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**MASTER’S THESIS**

Title: **“Formation of a strategy for the development of rural green tourism”**

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**T A S K  
TO MASTER THESIS**

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## INTRODUCTION

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the world has entered the “environmental protection era” and “green era”, and green and environmentalism are now becoming the mainstream of economic development in countries all over the world. The call for green economy is getting louder and louder, and its development powerfully impacts many industries and has a great influence on the development of the world economy, and also profoundly affects the development of the tourism industry.

At present, China is vigorously carrying out green tourism, forming a number of green tourism products, green enterprises and green tourists. This is not only in line with the principle of sustainable development of China’s tourism industry, but also an intrinsic requirement for China’s tourism industry to enter a new century and a new era. Moreover, the Chinese government is seeking various ways to increase the income of farmers and low-income people. Therefore, it is of great significance to clarify and introduce the theory of sustainable green tourism development, strengthen the green certification system, and enrich the industrial structure of rural areas, both in terms of the development of the tourism environment, as well as the protection and management of tourism resources.

Various aspects of the development of rural tourism farms have been the subject of research by many Chinese and foreign scholars. It is appropriate to note the works of domestic scholars who study the theoretical aspects of entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector and rural development, in particular: Cheng Jinlong, Ding Zhihua, Feng Ling, Gao Nan, Liu Zaicong, Sungkwon Hong. and many others. Among the foreign researchers of the economy of rural tourism farms, a special place is occupied by the works of Bernard L., Campon-Kero A., Gao K., Horachko M., Kantar S., Mikwamba K., Yaopetsch S. and others. The relevance of the study is also evidenced by the attention paid by the authorities to various areas of tourism industry development. In 2018, the National Strategic Plan for Rural Revitalization (2018–2022) was released, proposing that village development should be promoted by category.

However, there are still unexplored theoretical and methodological problems that require in-depth study, especially regarding the place of rural tourism in the structure of the national economy, the prospects for transforming private farms into rural entrepreneurship, which determines the relevance of the chosen research topic.

The aim of the research is the theoretical justification and development of practical recommendations for formation of a strategy for the development of rural green tourism in China.

In accordance with the purpose of the research, the following tasks were set and solved:

- the essence of rural tourism as a specific segment of the tourism services market was disclosed;
- industry chain and business model of rural green tourism were investigated;
- methodical approaches to the assessing the potential of rural tourism development were summarized;
- an assessment of socio-economic conditions for the development of rural green tourism was carried out;
- analysis of development of rural green tourism in China was carried out;
- problems and market situation analysis of rural green tourism in China were singled out;
- proposals for improving the management of rural tourism development in China were prepared;
- strategic prospects for the development of rural green tourism were disclosed;
- information and analytical support for the formation of a strategy for the development of rural green tourism was prepared.

The object of the research is the process of formation of a strategy for the development of rural green tourism in China.

The subject of the study is theoretical and methodical provisions and practical recommendations for formation of a strategy for the development of rural green tourism.

The scientific novelty and theoretical significance of the research results lies in the development of theoretical and methodical provisions for improving the processes of formation of a strategy for the development of rural green tourism.

The theoretical and methodical basis of the qualification work are the works of Chinese and foreign scientists, materials of scientific conferences and seminars, thematic publications in periodical scientific publications. The information base of the research is made up of the materials of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of China, China National Bureau of Statistics, own analytical developments.

In the process of research, general scientific and special methods of cognition were used: structural and logical – to build the general structure of the research; system and process approaches, synthesis method – to reveal the essence of the rural green tourism; comparative analysis – in comparing the indicators of rural tourism development in China; analysis – in identifying trends in the development of business entities in the field of rural tourism; synthesis – in summarizing the results; survey method – in conducting a survey of owners of agricultural estates and potential users of their services; SWOT analysis – to identify the strengths and weaknesses of rural tourism development in China; method of graphical and tabular presentation of data; scientific generalization – when substantiating conclusions.

Effect of rural tourism on rural community development in China was published at the International scientific and practical internet conference “Problems and prospects of ensuring sustainable socio-economic development of territories”, Kharkiv (October 27–28, 2023).

The thesis consists of an introduction, three sections, a list of used sources and annexes.

# SECTION 1

## THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

### FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM ENTERPRISES

#### **1.1 The essence of rural tourism as a specific segment of the tourism services market**

As an important part of the tourism industry, the theoretical and institutional basis for the development of rural tourism is multifaceted, involving policy support, planning and design, cultural heritage, infrastructure development, public service systems, branding, and benefit linkage mechanisms. The essence of rural tourism is a specific segment of the tourism service market.

With the industrial revolution, the process of urbanization continues to accelerate. City life has become more and more noisy, people are eager to ride the rest of the work to find a quiet piece of paradise, experience and enjoy the joy of the countryside, rural tourism is precisely in such a wave of breeding. Rural tourism can be divided into two categories: traditional rural tourism and modern rural tourism. Traditional rural tourism appeared after the industrial revolution, and its main form is that some city dwellers from the countryside return to the countryside for a period of holiday in the form of “returning to their hometowns” [37]. Although traditional rural tourism has some valuable economic impacts on the local community and increases the communication opportunities between the city and the countryside, it is very different from modern rural tourism, which is mainly reflected in the following: the development of traditional rural tourism is limited by the leisure time of the main tourist body, which mainly focuses on holidays and the number of people in this kind of tourism is very limited, so it can't effectively promote the development of the local economy, and it doesn't increase more employment opportunities and improve the local economy. So it can not effectively promote the development of local economy,

increase more employment opportunities and improve the local financial environment. In fact, traditional rural tourism exists widely in many developed and developing countries around the world, and in China it is usually classified as family visit tourism.

Modern rural tourism refers to a variety of tourism activities in a contemporary context, with rural areas as the destination. It not only includes traditional activities such as farmhouse entertainment and folklore experience, but also covers a variety of forms such as ecotourism, outdoor adventure, health and wellness, and agricultural experience. The development of modern rural tourism not only provides tourists with a wealth of leisure choices, but also brings economic benefits to rural areas, helping to promote the economic and social development of rural areas and the protection of cultural heritage [38].

Rural tourism, as a new form of tourism, is defined by its tourism purpose, tourism location and tourism attraction. In terms of its concept, there is no completely unified definition of rural tourism in the academic circles at home and abroad, and we would like to focus on the following points of view (table 1.1).

Table 1.1 – Definition of “rural tourism” (compiled by the author)

| Scholars / Institutions               | Definition   |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Gilbert and Tung (Spain) [26]         | Rural tourism is a form of tourism in which farmers provide accommodation, food, etc. for tourists to engage in a variety of leisure activities in a typical rural environment such as farms and ranches.  |
| Bernard Lane (1994) (UK) [42]         | Rural tourism is not only an agricultural based tourism activity but a multi-faceted tourism activity which includes, in addition to agricultural based holiday tourism, special interest nature tourism, eco-tourism, activities such as walking, hiking and horse-riding on holiday, adventure, sports and health tourism, hunting and fishing, educational cultural and traditional tourism, and some regional folklore tourism activities. |
| Brian Garrod (2006) [25]              | Rural tourism resources are land, flora and fauna, historical buildings and other resources unique to the countryside, when tourism operators find the actual availability of these rural tourism resources, they will put them into the production process of rural tourism products, to give play to the due value of these raw materials.   |
| He Jingming and Li Lihua (China) [31] | Rural tourism refers to tourism activities that take natural and human objects with ruralness as tourism attractions in rural areas. The concept of rural tourism encompasses two aspects: one is that it takes place in rural areas, and the other is that it uses rurality as a tourism attraction, and both are   |

| Scholars / Institutions                           | Definition   |
|---|--|
|   | indispensable.   |
| Yu Ji (China) [36]                                | Rural tourism is a new form of tourism that takes the rural community as the activity place and takes the rural scenery, forest landscape, agricultural and forestry production and economic activities, the natural ecological environment of the countryside, courtyards, and social and cultural customs as the tourism objects, and takes the urban residents as the target market and attracts the tourists to go to see, have leisure, experience, physical fitness, science and research, practice work, paintings, photographs, shopping, and holiday. |
| China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) [23] | Rural tourism is a tourism activity that takes natural scenery, humanistic relics, ethnic customs, agricultural production, farmers' life and rural environment as tourism attractions and takes urban residents as the target market to satisfy tourists' needs for leisure, holiday, experience, sightseeing and entertainment.  |
| European Union (EU) and OECD [22]                 | Rurality is a key element in the marketing of rural tourism and a unique selling point that attracts tourists to the countryside as a destination.   |
| Geoffrey Wall (UK) [13]                           | Rural Green Tourism is a form of tourism that focuses on ecological and cultural sustainability, encourages visitors to live in harmony with the natural environment, and supports local economic and cultural development.  |
| C. Michael Hall (New Zealand) [68]                | Rural Green Tourism is a form of tourism that draws on the natural resources and cultural heritage of rural areas to provide educational and participatory experiences for tourists while ensuring that these resources are protected and used wisely.   |
| Daniel H. Olsen (USA) [58]                        | Rural green tourism is seen as a sustainable tourism model that not only focuses on environmental protection, but also includes social responsibility and economic contribution to the local community, as well as personal growth and environmental awareness-raising for the tourists.   |

It can be seen that, regardless of the differences in the definitions given by scholars, they all have in common that: rural tourism is a form of tourism that takes place in the countryside and the suburbs around the city, and the tourist destination takes the unique natural scenery, local conditions or primitive production and labour methods and unique customs in the countryside as the main attraction, and is able to provide tourists with the relevant tourism equipment and services in exchange for the corresponding economic benefits. Rural nature is the basis for tourism activities, and the specific activities of rural tourism are

diversified. Simply put, it is a form of tourism to rural areas for the purpose of experiencing rural culture and getting leisure and relaxation at the same time.

To sum up, rural tourism is a tourist activity that tourists go to rural areas, which not only includes traditional sightseeing tours, but also covers a variety of aspects such as experiencing rural life, participating in agricultural activities, tasting local specialties, exploring rural culture and history, and enjoying natural scenery. This form of tourism emphasizes interaction and cultural exchanges with local communities, and aims to promote local economic development, protect and pass on rural cultural heritage, while providing visitors with unique leisure experiences and educational opportunities [61].

In China, rural tourism is one of the important ways to implement the strategy of rural revitalization, which helps to promote the transformation and upgrading of agriculture, increase farmers' income, improve the rural environment, and enrich the cultural life of urban and rural areas, as well as having a positive significance for the inheritance and carrying forward of the excellent traditional Chinese culture, the promotion of national unity, and the safeguarding of national unity and territorial integrity [32]. The development of rural tourism needs to adhere to the principle of sustainable development, pay attention to environmental protection and the rational use of resources, while giving full play to local characteristics and advantages, improving the quality and level of services, strengthening the construction of tourism infrastructure, enhancing the cultural connotation and market competitiveness of tourism products, and providing tourists with a rich variety of high-quality tourism products and services. Through these measures, rural tourism can become an important force in promoting local economic and social development, cultural exchanges and national unity.

Characteristics of rural tourism [60]:

Natural landscape and ecological environment: rural tourism usually relies on beautiful natural scenery and good ecological environment, providing tourists with an environment away from the hustle and bustle of the city and close to

nature. The natural environment in these areas is often well-preserved, providing fresh air, a peaceful atmosphere and rich biodiversity.

**Multi-cultural experience and heritage:** rural tourism is not just a sightseeing activity, but also a cultural experience. Tourists can participate in local traditional festivals, folklore activities, handicraft production, picking, cooking classes, etc. Through tourism activities, more people can learn about and respect the traditions and customs of local people's lives, and gain a deeper understanding and experience of the local culture and history, thus promoting the preservation and inheritance of cultural heritage.

**Community participation:** rural tourism emphasizes the participation and benefit of local communities, encourages local communities to participate in the design and operation of tourism activities, and drives the development of the local economy, increases residents' income and improves their quality of life through tourism activities. At the same time, it also helps to enhance local residents' pride in their own culture and awareness of its preservation.

**Combination of agriculture and tourism:** rural tourism is often closely integrated with agricultural production, and tourists can visit farms and experience farming activities, such as picking and planting, etc. This model helps to promote agricultural knowledge and technology, and also provides new sales channels for agricultural products.

**Sustainable development of the ecological environment:** rural tourism focuses on the concept of sustainable tourism, advocating green travel and environmentally friendly consumption, and minimizing the negative impact of tourism activities on the environment. Through rational planning and management, rural tourism helps to achieve the coordinated development of economy, society and environment [10].

