

Tourism development and management of rural ecological landscape resources

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Keywords: Rural areas; Ecological landscape resources; Tourism development and management

Abstract: Rural landscapes encompass a diverse array of land units found within rural regions, and rural ecotourism represents a tourism endeavor centered on these captivating ecological landscapes. This article delves into strategies for the development and management of rural ecological landscape resources, with a focus on fostering sustainable tourism growth in rural areas. Through an analysis of the current state of rural ecological landscapes and illustrative case studies, the article puts forward recommendations for tourism development and resource management. Furthermore, it underscores the significance of sustainable practices in managing rural ecological landscape tourism. In China, rural ecological tourism is still nascent and requires a holistic approach that integrates sustainable practices across rural ecology, economy, society, and culture to ensure its long-term viability.

1. Introduction

As urbanization rapidly advances, individuals' desires for tranquility and natural settings intensify, causing rural tourism to gain popularity as a sought-after leisure option [1]. The allure of rural landscapes, rich in natural beauty, cultural heritage, and authentic rural traditions, offers tourists a serene escape from urban hustle.

Nonetheless, the challenge lies in developing and stewarding these invaluable rural resources prudently. Ensuring they cater to tourists' needs while preserving the ecosystem and fostering sustainable growth poses an imminent challenge. Excessive exploitation risks ecological degradation, while inadequate management might detract from the tourist experience and tarnish the countryside's reputation.

This article endeavors to outline strategies for the balanced growth and management of rural landscapes. By examining specific cases, it suggests market-driven yet eco-friendly approaches to tourism development. Its aim is to contribute to the healthy, sustainable expansion of rural tourism, aligning with rural revitalization and ecological preservation efforts. Additionally, it underscores the importance of considering local communities' interests, ensuring they reap the benefits of tourism and fostering a genuinely symbiotic relationship. Through meticulous planning and responsible management, rural landscapes can propel rural revitalization, harmonizing economic, social, and environmental well-being.

2. The current development status of rural ecological landscape resources

Since the 1990s, rural tourism in China has experienced rapid growth. As we entered the 21st century, this trend accelerated, marked by an expansion in attractions, scale, functionalities, and geographical distribution, signaling a robust new era for the sector[2].

Data from the "2014-2018 China Leisure Agriculture and Rural Tourism Market Outlook and Investment Strategy Planning Analysis Report" by the Forward Industry Research Institute indicates that over half of China's 40,000+ tourist attractions are situated in rural locales. These rural scenic spots attract over 500 million visitors annually, generating over 200 billion yuan in tourism revenue. Notably, during peak travel periods like "National Day" and "Spring Festival," about 70% of Chinese urbanites opt for rural getaways, resulting in a weekly rural tourism market of approximately 100 million visitors[3].

Rural tourism has emerged as a key driver in the tourism industry, fueling economic growth and delivering significant societal benefits[4]. It has played a particularly crucial role in bolstering rural economies and enriching farmers' lives. For instance, it has facilitated the redirection of surplus rural labor, providing farmers with additional income streams. This has allowed some farmers to stay in their communities and pursue entrepreneurship, transforming their homes and earning extra income by leveraging local cultural assets and human resources.

Moreover, rural tourism has fostered the integration of the primary (agriculture) and tertiary (cultural tourism) industries, optimizing rural industrial structures. Farmers can now directly sell their agricultural products and handicrafts to tourists, broadening their market reach, enhancing product value, and contributing to the overall improvement of the agricultural sector[5].

Beyond economic gains, rural tourism has also been instrumental in enhancing rural environments and promoting ecological civilization. Local governments have invested in infrastructure to support rural tourism, leading to improvements in roads, sanitation, and the overall rural landscape. This exposure to urban tourists' lifestyles and values has had a transformative effect on rural communities, elevating farmers' cultural literacy and driving the construction of a new rural ecological civilization.

3. Strategies for tourism development and management

3.1. Integrating scenic area planning with tourism product design and matching with rural tourism image

To enhance tourism development, planners must first conduct a comprehensive analysis of the area's landscape and spatial structure to identify suitable industrial belts. Secondly, they should craft specific plans for each scenic area, taking into account terrain, topography, agricultural layout, and other regional factors [6]. Lastly, distinctive tourism products should be designed based on the scenic area's unique environmental and seasonal characteristics.

For instance, rural tourism often leverages seasonal attractions. In spring, festivals featuring peach and pear blossoms can draw visitors. Summer vacation resorts and homestays in temperate regions offer respite from the heat. Additionally, showcasing local tourism products with unique characteristics can enrich the visitor experience.

