

Research on Rural Revitalization Strategies Based on the SWOT Analysis in View of the Integration of Agriculture, Culture and Tourism: Taking Guangdu Village as an Example

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Abstract: Rural revitalization represents a critical avenue for the advancement of rural regions in China, with the integrated development of industries emerging as an unavoidable trend. The convergence of agriculture, culture and tourism is advantageous for fostering the holistic revitalization of rural areas. This study focuses on Guangdu Village in Quzhou, China as the research site and utilizes the SWOT analysis framework to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the resource, strategy, and locational advantages associated with the integration of agriculture, culture and tourism. Furthermore, the paper delves into the challenges encountered, including the limited level of integration, insufficient infrastructure, and a lack of skilled personnel. It subsequently proposes targeted optimization strategies including adjusting the structure of the three industries, strengthening the construction of supporting infrastructure, optimizing the talent training system and introducing innovative technology. The above strategies aim at leveraging local advantages to enhance the integration of agriculture, culture and tourism more effectively.

Keywords: Integration of Agriculture; Culture and Tourism; SWOT Analysis; Rural Revitalization; Rural Tourism

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Integration of Agriculture, Culture and Tourism

Since China introduced the concept of rural revitalization in October 2017, the development of rural areas in China has gradually got on the right track, opening a new

chapter of a new phase in rural revitalization and achieving significant milestones. This process has involved the gradual enhancement of various sectors, including industry, talent, culture, ecology, and organizational structures.[1] In October 2022, the national development plan pointed out the necessity of comprehensively advancing rural revitalization, prioritizing agricultural and rural development, and reinforcing the commitment to sustain and expand the gains made in poverty alleviation. The plan advocated to accelerate the construction of an agricultural power, propelling the official departments to implement effective strategies to facilitate rural revitalization. In January 2023, the latest development outline underscored the importance of enhancing the high-quality development of rural industries, establishing a modern rural industrial system, and fostering the integrated development of agriculture, culture and tourism industries in rural areas.

At the same time, in the 2035 long-term goal outlines highlight the significance of rural construction in the context of socialist modernization, aiming to create aesthetically pleasing and habitable rural environments. Over 40 years of rural reform practice has fully proved that only the reform and upgrade of industry can enhance the attractiveness of rural areas, laying a solid material foundation for the development of rural economy and society. The integrated development of agriculture, culture and tourism is identified as a primary focus, with plans to promote the synergy between agricultural and accommodation sectors in rural areas to extend the agricultural value chain and diversify rural economic activities.[2] In terms of cultural industry integration, it is committed to creating a unique charm of Chinese cultural tourism experience.

1.2 Connotation of Industrial Integration

In the context of comprehensive efforts to promote rural revitalization, the new momentum of rural development has triggered, positioning the integrated development model of rural industries as an essential trend in contemporary industrial advancement. In present-day China, there is a significant focus on the development of aesthetically pleasing rural platforms and the realization of the holistic value of rural regions. The synergistic advancement of the primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors within these areas is anticipated to disrupt the traditional reliance on agriculture alone.[3] In this new era, the revitalization of rural communities advocates for a transition towards the harmonious integration of economic, ecological, and social values within rural environments.

The integration of agriculture, culture and tourism represents a novel approach to bolstering the economic vitality of rural regions and enhancing agricultural development. This integration fosters innovative growth in new industries, forms, and models within rural settings, thereby enriching the theoretical framework surrounding rural industrial development. The synergistic development of agriculture, culture and tourism transcends mere aggregation of these three sectors; it facilitates a meaningful connection and deep integration of primary, secondary, and tertiary industries. This approach cultivates a rural tourism sector that amalgamates cultural elements, development initiatives, resources, technology, market dynamics, and functional aspects, thereby augmenting the value of tourism and empowering rural revitalization efforts. [4]It is imperative to shape tourism through cultural narratives, emphasize cultural significance via tourism, enhance tourism through agricultural initiatives, and support agriculture through tourism endeavors. By leveraging local cultural and natural resources, stakeholders can expand and enhance the entire value chain of rural cultural tourism, ultimately promoting a more holistic development of agriculture and rural communities.[5]

2. SWOT Analysis of the Integrated Development of Agriculture, Culture and Tourism

2.1 Strengths

2.1.1 Resource advantages

China's rural areas are rich in resources of agriculture, culture and tourism. The agricultural diversity ranges from wheat and corn in the northern regions to rice and sugarcane in the southern areas. Rural tourism is also famous for its rich and diverse characteristic agricultural products. Additionally, the natural landscapes of these rural areas feature pristine ecological rivers and pastoral vistas. In contrast to urban environments, tourists often prefer to experience the tranquility and aesthetic appeal of the countryside. Furthermore, many villages serve as repositories of historical and revolutionary culture, allowing visitors to engage with millennia of historical memory, a vibrant cultural atmosphere, and the legacy of revolutionary heritage.