**Combination of education and leisure:** rural tourism provides tourists with rich educational resources, especially for children and teenagers, and can serve as a platform for nature education and social practice. Rural tourism can be used as a form of educational travel, especially for children and adolescents, as a lively

nature and social practice education. In China, rural tourism is an important part of the tourism industry, which not only helps to promote the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, but also promotes the integrated development of urban and rural areas, strengthens national unity, and safeguards national unity and territorial integrity. In order to better develop rural tourism, it requires the joint efforts of the government, enterprises and communities to formulate reasonable planning and management policies, improve the quality of services, and protect and make good use of natural and cultural resources in the countryside, so as to achieve the sustainable development of tourism. Rural tourism is also a form of leisure that helps tourists relax and get rid of the pressure of daily life, so that more tourists can understand and participate in rural tourism and enjoy the happiness and benefits of tourism together.

Distinctive local characteristics: each rural area has its own unique geographical, cultural and social characteristics, and rural tourism products can often reflect these local characteristics, providing tourists with a unique tourism experience.

Integration of Technology. The integration of rural tourism with science and technology is an important trend in the development of the current tourism industry, which not only promotes the sustainable development of rural tourism, but also brings tourists a richer and deeper tourism experience. By building a smart tourism platform, using artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, Internet, VR technology, big data, cloud computing, mobile applications and other technologies, it is possible to establish a smart tourism platform to provide tourists with real-time tourism information, navigation, online booking services, personalized recommendations, etc., to improve the efficiency of and satisfaction with tourism, to promote the in-depth fusion of traditional agriculture with emerging science and technology, culture and tourism, and to enhance the value of the agricultural industry chain [43].

The concept of sustainable development is a development paradigm on how to balance economic growth, social development and environmental protection,

aiming to meet the needs of present societies without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Since its introduction at the end of the twentieth century, the concept has become an important guiding principle for global development, particularly in the areas of environmental policy, social planning and economic development.

The three pillars of sustainable development [81]:

- Environmental sustainability: protecting natural resources and ecosystems, ensuring biodiversity and the stability of the Earth's life-support systems, reducing pollution and waste generation, and promoting the efficient and recycled use of resources.
- Economic Sustainability: Promoting economic growth and innovation while ensuring the efficient use and allocation of resources and encouraging the development of a green economy and low-carbon technologies to achieve long-term economic stability and prosperity.
- Social Sustainability: Promote social justice and inclusion, provide basic services such as education and healthcare, safeguard human rights and social security, eliminate poverty and inequality, and improve the quality of life and sense of well-being.

Sustainable development is not only an environmental issue; it also involves economic, social, cultural and political aspects. By balancing these factors, sustainable development aims to build a more just, healthy and prosperous world that provides sustained well-being for current and future generations of humanity.

Green tourism is a tourism model that focuses on the combination of environmental protection, social responsibility and economic efficiency. It emphasizes the minimization of negative impacts on the natural environment and local communities in tourism activities, while promoting the sustainable development of local economies. Green tourism is not only concerned with the conservation and rational use of natural resources, but also includes respect for and support of local cultures, as well as the active management

of the environmental impacts of tourism activities and the reduction of anthropogenic pressures on the ecosystem.

Core elements of green tourism were presented on fig. 1.1, practices of green tourism were presented on fig. 1.2.



Figure 1.1 – Core elements of green tourism (compiled by the author according to [12])

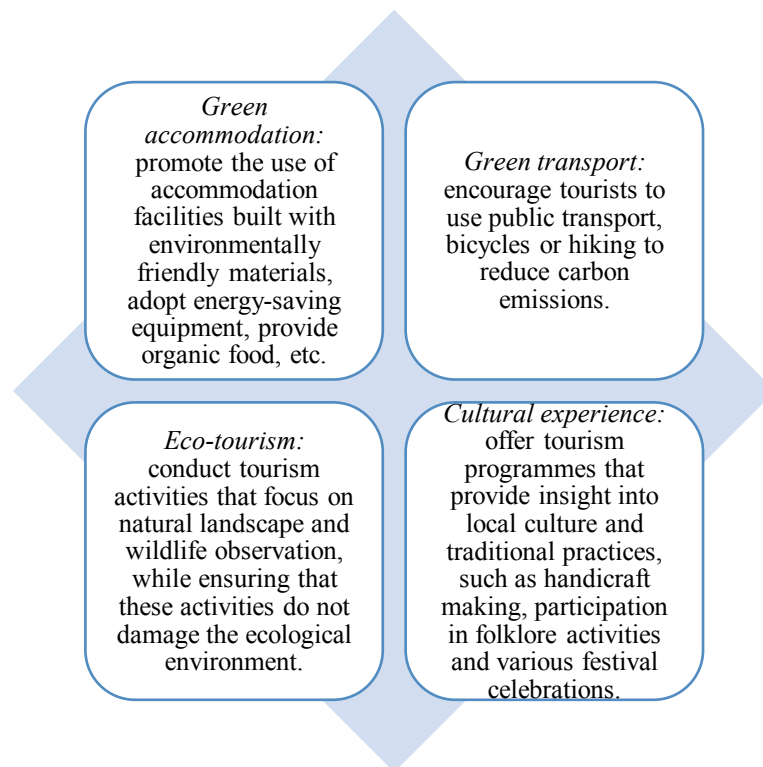


Figure 1.2 – Practices of green tourism (compiled by the author according to [49])

Green tourism not only helps to protect the environment and promote socio-economic development, but also enhances tourists' travelling experience, bringing them closer to nature and enabling them to understand and respect the different cultures and lifestyles of human groups. Through green tourism, it can promote the sustainable development of tourism and achieve the unity of economic, social and environmental benefits.

To further extend the concept of green tourism, rural green tourism is a form of leisure tourism that integrates elements of ecology, agriculture and tourism against the background of rural natural resources, rural ecological landscapes, rural production activities and rural customs and culture.

Rural green tourism is the combination of ecotourism and rural tourism, its main characteristics are [16]:

- rural ecological resources as the basis, emphasizing the ecological protection and cultural heritage in the tourism process;
- rural culture as a feature, through the depth of cultural connotation and tourism value, to create a unique rural tourism brand;
- taking farmers as the core, the tourism industry drives farmers to increase their income and rural economic development, so as to achieve a win-win situation between farmers and the tourism industry.

Traditional rural tourism mainly aims at leisure and entertainment, and tourists usually want to escape from the hustle and bustle of the city and enjoy the tranquility and beauty of the countryside. Rural green tourism, on the other hand, pays more attention to the protection of the natural environment and cultural heritage, emphasizes the concept of sustainable development, and aims to provide a form of tourism that meets the needs of tourists while protecting the environment and promoting the development of local communities (fig. 1.3).

The activity content of traditional rural tourism may include sightseeing, tasting local cuisine and experiencing rural life. Rural green tourism, on the other hand, focuses more on in-depth participation and experience, such as interacting with local communities, learning about local culture and traditional skills, and

participating in environmental protection activities. In addition, green tourism may also include activities to explore the natural environment and cultural heritage, such as hiking, camping, wildlife observation and local cultural experiences.

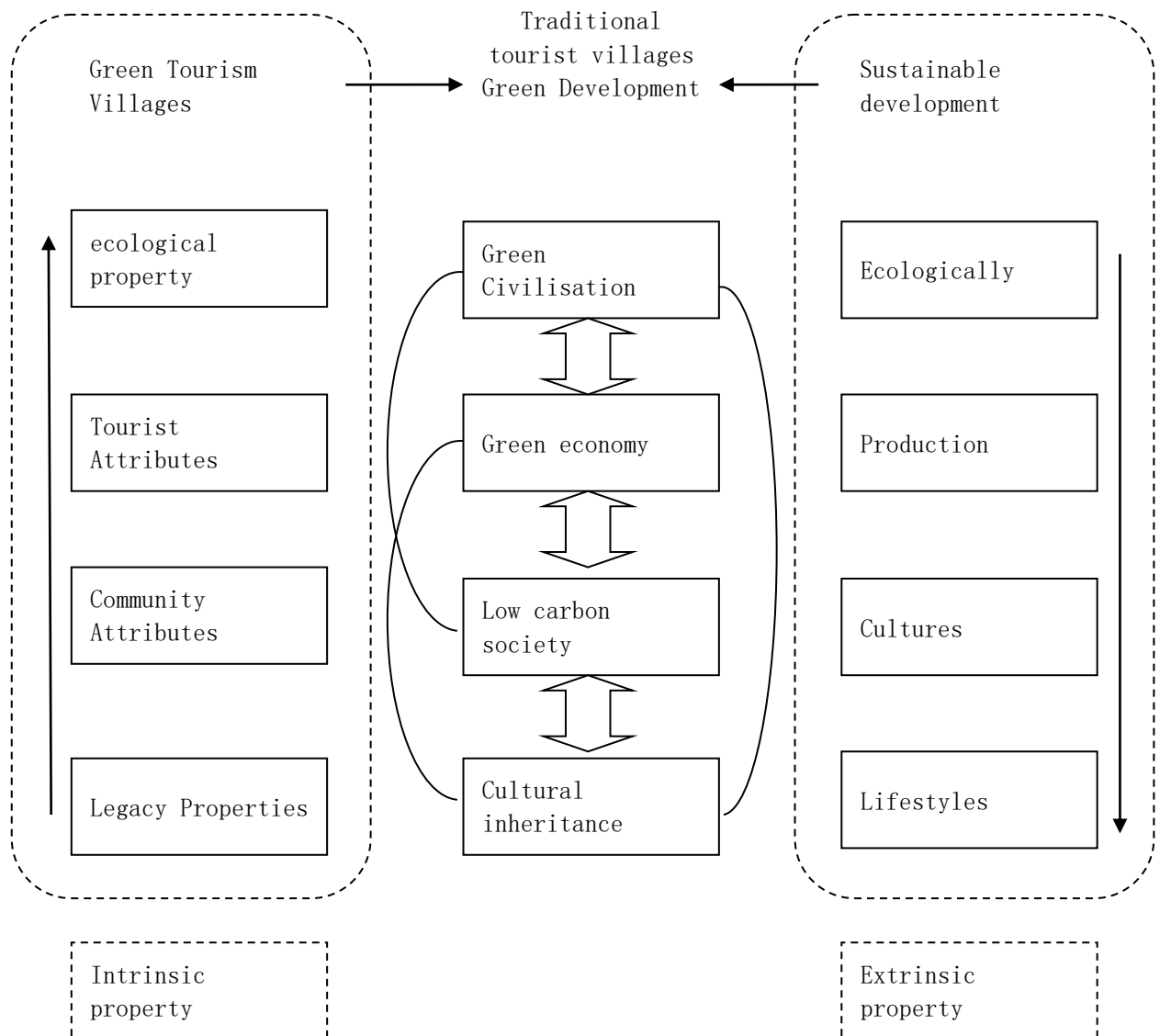


Figure 1.3 – Connotation of rural green tourism development (compiled by the author according to [40])

Traditional rural tourism may sometimes have some impact on the environment, such as noise, air pollution and rubbish. Rural green tourism, on the other hand, pays more attention to reducing the impact on the environment by adopting a series of environmental protection measures, such as reducing

rubbish, conserving energy and protecting wild animals and plants, in order to ensure the sustainability of tourism activities.

Traditional rural tourism mainly focuses on economic benefits, increasing local income by attracting tourists. Rural green tourism, on the other hand, focuses more on the balance between economic and social benefits, and is committed to promoting the sustainable development of local communities and improving the living standards of local residents, while protecting the natural environment and cultural heritage.

Overall, in terms of the connotation of rural green tourism development, rural green tourism is a type of tourism that pays more attention to environmental protection, sustainable development and community participation, and it aims to realize a harmonious symbiosis between tourism, environmental protection and community development. Traditional rural tourism, on the other hand, focuses more on providing leisure and recreational experiences, and to a certain extent ignores the importance of environmental protection and community development.

## **1.2 Industry chain and business model of rural green tourism**

The rural green tourism industry chain is a series of interrelated industries and activities formed by integrating agricultural, cultural, leisure and ecological resources. This industry chain not only includes traditional tourism services, such as accommodation, catering, transport and sightseeing, but also covers a variety of aspects such as agricultural production, cultural experience, environmental protection and community development. The following are the main components of the rural green tourism industry chain (fig. 1.4).