The rural tourism image encompasses the overall impression conveyed to tourists, influenced by the natural environment, geography, history, culture, and folklore. The rural landscape, as a complementary aspect of this image, must align with the overall layout. Therefore, when planning the rural landscape, it is essential to consider the local natural environment and cultural traits holistically.

3.2. We should follow the principle of combining development and protection, and overall development

The rural ecological environment is highly delicate, yet the ecological condition of certain tourist spots remains unsatisfactory, lacking harmony between people and nature. Hence, rural tourism development must prioritize the preservation and enhancement of the rural environment[7].

Over the years, ancient architecture and historical landmarks have suffered neglect, while deforestation, lake reclamation, and animal hunting have severely depleted rural landscapes, pushing some to the brink of disappearance. Modern farming practices have also rendered traditional and ancient farming tools and methods increasingly rare. Without deliberate and structured conservation efforts, rural tourism's allure will gradually fade. Therefore, it's crucial to raise awareness about environmental protection among planners, managers, developers, and tourists alike, implementing suitable preservation measures.

Rural landscapes, rich in diversity and visual appeal, constitute a vital component of regional tourism assets. Their development and utilization must be integrated into the holistic framework of regional tourism advancement. A comprehensive planning approach is needed to shape unified regional tourism routes, thus bolstering the local economy[8].

3.3. Strengthen publicity while strengthening resource integration and product innovation

Improving tourism facilities and infrastructure is pivotal for enhancing the overall tourist experience[9]. When developing rural ecological landscape tourism, focus should be given to planning and constructing transport, accommodation, dining, entertainment, and other amenities that harmonize with the natural surroundings, providing a cozy and convenient environment for visitors. Additionally, maintaining and managing these infrastructures is essential to guarantee tourists' safety and comfort.

Marketing and promotion play a vital role in tourism development and management. It's imperative to leverage both traditional and new media platforms, increasing the visibility and impact of rural ecological landscape tourism through advertisements, public relations, social media, and more. Marketing efforts should also align with events like festivals and cultural gatherings to capture tourists' interest. Furthermore, fostering cooperation alliances and regional collaborations can effectively promote tourism resources, leading to mutually beneficial outcomes.

3.4. Strengthening the quality of tourism services and implementing sustainable development strategies

Improving the quality of tourism services is crucial for boosting tourist satisfaction and fostering loyalty. Establishing a robust service quality management system that clarifies standards and procedures is essential. Furthermore, investing in employee training and development to enhance their professional skills and customer-oriented mindset is vital. Regular surveys and feedback loops help to understand tourists' needs and opinions, enabling continuous service quality improvement.

In tourism development and management, sustainability should be a guiding principle. This encompasses protecting the ecological environment, using resources wisely, and fostering community engagement. Adopting scientific and sustainable development practices ensures the long-term health of the ecosystem. Additionally, emphasizing resource recycling and waste reduction is important. Encouraging community participation in tourism development respects local interests and promotes the sustainable growth of the tourism sector.

4. Transforming a Rural Village into an Ecological Tourism Destination - Yucun, Anji, Zhejiang Province

4.1. Background

Once a poverty-stricken mountain village, Yucun in Anji County, Zhejiang Province, has undergone a remarkable transformation. Leveraging its distinctive natural scenery and cultural heritage, it has emerged as a leading example of ecological tourism.

4.2. Development Approach

(1) Ecological Preservation: Prioritizing the environment, Yucun imposes strict regulations on construction to safeguard its natural ecosystems and preserve the authenticity of its rural landscapes.

(2) Cultural Promotion: The village celebrates its local traditions, such as tea and bamboo cultures, integrating them into tourism offerings to enrich visitors' experiences.

(3) Community Engagement: Local residents are encouraged to participate in the tourism sector, fostering a sense of community ownership and cohesion while creating job opportunities.

4.3. Achievements

Through prudent management and sustainable practices, Yucun has emerged as a popular ecotourism destination. This has not only boosted tourism but also significantly raised the income of villagers, contributing to the harmonious development of the village's ecology, economy, and social fabric.

5. Research on the Development and Planning of Rural Tourism Resources

To aid developers in the systematic analysis and assessment of rural resources, markets, product advancement, facility establishment, and management strategies, a comprehensive rural tourism development and planning table has been devised. This ensures the project's sustainability and success. By referring to this table, developers can gain a more lucid comprehension of the different phases of rural tourism development, enabling them to make informed choices. The table serves as a valuable guide throughout the rural tourism development and planning process, assisting developers in attaining project success and optimizing profits. Please refer to Table 1 for the rural tourism development and planning table.

