

Research on the Pathways of Art-Led Rural Construction in Boosting the Development of Rural Cultural Tourism Industry: A Case Study of Guyan Painting Township in Lishui City

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Abstract: "Art-led rural construction" is an important approach that utilizes the power of art to sustain local cultural heritage and achieve the creative transformation of rural aesthetics. This paper focuses on the impact of art-led rural construction on rural revitalization, exploring its role in promoting the development of cultural tourism in Guyan Painting Township, Lishui City, against the backdrop of national policies. By analyzing the current development status of Guyan Painting Township, summarizing experiences, and comparing it with Tuochuan Township in Wuyuan, Jiangxi, and Hongcun in Anhui, the paper identifies existing issues such as insufficient specialization in the sketching industry, subpar tourist experiences, and lagging marketing and promotion. Corresponding countermeasures are proposed to provide references for the development of rural cultural tourism.

Keywords: Art-Led Rural Construction, Guyan Painting Township, Cultural Tourism Industry, Rural Revitalization

1. Introduction

Amid the deepening implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, art, as a unique force, plays an increasingly significant role in rural development[1]. Guyan Painting Township in Lishui City, Zhejiang Province, has achieved remarkable results in the development of its rural cultural tourism industry through the practice of art-led rural construction. However, academic research on Guyan Painting Township has mostly been conducted from perspectives such as new media[2] and cultural-tourism integration[3], with relatively few systematic studies from the perspective of art-led rural construction. Taking art-led rural construction as the entry point, this paper analyzes the current status of the cultural tourism industry in Guyan Painting Township, summarizes its experience in promoting rural development through the art industry, identifies problems through comparison with similar cases, and provides suggestions for the further industrial development of Guyan Painting Township and other similar villages.

2. Background and Definition

2.1 Background

In recent years, China has placed increasing emphasis on issues concerning agriculture, rural areas, and farmers (the "Three Rural" issues), making rural revitalization a critical agenda. The report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2019 proposed the rural revitalization strategy, emphasizing the excavation and creative transformation of outstanding rural ideologies and concepts. "Art-led rural construction" was first proposed by Qu Yan, referring to the use of artistic means in rural areas to integrate and enhance cultural, ecological, and other aspects to promote rural development[4]. Zhejiang Province vigorously promotes "Art-Led Rural Construction." Guyan Painting Township in Lishui City adopts a "+Art" mindset to stimulate the value of rural resources, driving the integration of culture and tourism.

2.2 Definition

2.2.1 Public Art

Characterized by public accessibility and artistic quality, public art exists in open public spaces and serves as a marker of regional culture[5]. In art-led rural construction, artists and residents collaborate in the public environment, categorized into traditional "placement-based" and newer "communication-based" approaches. Projects like the Yangdeng Art Cooperative by Jiao Xingtao from the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute inject momentum into rural development.

2.2.2 Rural Tourism

With rising national income, the appeal of rural tourism has increased. Art-led rural construction, accompanying industrial upgrading, increasingly influences rural tourism development and has become a common method for upgrading

the rural tourism industry[6].

2.2.3 Rural Construction

The focus of art intervention in rural areas lies in restoring rural rituals and ethical spirit while activating the agency of ordinary people[7]. Artists and groups need to identify and solve rural problems, build social trust, and reconstruct local order. Examples include Qu Yan's "Qingtian Model," which combines traditional and contemporary elements to form a "rural community"[8].

3. Case Analysis

3.1 Development History

3.1.1 Initial Development Stage (1980s-1990s)

The area of Guyan Painting Township developed its industry primarily through primitive logging methods, with tourism resources remaining underdeveloped. Relying on its natural landscapes, it nurtured the "Lishui Barbizon School," but this did not translate into significant economic impetus from culture and tourism.

3.1.2 Growth Stage (2000-2015)

The Lishui Municipal Party Committee and Government prioritized the development of Guyan Painting Township. In 2005, a decision was made to create an industrial park, improve infrastructure, attract related enterprises, and promote the integration of culture and tourism. The core area of the scenic spot opened to tourists, marking the entry into a growth phase for the industry.

3.1.3 Deep Integration Stage (2015-Present)

Guyan Painting Township was designated as a National 4A-level Tourist Attraction and included in Zhejiang Province's first batch of characteristic towns. The art industry formed a cluster effect, diversified its main entities, and focused on creating an "artistic community-type" agglomeration zone. Internship bases were established, enhancing the artistic atmosphere.

3.2 Current Development Status

3.2.1 Cultivating Artistic Talent Centered on Sketching Bases

The art industry in Guyan Painting Township originated from the "Lishui Barbizon School." "The Art Village by the Water" is Zhejiang's first professional art education internship base, collaborating with over 200 universities and art institutions. It hosts over 150,000 sketching practitioners annually. Cooperation with oil painting industries and art academies promotes rural industrial economic development.

3.2.2 Hosting Art Events to Upgrade Cultural and Creative Industries

Leveraging its landscape and oil painting industry atmosphere, the township organizes various art events to enhance brand awareness, such as "The Sketching Journey of Famous Painters in Guyan Painting Township" and the "Guyan Painting Township Art Festival." The "28 Cultural and Creative Incubation Center" was established, proposing the concept of "Artistic Creative Living Industry+" to drive the overall art and cultural creative industry.