Taking Guangdu Village as an example, it is endowed with rich resource advantages.

Firstly, in terms of agricultural resources, Guangdu Village is situated in a monsoon climate zone, characterized by warm and humid conditions that are conducive to crop growth. The village boasts extensive flat land and abundant agricultural resources, facilitating large-scale agricultural development. To enhance agricultural productivity, experts from the Zhejiang Academy of Agricultural Sciences have conducted inspections and provided substantial support and technical guidance, thereby increasing the added value of local agricultural products.

Secondly, Guangdu Village possesses rich cultural resources. Recognized as one of the fourth batch of traditional villages in China and one of the inaugural historical and cultural villages in Jiangshan City, Guangdu has a deep historical lineage that can be traced back to the third year of Taiping Xingguo during the Song Dynasty (978 AD). The village is home to numerous well-preserved cultural relics and historical sites, including one provincial cultural protection unit, six municipal cultural protection units, and five watchtowers from the Anti-Japanese War period (1931-1945). In recent years, the village has invested nearly 4 million yuan to enhance its infrastructure in support of cultural exploration and tourism development. In addition, Guangdu is rich in

cultural artifacts, including one of the first 48 national treasures, which dates back to the fifth year of Ganfu in the Tang Dynasty (878 AD). The village continues to host numerous artisans, including inheritors of the Hand Lion Dance, bamboo weavers, masters of Chinese painting, and wood carving experts, who represent the unique living cultural resources of Guangdu.

Thirdly, the tourism resources of the area are noteworthy. The villages lived in a triangular block configuration, situated against a mountainous backdrop and adjacent to rivers. Notable attractions include Songfeng Mountain, Guangdu River, and the ancient, aesthetically pleasing architectural structures that characterize the region. The residential buildings within the village exhibit the distinctive Hui architectural style, which is rooted in the traditional designs originating from the Huizhou region of Anhui Province, China. As one explores the area, over thirty historical residences, such as Taiping An, along with ancient private schools and wells, are readily observable. Furthermore, during 2021 and 2022, Guangdu Village allocated more than 10 million yuan towards significant projects, including the restoration of Bagu Hall, and initiated the “One Village, Ten Thousand Trees” greening initiative, which involved the planting of various flora and seedlings to enhance the village's overall aesthetic appeal.

Guangdu Village is linked to the Shangjiexian Expressway, which serves as a vital tourist route within the mountainous region of Fenghua, marking it as a primary stop and attraction for visitors. To the east, Guangdu Village connects with Xiakou Town and National Highway 205, facilitating access to nearby tourist destinations and the convergence of Fujian, Zhejiang, and Jiangxi provinces. Additionally, the northern boundary of the village provides a route leading westward into Jiangxi Province, further underscoring the advantageous location of the village.

2.1.2 Policy advantages

At present, China's rural areas are facing the opportunity of vigorous development, and the policy is generally favorable. In terms of financial support, the government actively encourages financial institutions to lean towards rural tourism projects, providing sufficient financial support for the

development and construction of rural tourism. In terms of land policy, the government allows the rational allocation of land resources for tourism development according to scientific planning to ensure the implementation of projects. Looking at the overall layout, the government continues to improve the policy guarantee system of rural tourism, encourages local areas to integrate rural tourism into various county-level plans, promotes a series of infrastructure construction, and improves the tourism experience and satisfaction of tourists.

Take Guangdu as an example, in 2020, it was successfully included in the eighth batch of key village support projects for the protection of historical and cultural villages in the province.

According to the regulations, key villages and general villages for the protection and utilization of historical and cultural villages will receive financial subsidies. The subsidy standard for key villages in Class One cities and counties is 7 million yuan per village, and the subsidy standard for Class Two cities and counties is 5 million yuan; general villages will be given subsidies of 300,000 to 500,000 yuan. In 2022, Guangdu Village strived for more than 30 million yuan of funds for the maintenance and maintenance of ancient buildings. In 2023, Guangdu Village received 1 million yuan of reward construction funds.

