cities and traditional historical areas. They have formulated numerous laws and regulations to preserve cultural heritage in historical areas during urban development. The "Athens Charter," a landmark document on urban planning, was established at the Athens Conference and reflected the viewpoints of the "new architecture" movement, especially that of Le Corbusier from France. It was the first official document that explicitly emphasized the protection of "buildings and historical landmarks." The Charter states that historic neighborhoods and ancient buildings should not be demolished but should be appropriately protected (Gropius, 1923).

Subsequently, on May 31, 1964, the Second International Meeting of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, which dealt with historical architectural heritage, passed resolutions in Venice. The Charter acknowledged the importance and role of historical architectural heritage, considering it a common heritage of humanity and a witness to history. It further emphasized that preserving historical buildings should maintain their original artistic and historical characteristics. The "Machu Picchu Charter" in December 1977, based on the Athens Charter, was discussed with contributions in four languages, and it presented the Machu Picchu Charter, containing several requirements and declarations. This extended the scope of protection not only to historical buildings but also to their surrounding environments. As a result, historical neighborhoods include building complexes, ancient villages, and towns. In October 1987, further provisions were adopted during the 8th General Assembly of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in Washington. It defined historical cities and places in international law, encompassing urban areas, towns, historic centers, residential areas, and their environments, regardless of their size. The sixth article of the Charter expresses an attitude toward changes in historical areas: "The protection of historical sites should not only focus on the sites themselves but also consider their environment. Any new construction or renovation that alters the original features and character should be restricted." This demonstrates their emphasis on the integrity of historical neighborhoods while ensuring that the buildings in the area retain their traditional styles and cultural characteristics. However, due to changes in residents' daily lives and economic activities, historical neighborhoods inevitably generate new demands, leading to some alterations.

Regarding protecting historical sites, France's Historic Sites Protection Law is considered the most representative and authoritative. France has different laws for historical buildings and historical areas to meet various protection needs. This provides a benchmark for other countries to develop more detailed and specific regulations based on their situations. Modern urban architecture in Asia is closely related to its colonial history. From the 1870s, powerful European and American nations utilized their military technological advantages to colonize most parts of Asia. "Western-style architecture was introduced as a symbol of technology and prosperity." Based on their own cultural backgrounds and Western aesthetics, Asian countries developed their unique modern architectural styles. In this context, Japan was the first Asian country to start research on the preservation and reuse of modern architecture. From the 1950s to the 1980s, Japan established the National Catalog of Modern Architecture. Subsequently, modern architecture was protected as a national cultural heritage. In contrast, many modern buildings in other Asian countries were long neglected due to their association with colonial history.

In China, there has been a growing body of research on the formation and transformation of modern Old Han Kou society in Chinese universities. These studies primarily approach the topic from a historical perspective, focusing on popular

culture during the modernization process of Old Han Kou. Some research has explored the relationship between urban space and society in Old Han Kou from a sociological perspective. For example, Wang Hanwu's work, "Five Foreign Concessions in Hankou," categorizes the existing buildings in Old Han Kou (not limited to the concession area but primarily within it) from an architectural perspective, providing detailed analysis of their developmental evolution, which has had a significant influence in academic circles (Wang, 2017). Other studies have investigated existing buildings' functions and current status, examining their survival, renovation, and updates. Local history experts have also authored articles and works on landmark buildings, urging academia to pay attention to the hybrid products resulting from the cultural exchanges between China and the West in this unique historical context, with Old Han Kou representing modern urban culture. In Zhu Shiming's study as a local scholar in "Old Houses in Hankou," (Zhu, 2008) unprecedented attention is given to oral accounts of ordinary people. However, it can be observed that research on concession architecture has yet to form a comprehensive theoretical framework, primarily due to issues such as a lack of historical records and inconsistencies in existing historical materials. As a result, studies on Old Han Kou buildings often remain "architecture-centric," meaning existing research tends to focus on the structures and forms of the buildings themselves, lacking exploration into the real-life experiences within the buildings and the broader socio-cultural context. There is also a notable need for more doctoral theses exploring the topic. In general, official and academic attention to the architectural aspects of Old Han Kou is on the rise.

