

The Integrated Development of Rural Tourism and Culture in Rural Revitalization

Guo Jiahao*, Qi Yuxin, Xie Yuhan, Wo Yangzeng

Xinjiang Agricultural University, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, 830000, China

*Corresponding author: Jiahao Guo, alden2005@qq.com

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Abstract: In the context of the rural revitalization strategy, the integrated development of rural tourism and culture is of great significance. Through the analysis of relevant theories and practices, this study clarifies the crucial role of the integration of rural tourism and culture in promoting rural economic growth, inheriting rural culture, and enhancing rural social vitality, explores effective paths and strategies for integrated development, and provides theoretical support and practical references for rural revitalization.

Keywords: Rural Revitalization; Rural Tourism; Cultural Integration; Development Strategies

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Significance

1.1.1 The Importance of Rural Tourism Development in the Context of the Rural Revitalization Strategy

The rural revitalization strategy is an inevitable requirement for solving the principal contradictions in Chinese society in the new era, achieving the “Two Centenary Goals,” and realizing the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. As an emerging force in rural industries, rural tourism is highly comprehensive and has a high degree of relevance. It can not only directly drive the development of related industries such as catering, accommodation, and transportation, create numerous job opportunities, absorb rural surplus labor, and increase farmers’ income, but also promote the improvement of rural infrastructure, such as road construction, hydropower renovation, and network coverage. At the same time, rural tourism pays attention to ecological environment protection, which is conducive to creating an ecologically livable rural environment and plays a leading role in rural industrial prosperity and a facilitating role in ecological livability in rural revitalization^[1]

1.1.2 The Value and Role of Culture in Rural Tourism

Culture is the core resource and unique identifier of rural tourism. Rural culture encompasses many aspects, such as folk customs, traditional crafts, historical sites, and farming wisdom. From a value perspective, it has historical value, witnessing the development and changes of rural areas; artistic value, with folk crafts, songs, dances, and operas showing unique artistic charm; and social value, maintaining the emotional identity and cultural inheritance of rural residents. In rural tourism, culture can enhance the connotation and quality of tourism products, enable tourists to obtain in - depth cultural experiences, and meet their spiritual and cultural needs. At the same time, the injection of culture can avoid the homogenization of rural tourism products, enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of rural tourism, and achieve the sustainable development of rural tourism.^[2]

2. Theoretical Basis for the Integration of Rural Tourism and Culture

2.1 Definition of Relevant Concepts

2.1.1 The Concept and Connotation of Rural Tourism

Rural tourism is a tourism activity that attracts tourists to rest, sightsee, experience, and learn by taking the rural culture composed of rural regions, rural - related local conditions, customs, and landscapes as attractions. Its connotation includes rural natural landscapes, such as rural scenery and mountain - water scenery; rural production and living styles, such as farming experiences and rural handicraft making; and rural cultural customs, such as folk festivals and the inheritance of traditional crafts. Rural tourism emphasizes tourists' in - depth experience of rural life and focuses on the interaction between people and nature, as well as people and rural culture.

2.1.2 The Concept and Classification of Rural Culture

Rural culture is the sum of material and spiritual wealth created and accumulated by rural residents in long - term production and living practices. From a material level, it includes rural architecture, traditional farming tools, handicrafts, etc. From a spiritual level, it covers folk culture (such as traditional festivals, folk beliefs, and wedding and funeral customs), historical culture (the history of ancient villages, stories of famous people), and farming culture (farming solar terms, agricultural production knowledge), etc. According to forms of expression, it can be divided into material culture, institutional culture, and spiritual culture; according to functions, it can be divided into production culture, living culture, and belief culture.^[3]

2.2 Theoretical Basis

2.2.1 Industry Convergence Theory

The industry convergence theory holds that driven by factors such as technological innovation, regulatory relaxation, and market demand, different industries or different sectors within the same industry penetrate and intersect with each other, and finally merge into one to form a new industry form. In the integration of rural tourism and culture, technological innovation provides means for the integration, such as the use of digital technology for cultural display and tourism marketing; regulatory relaxation creates a policy environment for integration, reducing industry barriers; and market demand is the fundamental driving force for integration. Tourists' pursuit of cultural experiences and tourism quality promotes the integration of the tourism and cultural industries. Through industry convergence, the boundaries between rural tourism and the cultural industry are broken, giving birth to new forms of tourism such as folk culture tourism and historical - culture - themed tourism, and enhancing industry added value and competitiveness.