Developing tourism in rural areas requires a large amount of hardware infrastructure, transportation facilities, accommodation facilities, public facilities, and communication facilities, because rural areas are often located in remote locations, and thus much of infrastructure is not as advanced and complete [24].

|                                       |                                   |  |                              |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| Rural<br>Tourism<br>Industry<br>Chain | Core layer                        | Rural Tourism<br>Enterprises           | Farmhouse                    |
|                                       |                                   |  | B&B                          |
|                                       |                                   |  | Resorts, Country Hotels      |
|                                       |                                   |  | Farms, Wineries              |
|                                       | Resource<br>layer                 | Natural resources                      | Landscape                    |
|                                       |                                   |  | Farmland, Orchard            |
|                                       |                                   |  | Forests and Wetlands         |
|                                       |                                   | Cultural resource                      | Historic Sites               |
|                                       |                                   |  | Traditional Villages         |
|                                       |                                   |  | Folklore Activities          |
|                                       |                                   |  | Intangible Cultural Heritage |
|                                       |                                   | Service layer                          | Tourism Services             |
|                                       | Catering                          |  |                              |
|                                       | Accommodation                     |  |                              |
|                                       | Tourism                           |  |                              |
|                                       | Experience the service            |  | Agricultural                 |
|                                       |                                   |  | Handicraft                   |
|                                       |                                   |  | Folklore                     |
|                                       |                                   |  | Ecology                      |
|                                       | Support layer                     | Infrastructure                         | Roads,                       |
|                                       |                                   |  | Public                       |
|                                       |                                   |  | Network                      |
|                                       |                                   |  | Public                       |
|                                       |                                   | Policy support                         | Financial                    |
|                                       |                                   |  | Tax                          |
|                                       |                                   |  | Land                         |
|                                       |                                   |  | Tourism                      |
|                                       | Elongation<br>layer               | Agro-processing                        | Food Processing              |
| Speciality Handicrafts                |                                   |  |                              |
| E-commerce                            |                                   | Online Booking                         |                              |
|                                       |                                   | Online Sales                           |                              |
| Education and<br>training             |                                   | Tourism Service Training               |                              |
|                                       |                                   | Agricultural Technology Training       |                              |
| Cooperation<br>level                  | Government<br>organization        | Tourism Bureau                         |                              |
|                                       |                                   | Agricultural Sector                    |                              |
|                                       |                                   | Cultural Sector                        |                              |
|                                       | Non-governmental<br>organizations | Environmental protection organizations |                              |
|                                       |                                   | Cultural preservation organizations    |                              |
|                                       | Cooperative partner               | Travel agencies                        |                              |
|                                       |                                   | E-commerce platforms                   |                              |
|                                       |                                   | Financial institutions                 |                              |
| Market<br>segment                     | Target market                     | Domestic Tourists                      |                              |
|                                       |                                   | International tourists                 |                              |
|                                       | Marketing                         | Advertising                            |                              |
|                                       |                                   | Tourism Festivals                      |                              |
|                                       |                                   | Social Media Marketing                 |                              |
|                                       | Client service                    | After Sales Service                    |                              |
|                                       |                                   | Customer Feedback Mechanism            |                              |

Figure 1.4 – Industrial chain structure diagram of rural tourism development  
(compiled by the author according to [90])

Agricultural production is the foundation of the rural green tourism industry chain. Through the development of speciality agriculture, leisure agriculture and organic agriculture, it can not only provide fresh agricultural products, but also offer tourists the opportunity to experience agricultural production activities, such as picking, planting and harvesting. In addition, it can also provide urban residents with access to agricultural products produced by themselves. Agricultural experience is an important part of rural tourism, and tourists can participate in farming activities in the countryside, learn about the process of agricultural production and the planting techniques of agricultural products, and increase their knowledge and understanding of agriculture.

The cultural experience in the rural green tourism industry chain includes the display and inheritance of traditional handicrafts, folk activities, and intangible cultural heritage. The integration of these cultural elements enriches the content of tourism products and enhances the value of tourists' tourism experience. Handicrafts are one of the important commodities in rural tourism, and tourists can buy local handicrafts in rural areas to learn about local culture and traditional handicraft techniques. The production of handicrafts can not only increase the income of local farmers, but also protect and pass on traditional culture [33].

Environmental protection is an important part of rural green tourism. Through measures such as ecological protection, environmental monitoring, green building, the use of clean energy, and the treatment and recycling of waste, the natural environment of the countryside can be protected and improved to provide tourists with a beautiful tourist environment.

The development of rural green tourism cannot be separated from the participation and support of local communities. By providing employment opportunities and training local residents to become tourism service personnel, they can conduct guided tours and interpretation services, and do a good job in customer service and customer complaint handling. Encourage residents to participate in the operation of tourism projects and organize tourism activities, etc.,

so as to promote the development of the community's economy and increase the income of residents.

Tourism service is the core link of the rural green tourism industry chain, including accommodation, catering, tour guide service and transport connection. Through the provision of quality tourism services, the basic needs of tourists are met and their satisfaction is enhanced. Catering and accommodation, in particular, are one of the important industries in rural tourism, where tourists can taste local specialities in the countryside, stay in rural speciality dwellings, and learn about local food culture and customs. Meanwhile, farmers can also increase their income and employment opportunities by opening catering services such as Nongjiale [46].

Leisure and recreation activities, such as hiking, cycling, camping and water sports, are an important part of rural green tourism. These activities not only attract tourists, but also promote the development of local related industries.

The development and sale of tourism commodities, such as local specialities, handicrafts and souvenirs, can not only increase farmers' tourism income, but also promote local culture and special products.

The following industrial chain structure diagram of rural tourism development can help us understand the various components of the rural tourism industrial chain and their interrelationships more clearly.

This diagram starts from the core layer of rural tourism enterprises and extends outwards to the resource layer of natural and cultural resources, and then through the service layer to provide specific tourism and experiential services. The support layer includes infrastructure and policy support, providing the necessary conditions for the operation and development of rural tourism. The extension layer involves the processing of agricultural products, e-commerce platforms and education and training, which are all important components of the rural tourism industry chain. The cooperation layer emphasizes collaborative relationships with government agencies, NGOs and partners. Finally, the market layer focuses on the target market, marketing promotion and customer service to

ensure that rural tourism products can attract tourists and provide satisfactory services. Through such a mind map, we can have a more comprehensive understanding of the complexity and multidimensionality of the rural tourism industry chain and how the various components interact with each other to jointly promote the development of the rural tourism industry.

There are a variety of business models for rural green tourism, each of which endeavors to achieve a balance between environmental sustainability, economic benefits and social benefits. The following are some typical business models for rural green tourism (table 1.2).

Table 1.2 – Typical business models for rural green tourism (compiled by the author according to [67])

| Title of business model                                | Description of business model   |
|--|---|
| Eco-agriculture tourism model                          | Combining agricultural production and tourism experience, tourists can participate in agricultural activities, such as sowing, harvesting, breeding animals, etc., while learning about the production process of organic agriculture and green agricultural products. Profit is realized through the sale of self-produced organic agricultural products |
| Rural B&B model  | Use unused houses in the countryside to transform into speciality B&Bs, providing visitors with a unique accommodation experience. The design of the B&B integrates local culture and natural features, emphasizing comfort and environmental protection  |
| Nature education and study mode                        | Carry out activities such as natural environment education and farming culture education for students and children. Provide outdoor teaching, field trips and other services to enhance visitors' understanding of nature and culture   |
| Cultural tourism experience mode                       | Relying on the history, culture and folk traditions of the countryside, provide activities such as handicraft experiences, folk performances and traditional festival celebrations. Revenue is generated through admission fees, crafts sales, and guided tours and explanations  |
| Health and wellness, leisure and holiday tourism model | Combine the fresh air, green ingredients and tranquil environment of the countryside to provide health and wellness services such as yoga, meditation and hot springs. Attract groups of tourists pursuing a healthy life, and achieve profitability by providing accommodation, catering services, and wellness courses                                  |
| Outdoor adventure tourism model                        | Make use of the natural resources of the countryside, such as mountains and rivers, to carry out outdoor adventure activities such as hiking, rock climbing and rafting. Provide professional outdoor equipment rental, guide services and security, and earn income through related service fees   |
| Community Participatory Tourism Model                  | Encourage local community residents to actively participate in the development and operation of rural tourism and share the economic gains brought by tourism. Through co-operatives or shareholding systems, residents can become shareholders in tourism development to enhance their sense of belonging and responsibility                             |

These business models can be flexibly selected and combined according to local characteristics and market demand in order to form competitive rural green tourism products. At the same time, these models also need to focus on interaction and cooperation with local communities to ensure that local residents can benefit from tourism development and achieve sustainable tourism development.

Community participation plays a vital role in the development of rural tourism, and its roles are mainly [67]:

**Promoting sustainable economic development:** community participation helps to ensure that the economic benefits of rural tourism projects can be fairly distributed to local residents, thereby improving their living standards and economic conditions. By participating in the provision of tourism services, such as operating bed and breakfasts, catering and handicraft sales, residents can directly benefit from the development of tourism, increase their incomes and reduce poverty.

**Protecting and passing on cultural heritage:** rural tourism is often closely related to local cultural heritage. Community members have a natural affinity for local culture and a sense of protection, and their participation helps to protect and pass on local history, traditions and customs. Through community efforts, it can be ensured that tourism development will not destroy the originality and authenticity of cultural heritage.

**Enhancing community cohesion and identity:** community participation can strengthen the ties between residents and enhance community cohesion and identity. When residents participate in rural tourism projects together, they will value and protect their community more, and they can also enhance their sense of belonging and pride in the community.

**Improve the quality of tourism products:** local community residents have a deep understanding and affection for their own homes, and their participation can provide valuable local knowledge and creativity for the development of tourism products and services. This not only enhances the quality and diversity of the

tourism experience, but also ensures that tourism activities are in harmony with the local culture and environment.

Promote environmental protection and sustainable development: community members usually have a strong sense of protection of the local environment. Their participation helps to implement and monitor environmental protection measures to ensure that tourism activities do not cause irreversible damage to the natural environment.

Enhance democracy and transparency in decision-making: community participation helps ensure a more democratic and transparent decision-making process for tourism development. Through participation in decision-making, residents are able to directly express their opinions and needs, ensuring that tourism development plans reflect the wishes and interests of community members.

Enhancing the attractiveness of tourism destinations: when community residents actively participate in tourism activities, their warmth and friendliness can be an important factor in attracting tourists. Tourists can not only enjoy authentic cultural experiences, but also feel the warmth and vitality of the community, thus enhancing the overall attractiveness of the destination.

In conclusion, community participation is a key factor in the development of rural tourism, which not only promotes economic growth and social progress, but also protects cultural and environmental sustainability and lays a solid foundation for the long-term development of rural tourism.

### **1.3 Methodical approaches to assessing the potential of rural tourism development**

There are various methods to study the development strategy of rural green tourism, which can be explored from different perspectives and levels. This thesis mainly uses the following research methods:

Literature review method. By collecting and analysing academic literature, policy documents and case studies on rural green tourism at home and abroad, we sort out the development history, status quo, problems and future trends of rural green tourism, so as to provide theoretical support and practical reference for the formulation of development strategies.

Qualitative research method. Including in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation, etc. By communicating with practitioners of rural tourism, local residents, government officials, experts and scholars, etc., we obtain first-hand information and gain a deeper understanding of the actual situation and needs of rural green tourism [62].

Quantitative research method. Use questionnaire survey, statistical analysis and other methods to collect data on the number of tourists, consumer behavior, satisfaction, etc. of rural tourism, and carry out quantitative analysis, so as to provide an objective basis for the market demand, economic benefits and environmental impacts of rural tourism.

SWOT analysis method. Evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of rural green tourism development to provide a comprehensive analytical framework for the formulation of development strategies.

Case study method. Select representative rural green tourism destinations as cases, study their successful experiences and problems in depth, and refine a model that can be replicated and promoted [50].

Comparative research method. Compare and contrast the development models and practices of rural green tourism in different regions or countries, analyze their characteristics and differences, and draw lessons from them.

Model construction and simulation. Establish economic, environmental or social models of rural green tourism development, and predict the possible impacts and results through simulating different development scenarios, so as to provide a scientific basis for decision-making.

Policy analysis method. Analyze existing rural tourism policies, assess their effects and implementation, and put forward suggestions for policy optimization and improvement.

Sustainability assessment. Adopt sustainability assessment tools, such as ecological footprint and resource utilization efficiency, to evaluate the environmental, economic and social sustainability of rural green tourism [10].

Expert consultation method. Invite experts in the field of rural tourism to conduct consultations and seminars, and make use of their knowledge and experience to provide professional opinions and suggestions for the development of rural green tourism.

The combined use of the above methods allows for a comprehensive and in-depth study of the development strategy of rural green tourism, assesses the development potential of rural tourism, and provides scientific guidance and practical solutions for the sustainable development of rural tourism.

The research framework design (fig. 1.5) of rural green tourism development strategy mainly focuses on the core objectives and key elements of rural green tourism to ensure the comprehensiveness and systematicity of the study. The following is the detailed research framework:

Research background and objective setting: background analysis: assess the current development status, challenges and opportunities of rural green tourism, and the background of rural revitalization strategy. Goal setting: define the main goals of the study, such as promoting economic development, environmental protection, and cultural heritage inheritance.