Nevertheless, research related to the spatial aspects of Old Han Kou is still in its infancy and offers significant room for improvement. Several areas for improvement can be identified in the current state of Old Han Kou's research:

- 1) There needs to be more research outcomes, significantly trailing behind the research outcomes related to the Shanghai and Tianjin concessions.
- 2) Regarding research depth, most studies merely provide macro-level explorations of concession history, needing more in-depth analyses of specific historical phenomena, buildings, and events within the concessions.
- 3) From a theoretical perspective, the relevant research appears scattered and fragmented, without a complete theoretical framework.
- 4) Concerning the composition of researchers, most are local scholars from Wuhan, with insufficient cross-comparisons with concessions in other parts of China.
- 5) From the perspective of research angles, although some scholars have begun studying the Shanghai and Tianjin concessions from literary, sociological, anthropological, and interdisciplinary perspectives, existing research on the Hankou concession still needs to be expanded to the domains of history and architecture.

Additionally, many experts knowledgeable about the Hankou concession are enthusiasts or ordinary individuals. For instance, a significant volume of articles in Wuhan's historical records is contributed by individuals who experienced life in the concessions or those with in-depth knowledge of Hankou during the concession period. The micro-level depiction of historical concessions has yet to receive widespread academic attention. During field investigations, the author had the fortune to meet many literature and history enthusiasts. It was discovered that many of these enthusiasts need to be more professional academic researchers, yet their knowledge of the minutiae of the old concessions in Hankou is astounding. However, more sufficient communication and information dissemination channels are needed between amateur enthusiasts and academic researchers.

#### **4. Methodology**

In order to further investigate "Collective Memory and Nostalgic Space Consumption in the Context of Modernization of Old Han Kou Architecture," a qualitative research approach can be employed. Firstly, on-site investigations will be conducted to gain firsthand insights into the history and current state of Old Han Kou. Secondly, a questionnaire survey will provide extensive attitudinal and experiential data, shedding light on actual effects. The research will delve into both success stories and issues, and opinions and sentiments from residents and businesses will be gathered through interviews. SPSS data analysis will be used to quantify the benefits of nostalgic space consumption.

##### *4.1. Literature Analysis*

In the on-site investigation of Old Han Kou, researchers visited 30 representative historical buildings and interacted with 50 residents. Around 100 old photographs from 1840 to 2020 and 20 relevant documents were also collected.

##### *4.2. Interview Method*

In-depth interviews were conducted with three residents, two business owners, and two tourists. Three residents mentioned that they spent their childhood in Old Han Kou and have deep emotional connections to the area. Two business owners stated that they chose to open their shops in Old Han Kou partly because of the area's history and culture, which attracted many customers. Two tourists expressed their memorable experiences.

##### *4.3. Questionnaire Survey Method*

A questionnaire survey was conducted among elderly individuals, resulting in 300 valid responses. Among them, 60% of respondents expressed strong nostalgia for Old Han Kou; 70% stated that they visit Old Han Kou at least once a month, primarily for nostalgia and cultural experiences; and 80% believed that the elderly's stories are related to their collective memory.

#### 4.4. Data Analysis Method

After conducting an in-depth analysis of the questionnaire data using SPSS 24.0 we discovered correlations between nostalgic space consumption in Old Han Kou and the respondents: Frequency of Visits: The statistical analysis of visit frequency revealed that, on average, respondents visit Old Han Kou 3.5 times per month. Such a high visit frequency highlights the special place that nostalgic space holds in the hearts of the respondents. Age and Nostalgia: Respondents with nostalgic feelings for Old Han Kou have an average age of 40. This data reveals an interesting phenomenon: not only do the older generation have deep emotions for Old Han Kou, but younger people also have a strong attachment to this nostalgic space. Linear Regression Analysis: In further analysis, we found positive correlations between respondents' age, education level, visit frequency, and nostalgic feelings toward Old Han Kou. Specifically, the correlation coefficient between visit frequency and nostalgia was high, indicating that the more frequently we visit Old Han Kou, the deeper our nostalgia.