Table 1 Rural Tourism Development and Planning Table

Item	Content
Natural resources	Landscape,countryside, animals and plants,etc
Humanistic resources	Historical sites,folk culture,traditional handicrafts,etc
Resource characteristic analysis	Uniqueness,scarcity, attractiveness,etc
Target market	Age,gender,occupation, income,etc
Theme product	Ecological experience,cultural research,leisure vacation,etc

Despite being under the jurisdiction of distinct administrative authorities, rural ecological landscape tourism projects and environmental management maintain an inherent link, as illustrated in Figure 1, which showcases their interconnected management processes and relationships.

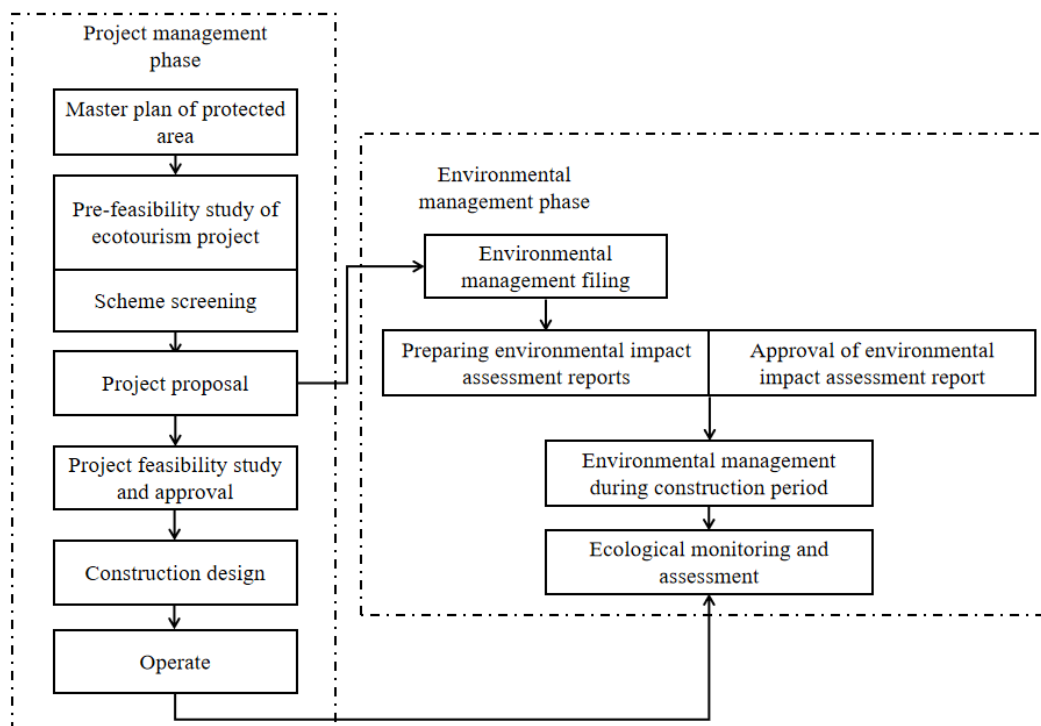


Figure 1 Schematic diagram of rural ecological landscape resource management

6. Conclusions

As global attention towards sustainable development intensifies, rural tourism has emerged as a pivotal connector between nature, culture, and local communities. This article delves into the intricacies of developing and managing rural ecological landscape resources, with a firm focus on bolstering the sustainability of the rural tourism sector. The rural landscape, a tapestry of diverse land units, serves not just as a showcase for the natural environment but also as a vessel carrying the rich culture and history of rural communities. This unique ecological landscape draws visitors to rural ecotourism, offering them unparalleled experiences.

Through a thorough analysis of the current rural ecological landscape resources, the exceptional

value and untapped potential of these resources have been appreciated. Consequently, a comprehensive set of strategies for tourism development and management has been proposed, underscoring the significance of sustainable practices in rural ecotourism. The approach aims not only to cater to the needs of tourists but also to foster holistic growth in rural economies, societies, cultures, and ecosystems. It is only through such sustainable practices that rural ecotourism can truly emerge as a driving force for rural progress.

Acknowledgments

1) Project of Key Research Base of Humanities and Social Sciences in Universities of Xinjiang Province (Research Center of "Two Mountains" Theory and High-quality Green Development in Southern Xinjiang) (JDYB202317)

2) Project of Key Research Base of Humanities and Social Sciences in Universities of Xinjiang Province (Research Center of "Two Mountains" Theory and High-quality Green Development in Southern Xinjiang) (JDYB202321)

3) Research Project of High-quality Development of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (ZBJJZL2023A09)

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