Theoretical foundation and literature review. Theoretical framework: construct a research framework based on the theories of sustainable development, ecological economics, and tourism. Literature review: sort out the research literature in related fields and summarize the theory and practical experience of rural green tourism at home and abroad [69].

Research methods and data sources. Research methods: combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, such as in-depth interviews, questionnaire



Research content and analysis. Policy analysis: to study the impact and support of national and local policies on rural green tourism. Resource assessment: Analyze the current situation and potential of rural natural resources, cultural resources and human resources.

Market demand: investigate tourists' demand, consumption behavior and preference, and analyze market trends. Environmental impact: assess the impact of tourism activities on the ecological environment and propose sustainable management measures. Social and cultural impact: explore the impact of rural tourism on local social structure and cultural heritage [14].

Development path and model construction. Path design: based on the results of the study, propose development paths for rural green tourism, such as ecotourism and cultural tourism. Mode construction: construct a development mode of rural green tourism adapted to local characteristics, such as community participation, co-operative mode, etc.

Implementation of strategies. Policy suggestions: put forward policy suggestions to promote the development of rural green tourism. Investment guidance: guide the direction of investment and encourage the participation of social capital. Operation and management: propose operation and management strategies, including brand building and marketing. Environmental protection: formulate environmental protection measures to ensure the sustainable use of tourism resources.

Risk assessment and response mechanism. Risk identification: identify risk factors that may affect the development of rural green tourism. Countermeasure strategy: formulate strategies and plans to cope with risks to ensure the stability of tourism development.

Case study and empirical analysis. Case selection: select representative cases of rural green tourism for in-depth study. Empirical analysis: verify the effectiveness of the development path and model through empirical analysis [76].

Conclusion and Recommendation. Research summary: summarize the research results and put forward the overall conclusion of rural green tourism

development. Policy recommendations: to put forward specific policy recommendations and implementation suggestions for the reference of decision makers.

Follow-up research and prospect. Research outlook: to look forward to the future development trend of rural green tourism, and put forward the direction and focus of follow-up research. Through such a research design idea (fig. 1.5), it can ensure the comprehensiveness, systematicity and practicability of the research on the development strategy of rural green tourism, and provide scientific basis and practical guidance for realizing the sustainable development of rural areas.

The sources of data for the study of rural green tourism development strategies can be diversified to ensure comprehensiveness and accuracy of the study. The following are the sources of data used:

Government reports and policy documents. Official documents: policy documents such as the Guidelines on Promoting Sustainable Development of Rural Tourism issued by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China and 17 other departments provide official guidance and planning for rural tourism development. Statistical data: statistics related to rural tourism, such as the number of tourists and tourism revenue, issued by the National Bureau of Statistics of China, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and other government departments [78].

Academic research and professional institutions. Academic thesis: research results in the field of rural tourism through academic journals, conference thesis and other channels. Reports of research institutions: research reports and analysis articles released by professional institutions such as the China Tourism Research Institute.

Field surveys and interviews. Questionnaire survey: design and implement questionnaire surveys for rural tourism tourists, local residents, tourism enterprises, etc. to collect first-hand data. In-depth interviews: conduct in-depth interviews

with practitioners of rural tourism, local government officials, experts and scholars, etc. to obtain qualitative data.

**Online resources and social media.** Online platforms: use online resources such as tourism websites, e-commerce platforms, social media, etc., to collect tourists' evaluations, tourism product information, etc.

**News reports:** pay attention to online news, special reports, etc. to understand the latest news and development cases of rural tourism.

**International experience and cooperation.** International reports: refer to the reports issued by international institutions such as the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and draw on international experience. Co-operation projects: participate in international co-operation projects to exchange research results and best practices in rural tourism.

**Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs).** Project report: data and experience accumulated by NGOs and community organizations in rural tourism projects. Community research: research on cultural and ecological impacts in cooperation with local communities.

**Tourism enterprises and trade associations.** Enterprise data: operational data and market analysis reports within tourism enterprises. Industry statistics: industry trend reports released by trade associations, market research results, etc.

Through the above diversified data sources, we can gain a comprehensive understanding of the status quo, challenges, opportunities and development trends of rural green tourism, and provide solid data support for the formulation of effective development strategies.

**Difficulties and limitations of the study.**

**Data availability and quality:** due to the wide distribution of rural green tourism and the imperfect infrastructure in many areas, the workload of data collection, collation and analysis is large and complex. In addition, some key data may be difficult to access for various reasons (e.g., commercial confidentiality, privacy protection, etc.), making it difficult for researchers to obtain accurate and comprehensive data, thus affecting the depth and breadth of the study [15].

Multidisciplinary intersectionality: rural green tourism involves a number of disciplinary fields such as environmental science, sociology, economics, geography, tourism, etc., which requires interdisciplinary knowledge and methods, which puts high demands on researchers. How to achieve the organic integration of these disciplines, as well as to find a common research language and framework among them, is an important but difficult task.

Lack of assessment criteria: there are no standardized criteria for assessing the “greenness” of green tourism, which complicates the evaluation of the sustainability and impacts of rural green tourism.

Regional imbalances and cultural differences: the development and research of rural green tourism is often limited by regional and cultural factors. There are significant differences in the development status, natural environment and social structure of different regions, as well as diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, and research requires an in-depth understanding of the values, traditions and needs of local communities, which increases the difficulty and complexity of research, making it potentially difficult to directly apply the results of research in a particular region to other regions, while the development of rural green tourism in some regions may be constrained due to resources, the environment, policies and other constraints. constrained.

Multidimensionality of economic impact: the impact of rural green tourism on the local economy is multidimensional, including direct economic gains and indirect socio-economic benefits, which are difficult to accurately measure and assess.

Long-term nature of environmental impacts: assessing the long-term impacts of tourism activities on the environment requires long-term research and monitoring, which places demands on the continuity of research and financial support [53].

Gaps in policies, regulations and practices: policies and regulations are important factors influencing the development of rural green tourism. However, these policies and regulations may be adjusted over time and with changes

in the governing situation of government agencies, thus affecting the stability and predictability of the study. Even if the study puts forward effective policy recommendations, the actual implementation process may encounter problems such as difficulty in implementing the policies and uneven distribution of resources.

**Stakeholder coordination:** rural green tourism involves multiple stakeholders, including the government, tourism developers, local residents and tourists, etc., and it is a challenge to balance the interests of all parties.

**Impact of external factors:** external factors, such as climate change, economic fluctuations, policy changes, demographics, and social perceptions, have been changing dynamically, which may have an impact on rural green tourism and increase the uncertainty of the study.

In order to overcome these difficulties and limitations, the study requires a variety of research methods, including qualitative and quantitative analyses, and multi-stakeholder participation. In addition, long-term tracking of industry research results and case studies are important tools for understanding and advancing the development of rural green tourism.

The assessment of the market demand and development potential of rural tourism is a multi-faceted analysis process involving market trends, consumer preferences, regional characteristics, and policy environments. The following are key points for evaluating the design:

**Market trend analysis:** research the current trend of the tourism market, understand whether the demand for rural tourism is growing among consumers, and what the driving factors for this growth are [72].

**Target customer groups:** identify and understand the main customer groups in the target market, including their preferences, travel habits, and spending power.

**Evaluation of regional characteristics:** considering the uniqueness of the rural area, such as natural scenery, cultural heritage, local cuisine, agricultural production activities, etc., these are all selling points for rural tourism.

**Infrastructure assessment:** assess existing infrastructure, such as catering, transportation, communication, accommodation, shopping, entertainment, and other tourism services, and whether they can meet market demand.

**Policy and regulatory environment:** understand the government's support for rural tourism, including incentives, financial support, and regulatory restrictions.

**Environmental sustainability:** assess the potential impact of rural tourism on the environment, and how to achieve sustainable tourism and protect natural environment and cultural heritage.

**Socioeconomic impact:** analyze the economic contribution of rural tourism to local communities, including job creation, increased income for residents, and the development of local businesses.

**Competition analysis:** examine tourism products and services in the same region or similar rural destinations to understand the market competition situation.

**Risk assessment:** identify potential risks that may affect the development of rural tourism, such as economic fluctuations, natural disasters, policy changes, regional wars and conflicts.

**Technology application:** evaluate the application of technology in rural tourism, such as online booking systems, virtual tourism experiences, social media marketing, etc.

**Opportunities for innovation:** explore opportunities to attract tourists through innovative services and experiences, such as eco-tourism, agricultural production experiences, and cultural festival promotion innovations.

**Market segmentation:** identify different market segments, such as family tourism, adventure tourism, elderly retirement tourism, student study tours, and customize products and services for each segment [19].

**Price sensitivity:** understand the target customers' sensitivity to price and the price they are willing to pay for high-quality rural tourism experiences.

Seasonal factors: considering the seasonal characteristics of rural tourism, assessing market demand during peak and off-season periods, and planning operational strategies accordingly.

Success case study: study other successful rural tourism cases to understand their practices and lessons learned.

In order to better understand the needs and trends of the rural green tourism market, we conducted a systematic market research. The research results show that the current demand of tourists for rural tourism mainly focuses on the following aspects:

- pursuing original natural scenery and rural cultural experience;
- focus on environmental protection and sustainability in the tourism process;
- expecting a rich variety of tourism products and activities;
- expect thoughtful service and good travelling experience.

Based on these demand characteristics, we should fully consider these factors when formulating the development strategy of rural green tourism to meet the diversified needs of tourists.

## **Conclusions to section 1**

The results of a critical review of the theoretical and methodical foundations of the development of rural tourism enterprises give grounds for drawing the following conclusions:

The multifaceted value and developmental potential of rural tourism, analyzing its essence as a distinct segment of the tourism service market from both theoretical and practical perspectives. It emphasizes that rural tourism not only offers leisure and entertainment but also contributes to the economic and social development of rural areas as well as the preservation of cultural heritage. The characteristics of rural tourism are discussed in detail, encompassing its

natural landscapes, multicultural experiences, community involvement, the integration of agriculture and tourism, sustainability, the combination of education and leisure, local characteristics, integration of technology, small-scale services, and seasonality. Furthermore, the organizational features of rural tourism are highlighted, such as small and flexible structures, a community-oriented approach, environmental and cultural sustainability, seasonal and diversified operations.

This chapter also introduces methods for evaluating the potential of rural tourism development, encompassing a literature review, qualitative and quantitative research, SWOT analysis, case studies, comparative research, model construction and simulation, policy analysis, sustainability assessment, and expert consultation. The research framework design section proposes a systematic research framework, encompassing research background and goal setting, theoretical foundation and literature review, research methods and data sources, research content and analysis, development paths and model construction, strategic implementation, risk assessment and response mechanisms, case studies and empirical analysis, conclusions and recommendations, follow-up research and prospects.

Furthermore, the discussion delves into the challenges and limitations of rural tourism development, such as data acquisition, interdisciplinarity, the absence of evaluation standards, uneven regional development, the multidimensional economic impact, the long-term environmental implications, the disparity between policies, regulations, and practices, stakeholder coordination, and external factors. Ultimately, a comprehensive approach to market demand and development evaluation for rural tourism is proposed, based on market trend analysis, target customer group research, regional characteristic assessment, infrastructure evaluation, policy and regulatory environment analysis, environmental sustainability evaluation, socio-economic impact analysis, competition analysis, risk assessment, technology application, exploration of innovation opportunities, market segmentation, understanding of price sensitivity, consideration of seasonal factors, and successful case studies.

## SECTION 2

### ANALYSIS OF TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM ENTERPRISES

#### **2.1 Socio-economic conditions for the development of rural green tourism**

Although, China is the second largest economy in the world, it is the world's factory with serious pollution and some ecological damage. The profile of China's rural areas, which are an important part of China's economic and social development, is influenced by a variety of factors, including geography, economy, society and policy. Agricultural development: small scale, low degree of mechanization, high production costs, low agricultural profits, single and backward rural economic structure, low level of farmers' income.

China's rural areas cover most of the country's land area, but population density is relatively low. According to data from China's seventh national census, the number of professional farmers in China has been less than 200 million, and their share in the total number of employed people in society has dropped to 23.6%. Second, from a geographical perspective, the rural population has decreased to 510 million, with its share of the total population dropping to 36.11%. Finally, from a household registration perspective, the rural population is still 771 million, with a share of 54.60% of the total population. These figures show that the number and structure of farmers are changing as China's urbanization process accelerates and its agriculture modernizes [2]. The proportion of rural residents in China's total population is gradually decreasing, as more and more people migrate to urban areas.