### 5. Results

#### 5.1. The Significance and Value of Collective Memory in Old Han Kou

Old Han Kou effectively preserves the city's collective memory by recreating a landscape of Republic of China-era architectural charm that represents Old Han Kou's culture. In today's rapid development, utilizing old buildings has become the best way to maintain the city's appearance and cultural heritage. Historical buildings, in particular, can satisfy people's desire to reminisce and ignite their historical imagination. Architectural landscapes, as symbols of historical culture within the microcosm of the city, can instantly awaken people's collective memory of the city through intuitive visual impact. Hankou Good Temple is such a "double focus" carrier of collective memory. In addition, local identity is mainly implemented through local memory. Memory is an ongoing dialogue about the material and symbolic aspects of the past, and collective memory is constructed and transmitted through shared knowledge, such as historical events on the streets (Figure 1). Old Han Kou's items include old items that possess historical or collective memories of the city. These nostalgic items are constructed following the unique cultural characteristics of Hankou in the 1930s and 1940s and are highly restored. These items are filled with nostalgic emotions. They encompass artifacts from specific historical eras within collective memory, such as unique modes of transportation (such as rickshaws, Republic of China-era trams, and old bicycles), as well as items that were common in the past and held special significance for people, such as vintage phonographs, old records, and antique cameras. While these items may not be as conspicuous as buildings, they guide visitors' imagination of themselves being transported to a bygone era through their visual impact, eliciting nostalgia and imagination among consumers. Items imbued with characteristics and elements of the past are more likely to evoke nostalgia among consumers, as they represent a part of the past that holds deeper meaning for people. This approach helps preserve the city's collective memory while satisfying people's yearning and emotional needs for the beautiful times of the past. This underscores the importance of collective memory in urban culture and historical continuity.



Figure 1 Han Kou Good Temple.

Old Han Kou crafts experiential spaces that rely on stories, emotions, settings, and activities to embody the Republic of China's cultural ambiance, representative of Old Han Kou. This process encompasses symbols like landscapes and objects

capable of expressing nostalgic emotions, all while integrating retro decorations to create scenes rich in cultural and nostalgic sentiments. Cultivating this temporal ambiance allows visitors to reminisce, fostering emotional resonance within the collective memory. The allure of this "scene-based" experience lies in its transformation of participants from the "masses" into "individuals," paying close attention to the psychological and emotional needs of each person, immersing them continually in scenes that elicit emotions. Multiple scene-based spaces have been created, including "Residential Alleys," "Han Kou Docks," "Snack Streets," "Hankou Streets," "Hankou Marketplaces," and "Dock Piers." These spaces extensively employ landscape vignettes and related installations, reprising elements in places like the pavement, tramways, traffic signals, rickshaws, straw piles, and more. In these scenes, one can encounter commonplace elements from Old Han Kou's streets of the 20th century, such as pawnshops, teahouses, rice shops, and more, invoking collective memories.

The modern urbanization of Old Han Kou has brought about significant population migrations and the concurrent disappearance of architectural structures and sites tied to the city's collective memory. The urban memories of residents have gradually faded with urban development, and the memories of out-of-town tourists about the destination city are even more limited. The rapid pace of urban renewal and the fast-paced urban lifestyle create anxiety and unease, exacerbating the loss of a sense of place. People often construct a sense of place to meet their emotional needs to alleviate this anxiety and emotional loss. Creating urban nostalgic spaces is a product of urban development, satisfying the modern person's sense of belonging and nostalgia, as well as their emotional identification needs and values.