In 2023, the proportion of central financial funds for the connection and promotion of rural revitalization used for industrial development has reached 60%. 50 national modern agricultural industrial parks, 40 advantageous and characteristic industrial clusters, 200 agricultural industry strong towns and 100 agricultural modernization demonstration zones were built to promote the integration of production and villages, and production and towns, and more farmers realized employment near and on the spot. With the strong support of national rural revitalization policy subsidies, the agricultural infrastructure of Guangdu Village will be increasingly perfect and continuously reach new heights, laying a more solid foundation for the modernization of agriculture.

Currently, rural areas in China are experiencing significant developmental opportunities, supported by generally favorable policies. In terms of financial assistance, the

government actively promotes the engagement of financial institutions in rural tourism initiatives, thereby providing substantial financial resources for the development and construction of such projects. Regarding land policy, the government permits the strategic allocation of land resources for tourism development based on scientific planning, ensuring the effective execution of projects.

From a broader perspective, the government is enhancing the policy framework that supports rural tourism, encouraging localities to incorporate rural tourism into various county-level development plans. This includes the promotion of infrastructure development aimed at improving the overall tourism experience and satisfaction of visitors.

For instance, Guangdu Village was successfully designated as part of the eighth batch of key village support projects for the preservation of historical and cultural villages in the province in 2020. According to established regulations, both key and general villages designated for the protection and utilization of historical and cultural sites are eligible for financial subsidies. Specifically, key villages in first-class cities and counties receive subsidies of 7 million yuan each, while those in second-class cities and counties receive 5 million yuan. General villages are allocated subsidies ranging from 300,000 to 500,000 yuan. In 2022, Guangdu Village secured over 30 million yuan for the maintenance and preservation of its ancient buildings, and in 2023, it received an additional 1 million yuan in reward construction funds.

In 2023, the proportion of central financial resources allocated for the promotion of rural revitalization through industrial development reached 60%. This initiative has led to the establishment of 50 national modern agricultural industrial parks, 40 advantageous and characteristic industrial clusters, 200 strong agricultural industry towns, and 100 agricultural modernization demonstration zones. These developments aim to facilitate the integration of production with rural areas and towns, thereby enabling more farmers to find employment locally. With robust support from national rural revitalization policy subsidies, the agricultural infrastructure in Guangdu Village is expected to improve significantly, thereby establishing a more solid foundation

for the modernization of agriculture.

2.2 Weaknesses

2.2.1 Low level of integration of agriculture, culture and tourism

The advancement of rural tourism has the potential to facilitate the integration of primary, secondary, and tertiary industries, enhance the movement of urban and rural resources, and foster the amalgamation of diverse elements. It also contributes to rural revitalization and the realization of integrated urban-rural development, addressing the challenges of inadequate and uneven rural progress. However, Guangdu Village faces significant challenges due to the low level of integration among its agricultural, cultural, and tourism sectors, as well as a limited extension chain. Despite possessing a wealth of high-quality resources, these resources across various industries remain relatively dispersed and have not been systematically planned or utilized. Consequently, certain resources remain underutilized and have not been effectively brought to market to generate economic returns. The development of the three sectors in Guangdu is characterized by imbalance, with cultural resources being a prominent feature, while tourism and agriculture are comparatively underdeveloped. Currently, the full integration of these three industries has not been achieved, which hampers the ability to leverage resource endowments and restricts the entry of cultural resources into the tourism market, thereby limiting their potential advantages. Guangdu's development is relatively nascent, and the degree of integration among agriculture, culture and tourism remains low. There is a pressing need for further advancement and market promotion of tourism products that synergize agriculture, culture and tourism. Additionally, the local brand's influence and appeal are weak, which constrains the overall development of the industry and is detrimental to the clustered growth of these sectors.

2.2.2 Insufficient infrastructure and suboptimal hardware conditions

Public services serve as fundamental support for the integrated development of agriculture, culture and tourism, while this integration can enhance the depth and diversity of public services. Despite significant financial investments in recent years aimed at the

restoration of ancient structures and cultural artifacts in Guangdu Village, the village currently lacks adequate tourism support facilities. This deficiency hinders its ability to meet the contemporary demands of the tourism sector and reveals numerous inadequacies in its infrastructural conditions, which are insufficient for practical application scenarios. For instance, there is a notable absence of high-quality accommodations, such as hotels and guesthouses, as well as a lack of dining establishments, souvenir shops, and travel agencies, which is incongruent with the village's abundant agricultural, cultural, and tourism resources. Furthermore, the internal transportation network within the village is relatively inefficient, characterized by a scarcity of transportation options, including ride-hailing services and multiple bus routes, thereby complicating access for tourists who do not possess personal vehicles.