Agriculture is the traditional economic activity in rural areas of China, but its share in the overall economy has declined as China's economy has developed. Rural areas are gradually developing a variety of economic activities, including township enterprises, rural tourism, and processing of speciality agricultural

products. Education and medical resources are relatively inadequate in rural areas, although the government is working to improve these services. With the spread of the Internet and mobile communications technology, the way rural residents access information and communicate is changing.

In recent years, the Chinese government has attached great importance to building and improving rural infrastructure, and has achieved remarkable results. Most villages are connected to roads, highways are basically available at the county level, and logistics and distribution have been extended to villages on a large scale. Over the past five years, 1.275 million kilometers of rural roads have been built and reconstructed nationwide, and 99.24% of townships and 98.34% of villages have been connected to asphalt and cement roads. At the same time, the problem of drinking water safety for more than 250 million rural people has been solved, and infrastructure such as rural power grids, rubbish treatment plants and sewage treatment facilities have been gradually improved [79]. There are still some shortcomings and deficiencies in the construction of rural infrastructure and the provision of public services that require sustained investment and improvement. For example, some farmland lacks effective irrigation facilities, and the level of agricultural mechanization needs to be improved; logistics facilities for agricultural products are relatively outdated; and some villages do not have sewage and rubbish treatment facilities, which is overall backward compared to urban infrastructure. The government has invested in the construction of rural infrastructure, such as roads, water conservancy, electric power, and communication networks, in order to promote economic development and improve the lives of residents. Improvements in infrastructure have helped to reduce the urban-rural gap and increase the attractiveness of rural areas.

The Chinese government has implemented a series of policies and reforms aimed at promoting rural development and increasing farmers' incomes, such as agricultural subsidies and reform of the rural land system. The "Rural Revitalization Strategy" is an important policy for China's current rural

development, aiming to comprehensively improve the economic, social, cultural and ecological levels of rural areas.

Rural areas face a number of environmental problems, such as land degradation, water scarcity and pollution. The government and all sectors of society are promoting sustainable agriculture and ecological conservation measures to protect the rural environment and promote green development.

Rural areas retain rich traditional Chinese culture and customs, which have become important resources for rural tourism and cultural inheritance. With the advancement of modernization, the culture and way of life in rural areas are gradually changing, and some traditions are disappearing.

The profile of China's rural areas is diverse and dynamically changing, influenced by multiple factors such as globalization, marketisation and policy orientation. In the future, the development of rural areas will continue to be a focus of attention for the Chinese Government and society.

China's tourism industry is an important part of the national economy and has achieved remarkable development in recent years. Below are several key points of China's tourism development overview:

**Rapid growth:** China is one of the largest tourism markets in the world, and the number of domestic and foreign tourist arrivals continues to grow. The domestic tourism market is particularly active, with more and more Chinese choosing to travel as a form of leisure as their income levels rise and their leisure time increases. In terms of the growth of total domestic tourism revenue, the amount of tourism revenue has been growing rapidly until the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic (fig. 2.1).

**Policy support:** the Chinese Government attaches great importance to the development of tourism and has introduced a series of policies and measures to promote the healthy development of tourism, including the promotion of the "Year of Tourism" and the construction of tourism infrastructure. The government has also promoted the Belt and Road Initiative, which aims

to strengthen economic cooperation with countries along the route by promoting international tourism exchanges.

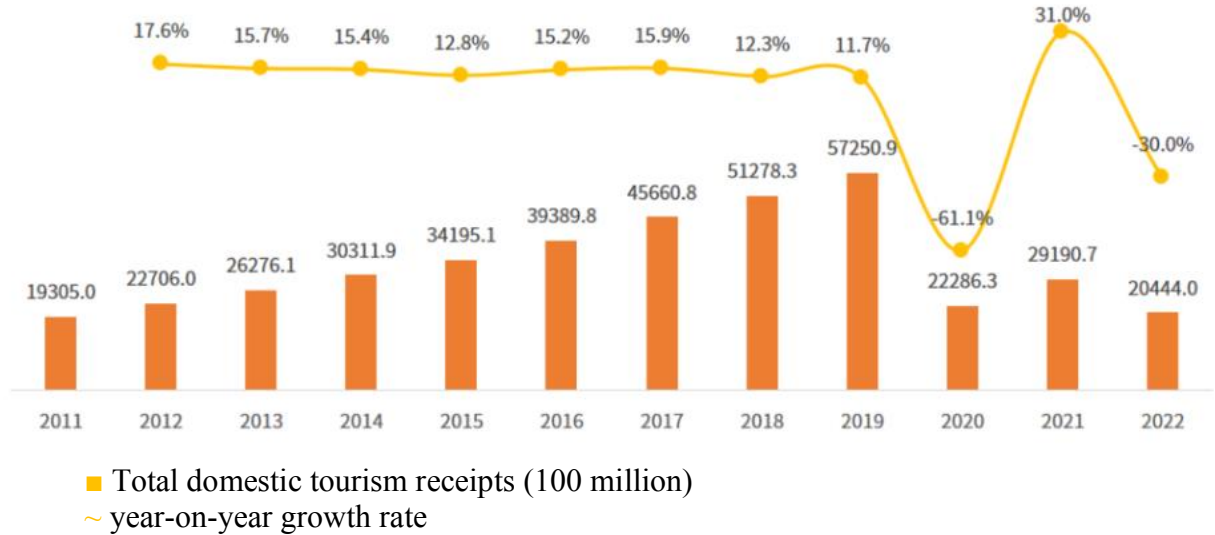


Figure 2.1 – China’s gross domestic tourism revenue and year-on-year growth rate, 2021 – 2022 (compiled by the author according to [55])

Table 2.1 – Five stages of rural tourism development (compiled by the author according to [92])

| Tourism model                                 | Characteristics  | Existing problems   |
|---|--|---|
| Pastoral sightseeing experience               | Based on the beautiful rural scenery and taking the rural life experience as the core, it brings visitors a feeling of being there.  | Undesirable infrastructure construction; homogeneous projects; lack of participation.   |
| Experience tour of ancient villages and towns | Relying on good rural scenery, antique architectural relics, profound cultural heritage, simple folk customs, etc., it takes the inheritance of innovative culture and art industry as the core. | Threats caused by commercialization model; Weak awareness of protection; Alienation of traditional culture.                         |
| Manor (leisure) economy                       | Based on agriculture and tourism, it integrates various functions such as agricultural production, sightseeing and leisure, science education, health care and vacation, and business meetings . | Slow return of investment, lack of proper operation mode and characteristics, inaccurate understanding of manor economy development |
| Rural leisure (recreation) vacation           | It makes use of the ecological environment, combining cultural customs, leisure vacations, health preservation, etc.   | As an important form of business, the definition of B & B is vague; the business is homogeneous; and it lacks effective supervision |

Infrastructure development: China has invested heavily in tourism infrastructure, including transport networks, hotel accommodation and tourist attractions. The rapid development of high-speed rail networks has greatly facilitated domestic tourism, enabling tourists to reach various destinations more quickly.

Tourism Innovation: China's tourism industry continues to innovate and many new tourism formats have emerged, such as rural tourism, cultural tourism, ecotourism, ice and snow tourism. The application of Internet technology has also promoted the development of online tourism services, such as online booking and personalised travel recommendations.

Sustainable development: the rapid development of tourism has also brought about some challenges, such as environmental protection and cultural heritage preservation. The government and the industry are increasingly focusing on the sustainable development of the tourism industry, promoting green tourism and responsible tourism [63].

Epidemic impact: the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on China's tourism industry, leading to a temporary contraction of the domestic and international tourism markets, with total domestic tourism revenues dropping off a cliff in 2020, and year-on-year growth rates declining markedly (fig. 2.1). The epidemic has also led to an accelerated transformation of the tourism industry. The epidemic has also prompted the tourism industry to accelerate its transformation, such as developing healthy and safe tourism, upgrading the quality of tourism services, and strengthening digitalisation.

Overall, China's tourism industry shows strong development momentum and broad market prospects, but also faces the challenges of transformation, upgrading and sustainable development. In the future, China's tourism industry is expected to continue to develop in a more diversified, high-quality and intelligent direction.

In the "14<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan for Tourism Development" [82], the Chinese government clearly proposed to regulate the development of rural tourism, deeply excavate and inherit the excellent traditional culture in the countryside, and drive

the development of rural tourism. The policy emphasises cultural leadership and ecological priority, promotes the harmonious symbiosis between tourism and environmental protection, and integrates cultural connotations into the whole process of tourism development.

The China Rural Tourism Development Report (2023) points out that with the full recovery of the tourism market, China's rural tourism has seen major benefits, with the market scale continuing to expand and the development system improving. Rural tourism has become an important hand in promoting rural revitalisation, showing strong development momentum and highlighting the value of diversity [84].

Rural tourism has become an important part of the tourism market, and its market share is increasing. Diversified value highlights: rural tourism not only promotes economic development, but also contributes to the overall revitalization of the countryside. The development environment has been continuously optimised, promoting the construction of “livable, workable and beautiful countryside”.

The whole industry chain has been upgraded, and new industries such as B&Bs and experiential agriculture continue to emerge. Tourists' needs are diversified, and consumption potential has been fully released. Digital technology empowers the development of rural tourism and improves the level of “wisdom”.

Future development direction and suggestions: strengthen top-level design (increase policy support, break regional restrictions, and achieve synergistic development); improve supporting facilities (optimize the community development environment and enhance infrastructure construction); innovation-driven (deepen the application of digital technology and promote the intelligentization and informatization of rural tourism); talent cultivation: innovate the talent cultivation system and improve the service quality of rural tourism.

The policy documents of the State Council have proposed a series of measures, including improving the policy guarantee system of rural tourism, promoting infrastructure construction, implementing rural tourism boutique

projects, and establishing and improving the benefit linkage mechanism, etc., in order to support the high-quality development of rural tourism [84].

The policy encourages the protection and inheritance of humanistic resources and promotes the organic integration of non-heritage into tourism products and routes, while emphasising the concept of green development and steadily promoting the construction of national cultural parks and national parks.

The policy document mentions the need to expand the field of tourism consumption, innovate tourism consumption scenarios, and cultivate new modes, such as nighttime consumption, tourism e-commerce, and shared tourism consumption, in order to meet the diversified needs of tourists.

The policy advocates civilised tourism practices, improves the quality of tourism services, strengthens the construction of tourism public service facilities, promotes barrier-free tourism, and ensures that tourism activities are civilised, healthy and green.

Relevant departments will support the development of tourism in accordance with the division of responsibilities to form a development synergy. This includes support policies in terms of land use, finance, region, taxation, finance, investment and talents, as well as strengthening the theoretical and talent support for tourism.

In summary, China's rural tourism is ushering in opportunities for rapid development with strong policy support, showing good development trends and broad prospects. In the future, rural tourism will continue to be an important force in promoting rural revitalisation and modernisation of agriculture and rural areas, and will be continuously optimised and upgraded in order to achieve sustainable development.

## **2.2 Analysis of the development of rural green tourism in China**

Currently, there are some problems in the development process of rural green tourism, such as single tourism product, lack of characteristics, environmental damage, and insufficient community participation. These problems

constrain the development of rural green tourism, and need to take effective measures to solve them.

China's rural tourism resources are rich and diverse, but the degree of development and utilization is uneven. On the one hand, many rural areas have unique natural landscapes, history and culture, and ethnic customs, which make them ideal destinations for tourists; on the other hand, due to the lack of scientific planning and effective management, these resources are often underutilised or even destroyed. At the same time, the rural tourism market is also facing challenges such as intensified market competition and diversification of tourists' demands [59].

With the rapid development of China's economy and the improvement of people's living standards, the scale of the rural tourism market has been growing year by year, and the business income (fig. 2.2) and the number of rural tourists have shown a rising trend (fig. 2.3). More and more urban residents choose to visit rural areas on weekends or holidays to experience green and ecological tourism, thus promoting the prosperity of the rural tourism market.