The construction of these nostalgic spaces holistically preserves urban memory, helping people generate emotional resonance when reminiscing. The experience of nostalgic phenomena refers to the process wherein people, after a nostalgic trigger, experience nostalgia and engage in emotional reflection about history. When visitors are deeply immersed in nostalgic spaces, they cannot easily detach themselves from that moment. Instead, they continually experience the impact of nostalgic emotions. This phenomenon reflects the significance and value of urban nostalgic spaces in meeting modern individuals' emotional needs and sense of identity.

## 5.2. Nostalgic Space Consumption in Modernized Old Han Kou

Urban spatial memory forms the foundation of nostalgia, and the development of nostalgic emotions originates from individual personal memories. Therefore, a person feels nostalgia because of their memories of the past. Urban nostalgia is a part of urban memory and a collective resonance of the same community regarding past urban events. Nostalgic emotions are inseparable from memory; they represent a unique form of memory that bridges individual recollections and urban historical memories. There is a mutual interaction between nostalgic emotions and the memory of space, as nostalgic emotions are imbued with spatial attributes through the arrangement of material environments and symbolic symbols. Space can be considered a container for carrying memories, storing and expressing nostalgic emotions through the environment, landscapes, and cultural elements within space, thereby creating what is known as "memory nostalgic space," providing a place for consumers to experience emotional resonance.

Through the analysis of interviewee texts, it can be observed that in Old Han Kou, the construction of nostalgic spaces is primarily undertaken by urban administrators and planners, who act as the custodians of urban memory. They create urban nostalgic spaces based on historical facts of Old Han Kou, aiming to meet people's needs and continue the city's historical heritage. For example, one operator (J1) mentioned, "By creating a nostalgic place, we hope to assist urban residents in reconnecting with their memories of Old Han Kou." In summary, the manifestation of urban memory in the construction of nostalgic spaces can be seen in the following three aspects:

1) Environmental Construction: Managers of nostalgic spaces create a specific atmosphere and environment, making it feel like visitors have traveled back in time. This includes setting specific lighting, playing particular music, and even arranging the layout of shops to recreate the ambiance of Old Han Kou in the 20th century, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in it.

2) Landscape Construction: Based on the historical memory and relevant data of the city, managers create a range of landscapes, including building objects, to preserve and showcase the city's historical memory. These landscapes encompass architectural scenery, cultural scenery, nostalgic symbols, and commercial landscapes, faithfully reproducing the urban landscapes stored in people's memories.

3) Cultural Construction: Managers of nostalgic spaces build upon the culture of Old Han Kou to create a place that perpetuates its unique cultural identity. They strive to pass on the cultural characteristics of Old Han Kou, including places frequented by residents, to showcase the city's most authentic cultural atmosphere.

Old Han Kou, as a Nostalgic Space, carries the historical memories of the city. Urban nostalgic spaces can be regarded as a part of urban memory, which either remains or is intentionally created as cities evolve and modernize rapidly. To enhance this feeling of going back in time, many shop names are quite nostalgic. For example, the most famous "Hankou Memories" restaurant and "Old Time" cafe on Lihuangpi Road (Figure 2). Traditionally, preserved nostalgic spaces are referred to as "memory environments," while modern ones intentionally constructed for nostalgia are called "memory places," with Old Han Kou being considered a "memory place." Creating nostalgic spaces does not merely replicate the past but invokes the city's historical memories by recreating the sense of the era and nostalgic symbols. Sensory experiences are the most direct

way for individuals to perceive space, and urban memory carriers stimulate people's inner emotions through sensory experiences. In modern society, sensory experiences have become the primary means for people to acquire and process information. People communicate through sensory perceptions and cultural symbols, which can reproduce and convey nostalgic emotions. Research shows that urban memory carriers, as a form of nostalgia expression, not only inherently store urban memories but also directly stimulate emotions in visitors through sensory experiences, evoking their recollections of the past.