2.2.2 Cultural Economics Theory

The cultural economics theory emphasizes the economic attributes of culture and the cultural connotations of the economy. Rural culture has economic value and can be transformed into economic benefits through tourism development. At the same time, economic activities also carry cultural connotations. Integrating cultural elements into the development of rural tourism can enhance the cultural taste and economic value of tourism products. Cultural capital plays an important role in the integration of rural tourism and culture. Rural historical and cultural sites, folk cultural traditions, etc. are all important cultural capitals. Through rational development and operation, the appreciation of cultural capital can be realized, promoting rural economic development. In addition, cultural consumption is an important force driving the integration of rural tourism and culture. Tourists' consumption of rural cultural tourism products not only meets their spiritual and cultural needs but also drives the development of related industries.^[4]

2.3 The Driving Mechanism for the Integration of Rural Tourism and Culture

2.3.1 Driven by Market Demand

With the improvement of people's living standards and the transformation of tourism consumption concepts, tourists' demands for tourism products have shifted from simple sightseeing to in - depth cultural experiences. The rich cultural resources in rural areas, such as unique folk customs, profound historical heritage, and traditional farming culture, can meet tourists' pursuit of differential and personalized tourism experiences. The strong market demand for rural cultural tourism products prompts tourism enterprises and practitioners to explore the cultural connotations of rural areas and develop related tourism products and projects, promoting the integration of rural tourism and culture. For example, urban residents' strong

interest in rural traditional festival activities and farming experience activities has given birth to integrated forms such as folk culture tourism festivals and rural complexes.

2.3.2 Guided by Government Policies

The government has issued a series of policies to support the integration of rural tourism and culture. In terms of industrial policies, rural tourism and the cultural industry are included in the category of key - supported industries, and financial subsidies, tax preferences, and other supports are provided. In terms of planning policies, rural tourism and culture integration development plans are formulated to guide the rational allocation of resources and the optimization of industrial layout. In terms of cultural protection policies, the protection and inheritance of rural cultural heritage are strengthened, providing a resource guarantee for the integration of rural tourism and culture. For example, traditional village protection projects and rural cultural museum construction projects implemented by local governments not only protect rural culture but also create conditions for the development of rural tourism. The guidance and support of government policies provide a strong guarantee and development direction for the integration of rural tourism and culture.^[5]

3. Analysis of the Current Situation of the Integrated Development of Rural Tourism and Culture

3.1 The Current Situation of Rural Tourism Development in China

China's rural tourism is rich and diverse in types, mainly including the farmhouse - based type, which provides rural catering and accommodation and conducts simple farming experience activities; the rural - scenery - sightseeing type, which relies on rural landscapes and agricultural parks for tourists to sightsee; the folk - culture - experience type, which features the display and experience of rural folk culture, such as traditional festivals and folk crafts; the rural - vacation type, which builds leisure and vacation facilities to provide services such as leisure and entertainment, health preservation, and elderly care; and the agricultural - science - popularization type, which combines agricultural production bases to carry out agricultural science education and parent - child experience activities. In terms of development models, there is the government - led type, where the government invests in infrastructure construction and tourism project planning; the enterprise - driven type, where tourism enterprises are introduced for large - scale development and operation; the community - participation type, where local residents are encouraged to participate in tourism development and share the development results; and the composite type, which integrates the advantages of multiple development models to achieve the diversified development of rural tourism.^[6]

3.2 The Current Situation of the Protection and Inheritance of Rural Culture in China

China's rural cultural resources are diverse and widely distributed. In terms of material cultural resources, there are ancient villages, ancient buildings (such as ancestral halls, temples, and ancient dwellings), ancient bridges, traditional production tools, etc., mainly distributed in rural areas with a long history, such as the ancient villages in southern Anhui and the courtyards in central Shanxi. Non - material cultural resources cover folk culture (such as paper - cutting, embroidery, New Year pictures, folk dances, and local operas), traditional crafts (such as handmade paper - making, brewing techniques, and wood - carving techniques), folk legends, farming solar terms, etc., which are distributed in rural areas across the country and have their own characteristics, such as Shaanxi paper - cutting, Suzhou embroidery, and Miao songs and dances in Guizhou. These rural cultural resources are precious heritage of rural history and culture and an important basis for the integration of rural tourism and culture.^[7]

4. Problems and Reasons for the Integrated Development of Rural Tourism and Culture

4.1 Existing Problems

1. Insufficient Exploration of Cultural Connotations: Currently, many rural tourism projects simply pile up cultural elements without deeply exploring the spiritual connotations and values behind the culture. For example, some folk - culture - tourism activities only stay at the performance level. Tourists can only watch and cannot truly understand the meaning of folk culture. In some historical - cultural - site tourism, the lack of in - depth explanations of historical backgrounds and cultural stories makes it difficult for tourists to resonate culturally.