2.2.3 Lack of talents and insufficient momentum

Market promotion predominantly emphasizes well-established natural and cultural landscapes, while the exploration and utilization of agricultural culture and rural aesthetics remain relatively underdeveloped. Farmers frequently encounter challenges in accessing effective strategies and methods to engage in the cultural tourism sector, leading to low levels of participation. The integrated development model that encompasses agriculture, culture and tourism necessitates the presence of multidisciplinary professionals who possess expertise in agricultural technology, tourism marketing, and cultural management.[6] Currently, many managers transit from other sectors, resulting in a deficiency in both professionalism and relevance to the specific needs of the cultural tourism industry. In Guangdu Village, a number of young residents opt to migrate to urban areas in search of employment opportunities, contributing to a pronounced demographic decline and a shortage of youth within the community. Local farmers often lack access to timely market information, which hinders their ability to engage effectively in the cultural tourism industry.

2.3 Opportunities

To accelerate the integrated advancement of passenger transport and tourism, the General

Office of the Ministry of Transport, in conjunction with the General Office of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, has issued a notice. It emphasizes the enhancement of tourism travel service offerings, the promotion of intelligent advancements in tourism passenger transport, the optimization of traffic distribution systems in tourist areas, and the proactive development of collaborative initiatives in passenger transport travel. Tailored services are being provided for self-driving tourism, family tourism and group tourism, thereby facilitating travel for tourists and enhancing their overall travel experience. Since 2023, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs have jointly initiated a support project aimed at cultivating rural culture and tourism leaders. This initiative seeks to nurture and support a cadre of leaders characterized by strong ideological integrity, moral character, and robust capabilities in wealth generation and coordination, who are deeply embedded in rural communities and dedicated to serving the populace. These leaders are expected to be firmly established in rural areas, providing dedicated service to grassroots communities and advancing the rural culture and tourism sector to new heights.

In July 2024, China proposed the necessity of harmonizing new industrialization, urbanization, and comprehensive rural revitalization efforts, with the goal of enhancing the integration of urban and rural planning, construction, and governance. To implement the cultural industry empowerment plan for rural revitalization, a select group of pilot cities has been identified through a rigorous selection process. A range of measures has been introduced to bolster policy support and provide guidance for these pilot areas, facilitating the coordinated utilization of rural cultural and tourism resources. Efforts are being made to actively explore innovative land use models for the culture and tourism industry, thereby continuously fostering new momentum for rural development. Following trials and evaluations, innovative integration models for the culture and tourism industry will be developed through various approaches.

2.4 Threats

The tourism industry in various regions of China is experiencing significant

homogenization, resulting in intense market competition. Numerous tourist attractions exhibit considerable similarities in terms of project design, landscape development, and cultural representation, leading to a deficiency in distinctive features and unique appeal. This situation exacerbates the competitive landscape within the tourism market, which has become increasingly saturated, often referred to as a “red sea” due to the limited market size and the abundance of competitors. Consequently, the sustainable development of the tourism sector is confronted with substantial challenges, necessitating urgent innovation.

At present, despite substantial investments by local cultural and tourism authorities in the development of public cultural services and tourism infrastructure, there remains a notable gap in tourist satisfaction regarding their experiences. As a result, the tourism industry is compelled to delve deeper into innovative strategies that integrate local culture with tourism resources. This approach aims to achieve optimal resource allocation and efficient utilization, ultimately striving for an upgrade and transformation of the sector.

3. Countermeasures

3.1 Adjusting the Structure of the Three Industries and Enhance the Industrial Value Chain

The comprehensive coordination of agricultural, cultural and tourism resources is essential for optimizing the allocation of resources across various industries. This approach aims to dismantle existing barriers between sectors, facilitating the seamless flow of diverse elements. Key factors such as labor, capital, technology, land, and data should be integrated and mutually reinforcing. In light of the growing trend towards the integration of agriculture, culture and tourism, urban investors are increasingly recognizing the potential for business opportunities in rural tourism development and the enhancement of agricultural product processing.[7] Consequently, there is a movement towards investing in rural areas to establish distinctive guesthouses and ecological farms.