3.2.3 Promoting Cultural Tourism through Landscape and Cultural Heritage:

Lishui, known as the "Green Valley of Zhejiang," integrates natural and cultural resources in Guyan Painting Township to create multiple distinctive brand images. Located in the hinterland of the Yangtze River Delta with obvious locational advantages and a well-developed highway network, its market reach is set to expand further.

3.2.4 Promoting "Scenic Area + Film & TV" Integration through Artistic Creation

Guyan Painting Township attracts numerous TV dramas for filming due to its landscape and artistic ambiance, such as "A Romance of the Little Forest" and "The Fragrance of Wheat." This promotes the integrated development of "Scenic Area + Film & TV," driving rural revitalization.

3.3 Summary of Development Experience

3.3.1 Five Spatial Transformation Channels:

Guyan Block: Protects and utilizes the cultural history of the Tongji Ancient Weir, revitalizing cultural and natural landscape resources through projects like viewing landscapes and water recreation.

Pingdi Peninsula: Maintains the original ecology of natural resources as the foundation for developing industries like sketching, creating a highland of landscape culture.

Old Street Block: Attracts painters and makers to open various shops, integrating cultural resources into daily life and using lifestyle to drive industrial development.

New Cultural Industry Block: Develops cultural industries based on the artistic atmosphere, creating an "art community"

cluster by attracting artist studios to form an artistic community.

Township Block: Implements scenic area management standards adapted to local realities, creating an art community that enhances the atmosphere of daily life and art.

3.3.2 Five Population Strata Building a Multi-Subject Framework:

Painters and Artists: Include local and visiting painters. Local painters form the foundation, supported by government policies, while visiting artists are attracted to enhance their reputation.

Oil Painting Students: Collaborate with various schools to cultivate talent. The large student population provides a consumer base. Local institutions also focus on art talent cultivation, attracting youth for research and study activities.

Government: Operates under the concept of "government leadership, enterprise introduction, and villager participation." Provides policy support, introduces market management mechanisms, and utilizes the internet for smart scenic area construction.

Operating Companies and External Enterprises: Leverage the artistic atmosphere. Policies are introduced to rely on commercial forces for industrial development, e.g., Zhejiang Qingchu Holding Group assisting cultural tourism enterprises in going public.

Cultural Makers and Villagers: Villagers operate farm stays and homestays. Cultural makers become "new villagers," forming a "community" with the original residents.

4. Comparison with Other Cases and Existing Problems

4.1 Tuochuan Township, Wuyuan, Jiangxi

High level of sketching industry specialization, numerous bases, partnerships with hotels for professional services, well-developed online booking systems; rich and seasonally diverse sketching landscapes, divided into three major sketching zones, creation of characteristic streets to meet diverse consumption needs.

4.2 Hongcun, Anhui

High village reputation as a World Heritage site with high artistic value of Hui-style architecture; large-scale sketching bases with clear positioning (e.g., Yi County has 6 major research bases); mature research and study industry with developed course series forming new diversified cultural and creative bases; professional and flexible operation model featuring government-enterprise cooperation achieving a three-way win-win.

4.3 Existing Problems in Guyan Painting Township

Low Specialization in Sketching Industry, Imprecise Positioning of Core Industry: Insufficient number of sketching bases, low service quality, lack of professional online service channels for sketching groups. Diverse industrial categories lack prominent characteristics and attractiveness.

Poor Tourist Experience, Need for Service Improvement: Lishui's relatively lower socio-economic development level impacts innovation in cultural tourism management. Deficiencies in scenic area transportation and accommodation reduce the tourist experience.

Lagging Tourism Marketing and Promotion, Overly Traditional Content: Obvious off-peak seasons, slow updating of thematic activities. Long-term reliance on film/TV location promotion yields diminishing returns. Traditional tourism products lack interactive experiences and sufficient smart technology, affecting visitor experience.

5. Solution Strategies

5.1 Highlight "Small and Refined" Characteristics, Enhance Specialization of Sketching Bases

Focus resources on building "small and refined" sketching bases, improve online booking systems, provide "one-stop services," understand student needs, and elevate the professional standards of the bases.

5.2 Increase Scenic Area Marketing Efforts, Shift Traditional Marketing Methods

Utilize a media matrix, regularly update themed activities, design experiential tourism products, explore marketing opportunities, strengthen horizontal and vertical linkages in marketing, and launch attractive experiential projects.

5.3 Strengthen Cooperation with Local Universities, Cultivate Lishui-Specific Talent

Encourage university faculty and students to engage in rural revitalization social practices, attract social talent, build rural cultural teams, collaborate with villagers and tourists in creative activities, cultivate "Lishui-specific artistic talent," disseminate local art, and highlight brand characteristics.

5.4 Deepen Cooperation Among All Levels of Subjects, Promote the Construction of a New-Type Painting Township

The government should advance rural revitalization, attract diverse stakeholders to form a community, establish diversified social groups, initiate projects, and pave the way for the future development of Guyan Painting Township.

6. Conclusion and Reflection

As a contemporary art practice orientation, art-led rural construction holds significant cultural research value. This paper analyzed the industrial development of Guyan Painting Township from the perspective of art-led rural construction, summarized experiences, identified problems, and proposed strategies. However, the spatial scope of the research object is vast and dispersed, and the analysis remains somewhat superficial. It is hoped that this study will draw more attention, contribute to improving the theoretical research system, and promote the sustainable and healthy development of Guyan Painting Township.

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