**Figure 2** Han kou "Old Time" cafe on Lihuangpi Road.

Through textual analysis, it is evident that nostalgic spaces primarily evoke nostalgic emotions in visitors through three aspects: promotion, perception, and interaction. Nostalgic environments, landscapes, and culture are intimately related to urban memory, constituting a part of urban memory carriers. The perception of visitors regarding the environment, landscapes, and culture within nostalgic spaces plays a crucial role in awakening nostalgic emotions. The environment provides clues for forming nostalgic memories, influencing people's behavior and cognition. Nostalgic environments can stimulate nostalgic emotions, enhancing visitors' attractiveness and experiential aspects. Once visitors enter nostalgic spaces, they are directly stimulated by the environmental ambiance, quickly immersing themselves in the nostalgic atmosphere and gaining a unique experience. Interaction is highly significant in spatial experiences, strengthening people's actual engagement. Interaction modes in nostalgic space experiences mainly include consumption and participation in activities. These interactive modes can awaken nostalgic emotions and intensify people's interactive experiences within the nostalgic space, allowing them to engage more deeply.

With the continuous development of globalization and modern urbanization, contemporary society has witnessed an upgrade in consumption, propelling the development of new-era consumption patterns. People's living standards have continuously improved, resulting in faster consumption rhythms and diversified consumption methods. Traditional functional consumption has transitioned into non-functional consumption, making modern spatial consumption more than merely exchanging goods and services. It is now filled with sensory and emotional factors. This shift has endowed spatial consumption culture with significant importance, and the emergence of urban nostalgic spaces is a product of this consumption trend. Nowadays, urban nostalgic spaces have evolved into comprehensive consumption venues that cater to consumers' diverse needs, including symbolic consumption, cultural consumption, culinary consumption, and event-based consumption. Under the packaging and positioning in the market, nostalgia is no longer just an imagination but a culturally valuable existence with commercial significance. The emergence of these nostalgic venues brings consumers closer to nostalgia and facilitates the transformation and experience of consumers' nostalgic emotions.

In this study, the fourth section of the questionnaire was placed on a Likert five-point scale using SPSS 24.0, according to the interview statistics (Table 1) and the principal component analysis was conducted as follows:

**Table 1** Interview statistics.

Numbering	Sex	Be from	Age	Educational background	Occupation
J1 Operator	Male	Hankou	59	Junior college	Manage
J2 Operator	Female	Zhengzhou	50	Senior high school	Manage
YB1Local resident	Male	Hankou	25	Undergraduate course	Teacher
YB2Local resident	Male	Hankou	30	Undergraduate course	Finance an
YB3Local resident	Female	Hankou	38	Master	Journalist
YW1Foreign tourist	Male	Changsha	22	Undergraduate course	Pupil
YW2Foreign tourist	Male	Guangzhou	35	Senior high school	Freelance



When the average score on the scale exceeds 3.5, the respondents agree with the related viewpoints. The survey yielded a highest score of 4.1398 and a lowest score of 3.7742. This demonstrates the irreplaceable role of nostalgia in sparking and reconstructing collective memory. Overall, with an average score above 3.5, this further confirms the positive impact of older adults on identifying locations related to collective memory. Not only residents but also out-of-town tourists strongly identify with Hankou's nostalgic experience, as evidenced by the highest average score. In the analysis, we divided the environmental aspects of nostalgia spaces into historical and leisure environments. The historical environment is what visitors perceive when they first enter the nostalgia space, and it plays a decisive role in visitors' initial impressions and overall experiences. The leisure environment gradually influences visitor interaction and participation as their experience deepens. We conducted correlation analysis and multiple linear regression to demonstrate the enhancing effect of nostalgia space environments on local identification. Correlation analysis assesses the strength of the relationship between two or more variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient is used to measure the linear correlation between variables. We can see that various dimensions of the nostalgia space environment are significantly positively correlated with local identification.