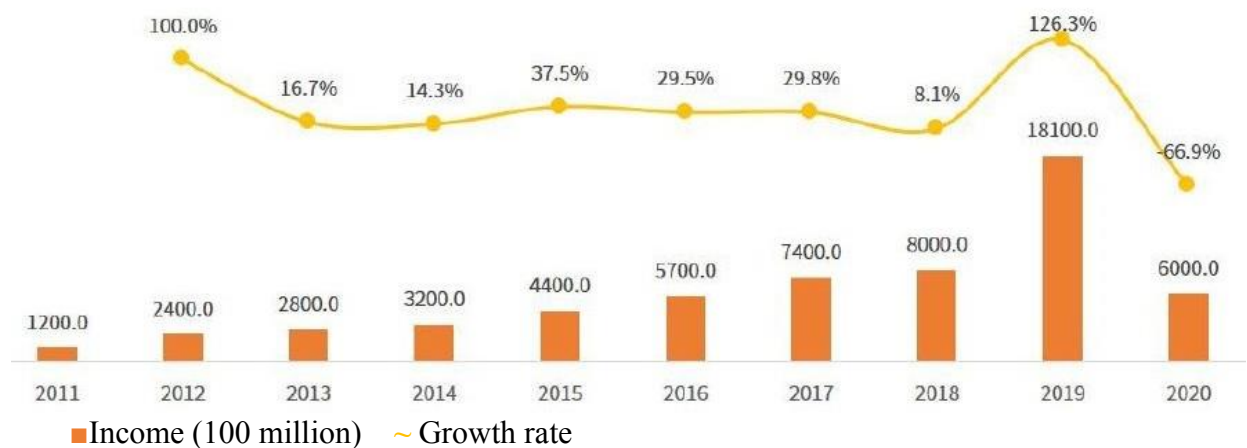


Figure 2.2 – Income and growth rate of leisure agriculture and rural tourism in China, 2011–2022 (compiled by the author according to [55])

At present, in the tourism market, consumers' requirements are getting higher and higher, and rural tourism products are getting richer and richer, including

sightseeing agriculture, leisure and holiday tours, folk culture tours and other forms, which satisfy the needs of different tourists and gradually develop in the direction of diversification and personalisation. For example, some regions have launched innovative products such as B&B experience, farming culture experience and eco-tourism by combining local characteristic culture and natural resources, meeting the diversified needs of tourists (fig. 2.4). From the ratings of various descriptions of rural tourism by Chinese travel users, consumers are most concerned with beautiful natural scenery, instead, the requirements of accommodation facilities are rated the lowest. (fig. 2.5)

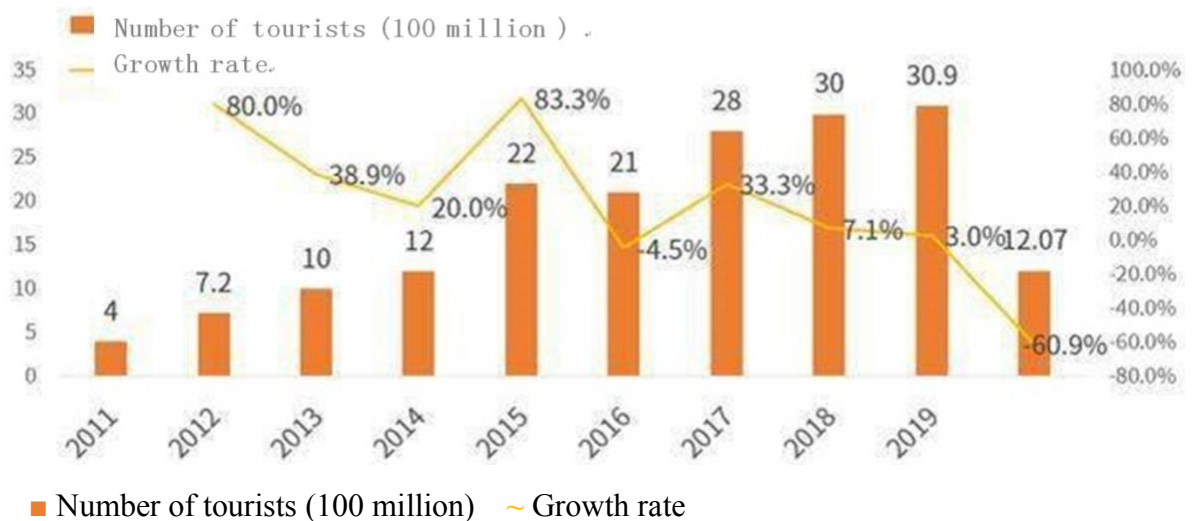


Figure 2.3 –The number and growth rate of leisure agriculture and rural tourism reception, China, 2011 – August 2020 (compiled by the author according to [55])

In order to promote the development of rural green tourism, government support and encouragement policies for rural tourism have been continuously promulgated. The preferential policies introduced by governments at all levels have promoted the construction of rural tourism infrastructure and the improvement of product quality.

In the process of rural tourism development, people pay more and more attention to ecological environmental protection and emphasise sustainable development.

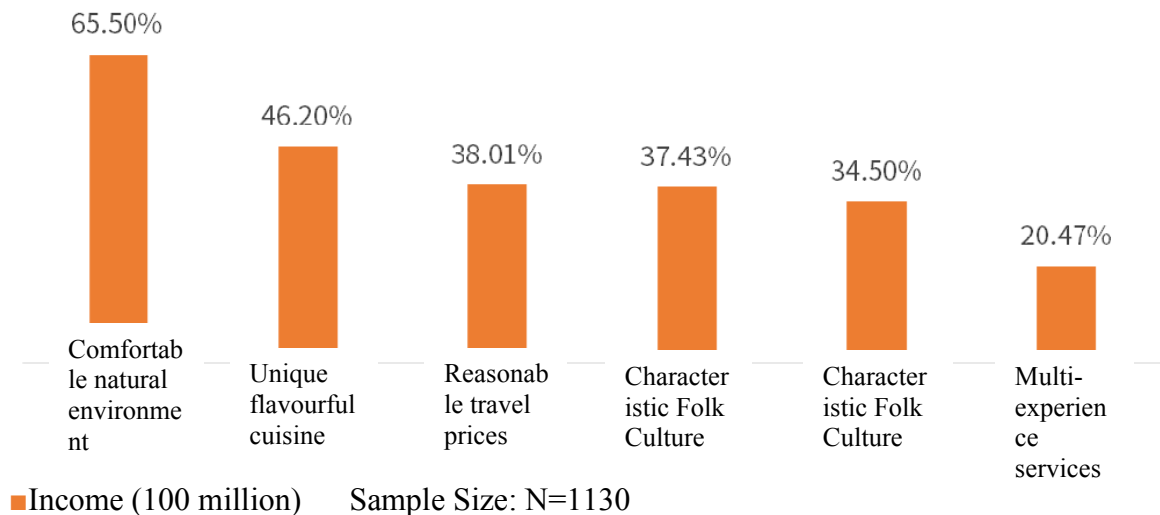


Figure 2.4 – 2020 Analysis of consumer-focused factors in rural tourism in China (compiled by the author according to [55])

China's rural tourism resources are very rich, covering a wide range of natural scenery, history and culture, and folk customs. At the same time, the Chinese government and all sectors of society are actively promoting the sustainable development of rural tourism in order to protect the rural environment and cultural heritage.

China's rural tourism resources are very rich, with diverse natural landscapes. Due to China's vast territory, rural areas have different natural landscapes, providing diverse natural landscapes. For example, mountain ranges, forests, lakes, rivers, fields, ancient towns and villages, and farming culture are all important parts of rural tourism resources, which provide unique conditions for rural tourism. The government and relevant departments are taking measures to protect these natural resources and prevent over-exploitation and environmental pollution.

The countryside is rich in human resources. China's rural areas retain many traditional villages and historical sites, such as old temples, ancestral halls and traditional handicrafts, which are important factors in attracting tourists. At the same time, folk culture and traditional festivals in the countryside provide unique experiences for tourists. These are unique resources for rural tourism. In order

to protect these cultural heritages, the government has implemented a series of protection and restoration projects and encouraged local residents to participate in cultural heritage preservation [20].

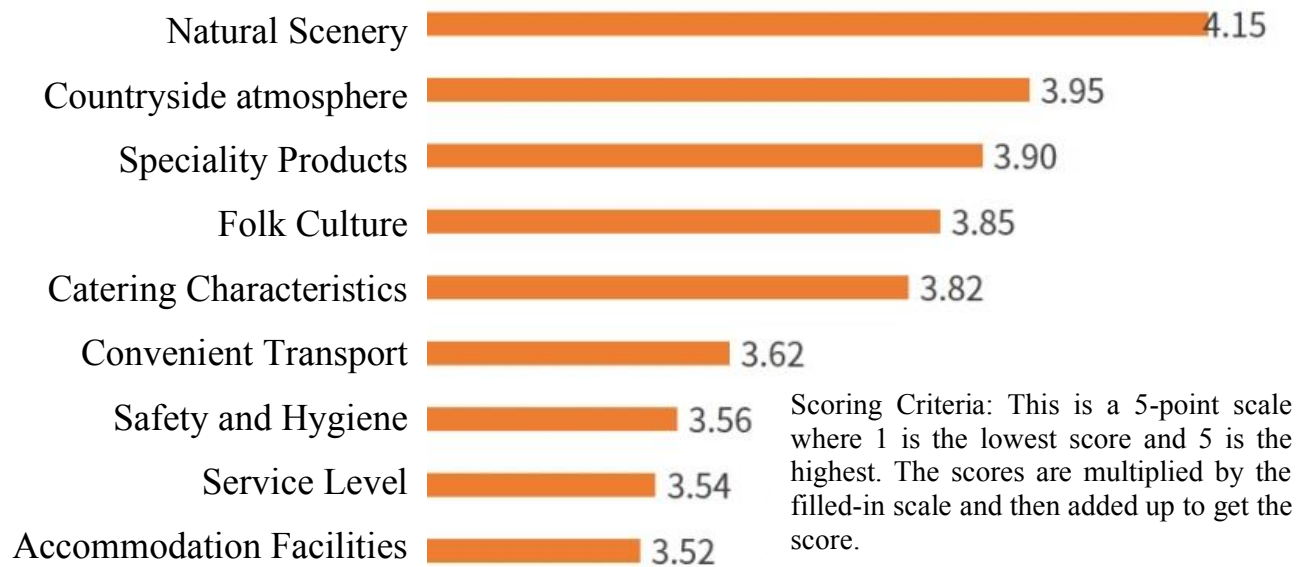


Figure 2.5 – 2020 Chinese travel users' ratings of rural tourism conditions (compiled by the author according to [56])

Villages in different regions have a rich variety of folk activities and festivals, such as temple fairs, dragon and lion dances, float parades and traditional handicraft production, etc. These folk customs add to the charm of rural tourism. The development of rural tourism helps to pass on and promote these folk cultures, and at the same time brings economic benefits to local residents.

The development of rural tourism has improved the rural environment to a certain extent, such as improving infrastructure and upgrading sanitary conditions. However, rural tourism in some areas also faces problems of environmental pollution and ecological damage. China is the world's largest user of chemical fertilisers, pesticides, feed and farm films, and therefore produces a large amount of pollutants and agricultural waste. Taking the pesticide use in China in 2016 as an example, China's fertiliser use far exceeds the world's average use and that of developed countries (fig. 2.6). The large amount of agricultural

waste has become an important factor in polluting the environment and damaging the landscape. The large number of tourists coming to the countryside for tourism also increases the production of waste, which puts a lot of pressure on the environment.

The Chinese government has proposed a rural revitalisation strategy, one of the objectives of which is to promote the sustainable development of rural tourism. Through the development of various forms of rural tourism, such as green tourism, ecological agriculture and cultural experiences, rural environments are protected and local economies are promoted.