This mode needs a departure from the static models of traditional resource management, encouraging the exploration of innovative

pathways for the in-depth integration of agriculture, culture and tourism. Such integration may manifest in various forms, including the amalgamation of services and functions, as well as cross-sectoral collaborations. Large-scale agricultural enterprises play a crucial role in contemporary agricultural production systems and serve as a significant manifestation of rural industrial revitalization. It is essential to recognize the importance of agricultural development in this context. [8]

For instance, Guangdu culture can enrich the tourism and agricultural sectors by imbuing crops and projects with a deeper cultural significance. Additionally, agriculture and culture can introduce novel forms and models to tourism, such as field-based family activities and the promotion of local intangible cultural heritage through the creation and sale of culturally significant products.

Furthermore, a deeper exploration of regional characteristics is imperative. This involves transcending industry boundaries and adopting exemplary service concepts and methodologies from diverse sectors,[9] thereby ensuring that various elements are fully integrated and collaboratively aligned to address the diverse needs of tourists.

3.2 Strengthening the Construction of Supporting Infrastructure

In light of the importance of preserving and advancing historical culture, it is imperative to enhance the restoration of facilities and to comprehensively optimize the fundamental infrastructure related to water and electricity supply, transportation, and environment within the village.[10] To enhance the travel experience for tourists, collaboration with bus companies and online ride-hailing services is essential. Additionally, it is important to thoughtfully design tourist routes that integrate local roadside attractions and cultural landmarks, thereby facilitating a seamless journey for visitors.

In terms of the development of the food and accommodation sectors, it is crucial to actively recruit within the catering industry, leveraging local ingredients and culinary traditions to attract a diverse array of high-quality dining establishments, thereby addressing the current deficiencies in this sector. To diversify accommodation options for tourists, Guangdu

can incentivize residents to convert their homes into guesthouses, fulfilling the basic lodging needs of visitors. Lastly, it is vital to coordinate the establishment of travel agencies and creative retail outlets to further augment the value and overall benefits of the tourism industry.

3.3 Optimizing the Talent Training System

The process of integration is inherently linked to the management of professional talent and the guidance necessary for comprehensive development. Consequently, addressing the talent deficit and enhancing talent acquisition policies is of paramount importance. On one hand, it is essential to actively recruit a diverse array of talents, with particular emphasis on attracting interdisciplinary professionals who can infuse innovative energy and varied perspectives into the convergence of the three sectors. On the other hand, engaging local populations can't be ignored. Implementing systematic education and training programs for local residents and farmers will enhance their skills and competencies, enabling them to play an active role in the transformation and development of their communities, so that Guangdu could establish a robust foundation and a vigorous driving force for the integrated development of agriculture, culture and tourism, collectively contributing to a comprehensive vision for rural revitalization.

3.4 Introducing Innovative Technology and Creating Characteristic Brands

To break through the traditional business model, it is necessary to innovate new models that integrate local cultural characteristics and natural landscapes which includes designing distinctive activities that enhance visibility and facilitate the establishment of unique brands and intellectual properties (IPs) through robust marketing strategies on digital platforms, increasing consumer engagement. The literary heritage of Guangdu Village, along with narratives such as the history of the Mao family and the tale of the top scholar, can serve as compelling elements to generate public interest.

It is essential to bolster innovation in agricultural science and technology to enhance the added value and market competitiveness of agricultural products. The incorporation of technological advancements into the vegetable

cultivation sector in rural areas can lead to improvements in both yield and quality. It can be synergistically aligned with local tourism and agritourism initiatives to attract a greater number of visitors. Additionally, the utilization of big data analytics to assess tourist origins and consumption preferences can inform the development of targeted marketing strategies, thereby facilitating precise marketing efforts and fostering the coordinated growth of related industries.

4. Conclusion

In the context of the integration of agriculture, culture and tourism, the momentum for rural revitalization is expected to accelerate significantly. Numerous small villages like Guangdu Village, possess distinctive resources, substantial development potential, and expansive market opportunities, positioning them as key drivers of rural revitalization. Currently, this integration is still in its infancy. Policy frameworks have consistently underscored the necessity of industry integration, leveraging new advantages, capitalizing on opportunities, mitigating threats, and addressing challenges to foster a conducive environment for rural revitalization.

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