Furthermore, in both environmental categories, the historical environment has a more significant impact on identifying locations related to collective memory than the leisure environment. Evaluating the data's quality, reliability, and validity is crucial. In practical research scenarios, the alpha reliability coefficient is the most commonly used reliability test method. Generally, when the reliability coefficient of a scale exceeds 0.7, it indicates good reliability. In this study, the Cronbach's Alpha value of the local identification scale reached 0.858, indicating the high reliability of the data. Content validity relies on the sufficiency of theoretical support and empirical evidence. The scale dimensions in this study were based on previous literature and inspired by Ming Liu et al.'s 2012 study on local identification in Foshan. Structural validity was assessed using the KMO test and Bartlett's sphericity test. The KMO value for location identification was 0.813, more significant than 0.7. Bartlett's sphericity test had a significance value of 0, lower than the significance level of 0.05, demonstrating excellent validity and suitability for factor analysis.

Principal Component Analysis was employed to conduct factor analysis on the local identification scale and rotate for maximum variance. Considering that the scale was designed with three dimensions, we set three factors as the limit when extracting factors. Among them, PI1-PI2 represents the cognitive dimension, PI3-PI5 represents the emotional dimension, and PI6-PI7 represents the behavioral intention dimension. The table 2 below presents the weights of each factor, rotated explained variances, and cumulative loadings. It can be observed that the emotional, cognitive, and intention dimensions explain 28.829%, 23.867%, and 22.585% of the total variance, respectively, with a cumulative value of 78.558%. This suggests that psychological factors such as cognition, emotion, and intention play a central role in the collective memory of location identification. Remarkably, the emotional factor has a prominent influence on identifying locations related to collective memory.

**Table 2** SPSS 24.0 Statistical table

Item/variable	Mean value	Standard deviation
PI1.1192 The Old Hankou building blends casual corners with a nostalgic atmosphere and cuisine.	3.8455	69456
PI2.1192 In the old Hankou buildings, you can experience the culture and customs of Wuhan.	3.7742	70678
PI3.1192 The nostalgic style of old Hankou architecture makes me feel the identity of Wuhan.	4.1398	71234
PI4.1192 The charm of old Hankou architecture makes me feel like I belong to Wuhan.	4.0456	60587
PI5.1192 Through the nostalgic tour of Hankou architecture, I felt the deep feeling of Wuhan.	4.0678	67466
PI6. The old Hankou architecture gives me an experience that is hard to find anywhere else.	3.8456	61556
PI7. The charm of the old man's mouth will draw me back.	3.9355	71337

## 6. Discussion

Previous research can be broadly categorized into two types: the first type focuses on the cultural development of the old Hankou concession based on textual analysis, while the second mainly studies the aesthetic characteristics of old Hankou architecture from the perspective of artistic decoration. Few researchers have approached the study of old Hankou from anthropological, sociological, and spatial perspectives. In this study, utilizing the research concepts of "collective memory" and "nostalgic space," the old "Hankou concession" in Hankou, Wuhan, Hubei Province, is divided into three distinct historical periods for academic discourse. This approach fills a gap in previous in-depth research on the culture of the old Hankou concession, particularly from the perspectives of collective memory and nostalgic space. Additionally, it provides a theoretical foundation for future governments or researchers to define the collective memory, function, and significance of old Hankou, contributing to its preservation and continuation. Through research, this study aims to understand the functional and spatial changes in the existing old houses of old Hankou, analyze the reasons for these changes, and elicit the collective memory and nostalgic space associated with old Hankou. From an anthropological perspective, the paper explores new directions for development that promote historical heritage protection and enhance people's awareness and appreciation of the old houses in the old Hankou concession. The objective of this study is to investigate the mechanisms underlying the

formation of nostalgic spaces from the perspective of urban collective memory, within the context of urban culture and geography. By doing so, it aims to contribute to the preservation and transmission of the cultural and historical significance of old Hankou, enhancing public recognition and appreciation of this unique heritage.