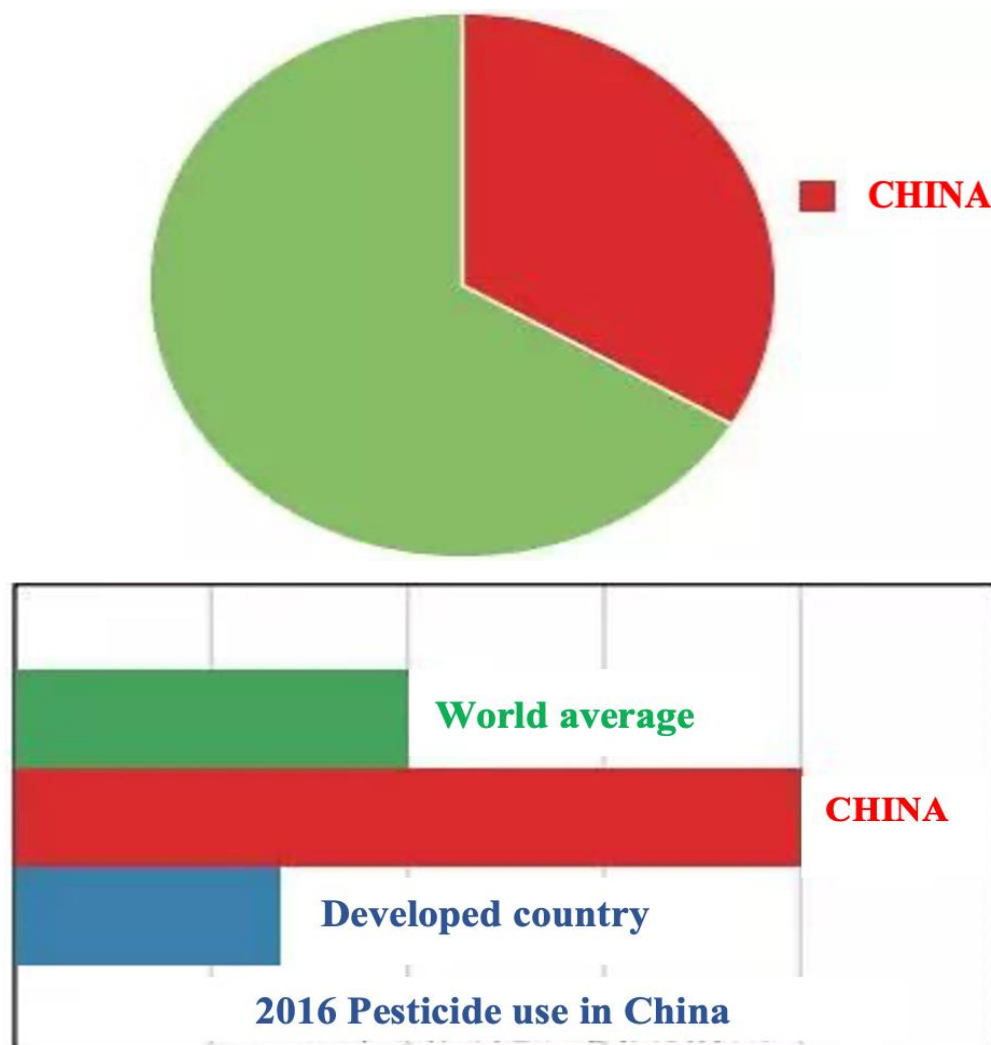


Figure 2.6 – Pesticide use in China in 2016 (compiled by the author according to [27])

Overall, rural green tourism is spacious and rich in tourism resources (fig. 2.7). However, these resources are under-utilised, and many rural areas are rich in natural resources and cultural heritage, which fail to give full play to their tourism value due to the lack of effective planning and management. The current situation of rural tourism resources and environment in China shows that rural tourism has played a positive role in promoting local economic development, inheriting culture, and enriching people's lives, but more efforts are still needed to protect the environment and sustainable development [6].

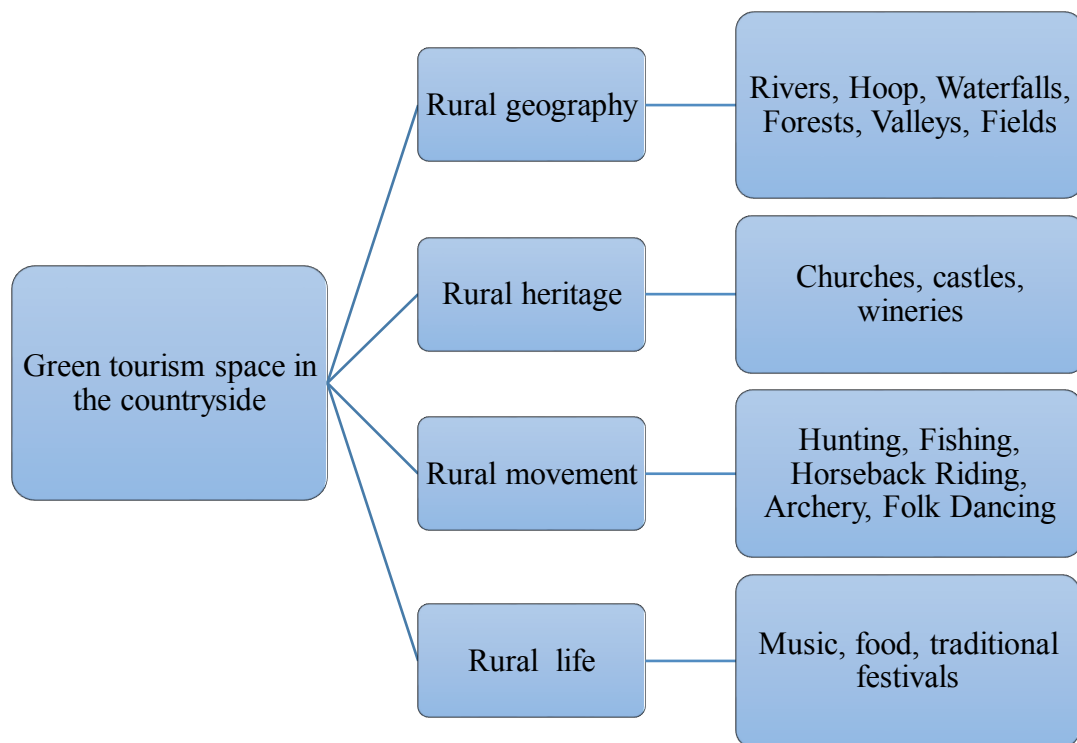


Figure 2.7 – Green tourism space in the countryside (compiled by the author according to [6])

The government has introduced a series of policies to support the development of rural tourism, such as providing financial subsidies, tax incentives and technical support. At the same time, the government is also stepping up its supervision of the rural tourism market to ensure that tourism activities are regulated and orderly.

### **2.3 Problems and market situation analysis of rural green tourism in China**

While rural green tourism is developing rapidly, there are also some problems and challenges. For example, some areas have neglected the protection of the ecological environment during the development process, resulting in over-exploitation of resources and environmental damage; in addition, the service quality and management level of some rural tourism scenic spots have yet to be improved, and need to be further strengthened by standardised management.

Homogenisation phenomenon: rural tourism products are seriously homogenised and lack innovation and characteristics, making it difficult to attract tourists to revisit. Rural tourism product structure is single, the tourism economy has a single mode of income, lack of core competitiveness, and the main source of income is farmhouse accommodation. However, with the upgrading of environmental protection policies, and the development of new tourism projects in the neighbourhood, the traditional old rural tourism has been greatly impacted, and the level of economic income in the villages has declined, affecting the future development of rural tourism [80].

Inadequate infrastructure: although the infrastructure in most Chinese cities has improved greatly, in some rural tourism areas, the infrastructure is still backward, such as the lack of high-grade roads, inconvenient accommodation and poor sanitary conditions, which limits the accessibility of tourists and hinders the development of tourism.

Inadequate resource environmental protection: in the pursuit of economic benefits, some regions have neglected the protection of rural natural resources and cultural heritage, leading to ecological damage and loss of cultural resources.

Uneven distribution of benefits: in the process of rural tourism development, farmers, as participants and beneficiaries of the tourism industry, often lack sufficient participation and benefit-sharing mechanisms; the benefits brought by the development of rural tourism have not been evenly distributed to the local

residents, and in some areas there are conflicts of interest between foreign investors and local residents, which affect the sustainable development of rural green tourism.

Uneven service quality: the service level of rural tourism varies, and the lack of unified service standards and quality supervision affects the overall satisfaction of tourists [48].

Inadequate management mechanism: there are imperfections in the management mechanism of rural tourism, such as the lack of strict supervision of service quality and inadequate safety management. These problems may lead to an increase in tourist complaints, damaging the image and reputation of rural tourism.

“Hollowing out” of villages: the main reasons are: increasing urbanisation, leading to an outflow of resources, and insufficient internal development impetus in villages, resulting in the loss of population in villages, especially the social elite groups in villages. In addition to the hollowing out of the population, at the same time village land resources are also hollowing out. A large number of unused arable land is not cultivated by anyone and cannot be transferred to the market, thus failing to generate economic returns. The low economic returns of the villagers who stay in the villages will further aggravate the “hollowing out” of the villages. This phenomenon not only causes structural faults in the village society, but also brings various problems to the development of tourism in traditional villages, such as the abandonment of traditional village buildings, the aging and decay of the original village scenery and street structure, as well as the loss of intangible cultural heritage and other problems [48].

Shortage of talents: the development of green tourism in villages is a systematic project that requires professional management and service talents, but at present there is a relative lack of such talents in rural areas, which restricts the professional and high-quality development of tourism.

In the following, the SWOT matrix is used to analyze rural green tourism from three aspects, namely environment, economy, and socio-culture, to assess

the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of rural green tourism. (table 2.2)

To sum up, rural green tourism has obvious advantages and opportunities in its development, but also faces disadvantages and threats that cannot be ignored. In order to achieve sustainable development, it is necessary to give full play to its advantages of natural resources and cultural heritage, strengthen infrastructure construction and enhance service levels, while focusing on ecological environmental protection and cultural heritage to cope with potential market competition and social and cultural impacts.

Table 2.2 – SWOT matrix of rural green tourism in China (compiled by the author according to [21])

| Strengths   | Weaknesses   |
|---|--|
| <p>(1) <i>Abundant natural resources</i>: China has a large land area, and rural areas usually have unique natural scenery, such as mountains and fields, forests and lakes, which provide unique conditions for green tourism.</p> <p>(2) <i>Deep cultural heritage</i>: China has a long history, and rural areas retain a wealth of traditional culture and folk activities, and these cultural resources can attract tourists to experience the charm of rural life.</p> <p>(3) <i>Ecological environment advantage</i>: rural green tourism emphasizes the protection and sustainable development of the ecological environment, which is in line with the current social pursuit of green environmental protection.</p> <p>(4) <i>Location and transport advantages</i>: China is located in the eastern part of Asia, with the Pacific Ocean in the east and the Eurasian continent in the west, and has a unique geographical advantage of connecting East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia and the Russian Far East. China's coastline of 18,000 kilometers, with a number of natural harbors, such as Shanghai, Tianjin, Guangzhou, etc., to facilitate maritime trade and international exchanges.</p> <p>(5) <i>Transportation network</i>: China has the longest high-speed railway network in the world, covering all parts of the country and providing fast and convenient land transport services. The well-developed highway system is able to connect cities and villages, promoting balanced regional economic development. The aviation network covers many domestic and international routes, and Chinese</p> | <p>(1) <i>Inadequate infrastructure</i>: Many remote villages have inadequate infrastructure, such as relatively outdated transport and accommodation, which affects tourists' travelling experience.</p> <p>(2) <i>Lack of professional management and services</i>: rural tourism often lacks professional management and service teams, resulting in uneven service quality.</p> <p>(3) <i>Homogenised competition</i>: some regions lack innovation in the development of rural green tourism, resulting in serious product homogenisation and reduced attractiveness.</p> |

| airlines occupy an important position in the global aviation market.   |  |
|--|--|
| Opportunities  | Threats  |
| <p>(1) <i>Policy support</i>: the state attaches more and more importance to rural tourism, and China's central government and local governments have issued a series of supportive policies to encourage the development of rural green tourism, which provides a good policy environment for rural tourism.</p> <p>(2) <i>Growing market demand</i>: With the increasing demand of urban residents for nature, healthy living and culture, the market demand for rural green tourism is also growing. At the same time, with the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, more and more capital is also entering the field of rural tourism.</p> <p>(3) <i>Technology and innovation</i>: the development of Internet technology provides new marketing and promotion means for rural green tourism, such as smart tourism and virtual reality experience.</p> | <p>(1) <i>Environmental damage</i>: excessive tourism development may cause damage to the ecological environment of rural areas and affect the sustainability of tourism resources.</p> <p>(2) <i>Increased market competition</i>: With the rise of rural green tourism, market competition has become increasingly fierce, putting forward higher requirements for product quality and service level.</p> <p>(3) <i>Social and cultural impact</i>: the influx of foreign tourists may impact the traditional culture and social structure of rural areas.</p> |

There are some problems all over the world today, such as: climate change, war, migration problems, pollution problems, demographic imbalance, education equity problems, and the development of rural green tourism will be faced with these uncontrollable factors, which may have a negative impact on the planning, implementation and operation of tourism projects. The following are some of the main uncontrollable factors of rural tourism:

**Natural disasters:** natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes and typhoons may cause serious damage to the infrastructure, natural landscape and tourism resources of rural tourism destinations, thus affecting the normal conduct of tourism activities.

**Climate change:** long-term climate change or short-term extreme weather events (e.g. heat waves, heavy rains, droughts) may adversely affect rural green tourism, altering the balance of the ecosystem and affecting tourists' experience.

**Fluctuations in market demand:** fluctuations in tourism market demand are affected by a variety of factors, such as the economic situation, consumer preferences, and seasonal changes. These factors are difficult to accurately predict and may lead to operational challenges for rural green tourism projects [29].

Changes in policies and regulations: government policies and regulations on rural tourism and environmental protection may be adjusted over time and in response to changes in the social environment. These changes may affect the legality, return on investment, and operational strategies of tourism projects.

Social and cultural conflicts: with the development of rural green tourism, the influx of foreign tourists may clash with local society and culture and have an impact on the lifestyles and values of local residents, which is difficult to fully control and predict.