2. Serious Homogenization of Tourism Products: The homogenization of rural tourism products in different regions is obvious.

Many rural tourism scenic spots mainly focus on projects such as farmhouses, picking gardens, and folk performances, lacking uniqueness and innovation. For example, the dishes and accommodation styles of farmhouses in different regions are almost the same, and the fruit varieties and picking models of picking gardens are also similar, making it difficult to meet the diversified and personalized tourism needs of tourists.

4.2 Reasons for Analysis

1. Inadequate Ideological Understanding: Some local governments and tourism practitioners do not fully understand the importance of the integrated development of rural tourism and culture. They do not regard culture as the core competitiveness of rural tourism, only focus on short-term economic benefits, and neglect the exploration of cultural connotations and the protection of cultural inheritance.

2. Insufficient Policy Support: Although the state has issued a series of policies to support the development of rural tourism, there are few special policies for the integration of rural tourism and culture. The existing policies are not effectively implemented in the implementation process. For example, policies such as financial support and tax preferences for the protection of rural cultural resources are difficult to truly benefit the grassroots level. At the same time, the policies lack systematicness and coordination, and the policies of different departments are difficult to effectively connect, affecting the promotion of the integrated development of rural tourism and culture.

5. Countermeasures and Suggestions for the Integrated Development of Rural Tourism and Culture

To better integrate rural tourism and culture and assist rural revitalization, we can address the existing problems from the following aspects.

Promote the differential development of tourism products. On the one hand, tourism products should be developed in combination with the cultural characteristics of rural areas. For example, if a rural area has a long-standing farming culture, farming-experience products that allow tourists to participate in sowing and harvesting can be developed. If there are ancient buildings and other historical and cultural sites, historical-culture-exploration tourism products can be developed. On the other hand, brand building and marketing should be strengthened. Create a unique brand for rural tourism and promote it through the Internet, social media, and other channels, so that more people know the characteristics of this rural tourism and are attracted to visit.

Coordinating the relationship between cultural protection and development is the key to ensuring the sustainable development of rural tourism. A scientific and reasonable protection and development plan should be formulated. When formulating the plan, both cultural protection and tourism development should be considered, and it should be clearly defined which areas need key protection and which areas can be moderately developed. Especially for historical and cultural sites, operations should be carried out in accordance with the principles of "protection first, rescue first, rational utilization, and inheritance and development." In addition, it is essential to establish a long-term mechanism for cultural protection and development. By formulating relevant rules and regulations, strengthen the supervision of cultural protection; set up special funds to provide financial support for cultural protection.

Improving infrastructure and public services can enhance tourists' tourism experience. First, build infrastructure such as transportation and accommodation well. Build wider and flatter roads in rural areas to facilitate the entry and exit of tourists; build more accommodation places with different grades and styles to meet the diversified needs of tourists. Second, improve the level of public services. Strengthen the construction of rural sanitation facilities to make the rural environment cleaner and more tidy; improve tourism service facilities, such as building tourist service centers and setting up clear signboards, to provide tourists with a convenient and comfortable tourism environment.

6. Conclusion and Prospect

6.1 Research Conclusions

In response to the problems existing in the integrated development, such as serious homogenization of tourism products, prominent contradictions between cultural protection and development, and imperfect infrastructure and public services,

corresponding solutions have been proposed. For example, deeply explore the cultural characteristics of rural areas and innovate the display and experience methods, develop characteristic tourism products in combination with cultural characteristics and strengthen brand building and marketing, formulate scientific protection and development plans and establish long - term mechanisms, strengthen infrastructure construction and improve public service levels. Through these countermeasures, it is expected to solve the current problems, promote a deeper integration of rural tourism and culture, and promote the sustainable development of rural areas.^[8]

6.2 Research Prospects

First, conduct in - depth research on the models and paths of the integration of rural tourism and culture in different regions, and formulate more targeted and operable development strategies according to the actual situations of different regions. Second, strengthen the research on the cultural protection mechanism in the integrated development of rural tourism and culture, and explore how to better protect and inherit rural culture while developing tourism, so as to achieve the common development of culture and the economy. Third, pay attention to the impact of integrated development on the rural social structure and residents' lives, and study how to protect the rights and interests of local residents in the development process and promote the harmonious development of rural society. Through in - depth research on these aspects, stronger theoretical support and practical guidance can be provided for the integrated development of rural tourism and culture, and the smooth implementation of the rural revitalization strategy can be promoted.

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Conflict of Interests

The author(s) declare(s) that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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