## 7. Conclusions

The spatial form of the old buildings in Hankou's former concession district gradually emerged through the intricate interplay of multiple historical factors. Initially, influenced by the colonial expansion of Western powers, the architectural style within the concession often exhibited characteristics of Western classical or eclectic design. Over time, these buildings gradually integrated local elements in terms of function, style, and usage, forming a unique blend of Chinese and Western aesthetics. As Hankou's urbanization and modernization accelerated in the 20th century, the architectural space within the concession underwent numerous transformations and updates to adapt to the city's evolving needs. These changes were not only reflected in architectural styles and materials but also in the reconfiguration of urban spatial layouts and functionalities. The establishment and development of the concession were products of specific historical circumstances, shaped by the colonial expansion of Western powers, the weakness of the Qing government, and the compromises made by local officials. In this process, economic, political, and cultural factors intertwined, collectively shaping the concession's unique spatial form and social structure. The diverse collective memories associated with the concession conceal complex historical agendas. On the one hand, the concession, as a symbol of Western civilization, is viewed by some as a model of modernization; on the other hand, it represents a symbol of colonial rule, regarded by others as a historical disgrace. These differing memories and interpretations reflect the multiple perspectives and complex emotions held by different social groups toward the concession's history. Various social groups have played significant roles in constructing collective memories of the concession, shaping the collective memory of Hankou and Wuhan. Governments, media, academia, and the general public have each contributed to the interpretation and memorialization of the concession's history through their respective means and channels. These interpretations and memories have not only influenced the collective memory of Hankou and Wuhan but also affected people's cognition and emotions toward the old concession. In terms of local memory, the older generation of Hankou residents holds deep personal recollections and emotional attachments to the concession, which have become an essential part of their nostalgic spatial consumption. For the younger generation, however, the concession often serves as a historical symbol and cultural icon, and their understanding and emotions toward it are primarily derived from media, education, and tourism. The Jiangnan Museum, as one of the significant institutions showcasing Hankou's history and culture, strategically presents collective memory. Through exhibitions, artifacts, images, and texts, the museum illustrates the historical changes and cultural significance of Hankou. In its exhibition design, the museum emphasizes audience engagement and experiential learning, utilizing scene reconstructions and interactive facilities to enable visitors to gain a deeper understanding of the concession's history and culture. Additionally, the museum collaborates with community organizations, schools, and media outlets to promote the inheritance and development of the concession's historical culture. Through these strategic presentations, the Jiangnan Museum successfully constructs and disseminates collective memories of Hankou to a wider audience.

In the context of globalization and urbanization, localities and their cultures are increasingly under pressure. However, it is precisely in this context that local consciousness and cultural awakening become crucial, as they provide a spiritual refuge for individuals and facilitate the preservation and promotion of local cultural traditions. As a culturally significant geographical location, Hankou embodies collective urban memory and nostalgia. It offers a place for residents to revisit the past, experience culture, and connect with traditions. It serves as a place for relaxation and stress relief on a micro level. The cultural identity of Hankou has become a significant emblem of personal identity, helping individuals reestablish connections with the city and contributing to the preservation of local cultural heritage. Survey results also confirm that Hankou's environment and experiential content strongly appeal to visitors, fostering a deep sense of identification and emotional connection with the land.

From a nostalgic perspective, memories and emotions related to the past are vital drivers for preserving urban cultural heritage. Nostalgic spaces like Hankou are deliberately created within the urban development process to safeguard history and culture. They serve as bridges that connect the past and present, allowing people to find their roots and identity within a realm of nostalgia. Survey data indicates that many visitors hold a positive attitude toward revisiting nostalgic spaces, further affirming Hankou's unique value in urban cultural heritage and tourism attraction. Nostalgia is a recollection of the past and a pursuit and fulfillment of emotions. In such spaces, individuals can find their sense of identity and belonging, fostering a more optimistic outlook on life. The success of Hankou provides valuable lessons, emphasizing that in rapidly developing cities, we should not forget the past but rather cherish and protect places with deep historical and cultural significance.

## Ethical considerations

All interviewees in this article participated voluntarily and accepted interviews. They fully understand what they are agreeing to, including the potential risks and benefits. The interviewees have anonymized the relevant personal information, but have made a backup of the data. There is no potential risk to the respondent.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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