Technological progress and substitution: the rapid development of new technologies and innovations in the tourism industry may cause traditional rural green tourism products to become obsolete or lose their appeal. At the same time, the emergence of new types of tourism may also pose a competitive threat to traditional rural tourism.

Global economic situation: fluctuations in the international economy, such as changes in exchange rates and trade barriers, may have an impact on the international development of rural green tourism, especially for destinations that rely on foreign tourists [18].

Due to the existence of these uncontrollable factors, the development of rural green tourism requires comprehensive risk assessment and planning, and the development of flexible coping strategies to reduce the adverse impact of potential risks on tourism projects.

The rural green tourism market is gradually becoming an important segment of the tourism industry, attracting more and more tourists with its unique natural scenery, rich cultural experiences and environmental protection concepts. However, with the continuous expansion of the market, the competition has become increasingly fierce. The following is an analysis of the competition in the rural green tourism market:

Market competition pattern. At present, the rural green tourism market presents a diversified competition pattern. On the one hand, governments around the world are actively promoting the development of rural tourism, and have

created a number of rural tourism brands with local characteristics through policy support and resource integration. On the other hand, more and more tourism enterprises also see the potential of the rural green tourism market and have entered the field, launching rural tourism products with various themes.

2. Competition Focus. In the competition of rural green tourism market, all parties mainly compete around the following aspects [9]:

- Resource advantages: regions with unique natural scenery and rich cultural resources are more likely to attract tourists. Therefore, localities have tapped and integrated local resources to create special tourism brands.
- Product quality: tourists are increasingly demanding the quality of rural tourism products. Tourism enterprises need to make efforts in product design and service quality to enhance the tourists' experience.
- Marketing means: effective marketing means are crucial for increasing rural tourism brand awareness and attracting tourists. All parties need to make full use of the Internet, social media and other channels for publicity and promotion.
- Innovation ability: in the fierce market competition, innovation ability has become a key factor in determining victory or defeat. Tourism enterprises need to constantly push forward and develop new products and services with market competitiveness.

3. Competition trend. In the future, the competition in the rural green tourism market will show the following trends [51]:

- Branding competition: with the intensification of market competition, branding will become an important factor in determining tourists' choices. All parties need to increase brand building efforts to enhance brand awareness and reputation.
- Differentiated competition: in order to avoid homogeneous competition, all parties need to dig deeper into local characteristics and develop differentiated tourism products to meet the personalized needs of tourists.

- Win-win co-operation: in the face of fierce market competition, all parties need to strengthen co-operation, achieve resource sharing and complement each other's advantages, and jointly promote the development of rural green tourism market. For example, cross-regional tourism cooperation can be carried out to create high-quality tourism routes and enhance overall competitiveness.

In summary, the rural green tourism market is highly competitive and full of opportunities. All parties need to accurately grasp the market trends and tourists' needs, and formulate scientific and reasonable competitive strategies to stand out in the fierce market competition.

As an emerging tourism industry, rural tourism is increasingly favored by the majority of urban and rural residents for its unique rural scenery, local people and ecological environment. In order to understand the market demand situation and development trend of rural tourism, this thesis carries out a comprehensive research on the rural tourism market by analyzing a large amount of rural tourism data, industrial development trend and policy environment.

Market demand situation:

Age distribution: according to the rural tourism indicator data compiled by data.iimedia.cn, the age of tourists in China's rural tourism market is mainly concentrated in the age group of 25–40 years old, accounting for more than 50%. This age group has higher consumption ability and willingness to consume, and is the main consumer group in the rural tourism market (fig. 2.8) [75].

Gender distribution: according to the rural tourism indicator data compiled by the National Bureau of Statistics of China, the gender distribution of tourists in China's rural tourism market is relatively balanced, with little difference between the proportion of male and female tourists. This phenomenon shows that the rural tourism market is gradually breaking down the traditional gender concepts and becoming more and more popular among tourists.

Consumption level: according to the rural tourism indicators compiled by data.iimedia.cn, the consumption level of tourists in China's rural tourism market

is relatively high, with a per capita consumption level of more than 500 yuan (fig. 2.9). This consumption level is mainly affected by tourists' age, income level, consumption habits and other factors.

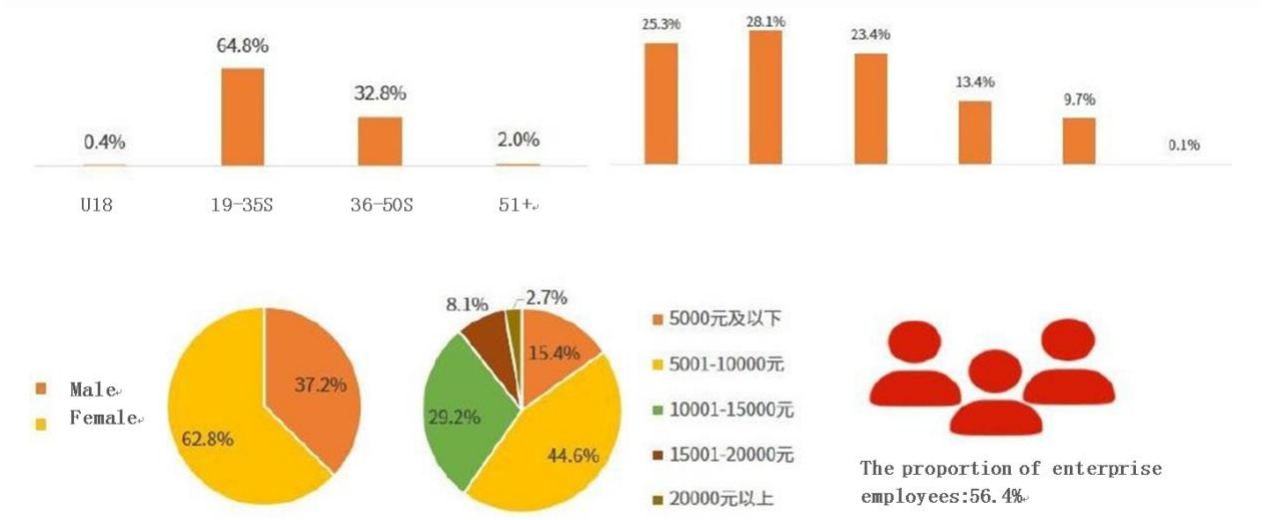


Figure 2.8 – 2023 User profile of rural tourism in China (sample size: N=1130) (compiled by the author according to [1])

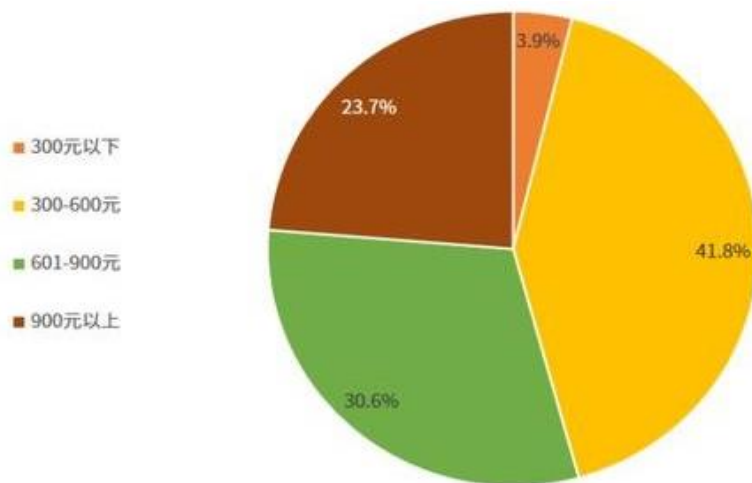


Figure 2.9 – Amount spent by users on rural tourism in 2023 (compiled by the author according to [75])

Trends in market development:

Diversification: the rural tourism market will gradually develop towards diversification, including history and culture, folklore, natural scenery, sports and

leisure, in addition to traditional projects such as farmhouse and picking. For example, Luoyang City in China has successfully realised the diversified development of rural tourism through the development of folk ecology, history and humanities, as well as border leisure and sightseeing tourism [74].

High-end development: the rural tourism market will gradually develop towards high-end development, and more and more tourists will pay more attention to the quality and experience of tourism. This development trend will push the rural tourism industry towards boutique, personalisation and customisation. This will also further push up the proportion of tourism in GDP (fig. 2.10).



Figure 2.10 – (2000–2019) (compiled by the author according to [87])

Digital development: the rural tourism market will gradually develop towards digitalisation, making use of modern technological means such as the Internet, mobile payment and smartphones to improve the service level and management efficiency of rural tourism. For example, the use of digital means to create rural tourism pop-up card places to improve the quality and efficiency of rural tourism.

Green development: the rural tourism market will gradually develop towards greening, focusing on the protection and sustainable use of tourism resources, and promoting the coordinated development of rural tourism with the ecological environment and cultural traditions.

## **Conclusions to section 2**

Having conducted an analysis of trends in the development of rural tourism enterprises, the following conclusions were drawn:

The rural areas of China face challenges such as small-scale agriculture, low mechanization, high production costs, and low agricultural profits. Demographic shifts have seen an increasing migration of rural residents to urban areas, leading to a gradual decrease in their proportion. In these rural regions, various economic activities are increasingly developed, yet educational and medical resources are relatively insufficient. While rural infrastructure has seen some improvement, shortcomings persist, particularly in areas like irrigation facilities, agricultural mechanization, and logistics infrastructure. The government has implemented a series of policies and reform measures, such as agricultural subsidies and land system reforms, to advance the rural revitalization strategy.

China has emerged as one of the largest tourism markets in the world, with a continuous increase in domestic and international tourist arrivals. The government has introduced policies to support the development of the tourism industry, such as “Year of Tourism” activities and the construction of tourism infrastructure. The advancement of high-speed rail networks and Internet technology has facilitated innovation and online services in the tourism sector. The tourism industry faces challenges to sustainable development, such as environmental conservation and the preservation of cultural heritage. The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the tourism industry, accelerating the transformation of the sector.

In the development of rural tourism in China, the policy background emphasizes cultural leadership and ecological prioritization, promoting a harmonious coexistence between tourism and environmental conservation. The scale of the rural tourism market has expanded, becoming a significant force in driving rural revitalization. Future directions for development include strengthening top-level design, improving supporting facilities, driving innovation, and cultivating talent.

The issues present in the development of rural green tourism primarily include the homogeneity of tourism products, a lack of uniqueness, environmental degradation, and insufficient community participation. Despite the abundance and diversity of rural tourism resources, their exploitation and utilization are unevenly distributed, confronting the challenge of intensified market competition and the diversification of tourist demands. The level of government support still needs to be enhanced, and the national consciousness of ecological and environmental protection further strengthened.

China's rural tourism resources are extremely rich, and the government is actively promoting sustainable development. Advantages include abundant natural resources, a rich cultural heritage, ecological environment advantages, location and transportation advantages, and a well-developed transportation network. Disadvantages include an incomplete infrastructure, a lack of professional management and services, and homogenized competition. Opportunities include policy support, increasing market demand, and technology and innovation. Threats include environmental damage, intensified market competition, and socio-cultural impacts.

The development of rural tourism is also subject to a number of uncontrollable factors, including natural disasters, climate change, fluctuations in market demand, changes in policies and regulations, socio-cultural conflicts, technological advancements and substitutions, and global economic conditions. The market competition landscape is diversified, with focal points including resource advantages, product quality, marketing strategies, and innovation

capabilities. The trend of competition will be towards branding, differentiation, and win-win cooperation. Market demand is primarily concentrated among individuals aged 25–40, with a balanced gender distribution and a relatively high level of consumption.

This chapter provides a solid foundation for formulating effective strategies for rural tourism development through a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic conditions, development status, market conditions, as well as the challenges and opportunities faced in China's rural tourism sector.

## SECTION 3

### SUBSTANTIATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL GREEN TOURISM

#### **3.1 Proposals for improving the management of rural tourism development in China**

Every year, rural tourism is gaining popularity in China and around the world. For travelers, it is a way to diversify their trip, bring back many memories, skills and souvenirs made by local producers. For rural areas and their residents, this type of tourism is an opportunity to diversify their sources of income, create alternative jobs (including for young people and pensioners), and, last but not least, discover and develop their creative potential. The advantages of working in rural tourism are that everyone can start with very small, simple steps that, with desire and patience, can grow into a bigger business, and perhaps even a private business.

Today, sustainable tourism in rural areas of our country is in its infancy. From the experience of other countries, including neighboring countries, it is known that only after the “need from below” is ripe does the legislative framework, tools, and the entire system of green tourism begin to develop as an independent industry. Today, the development of rural tourism in China is entering an active phase: knowledge is gradually being systematized, terminology is being clarified, and interest in learning is growing. Higher education institutions in a number of regions are beginning to train specialists in this area. However, very little has been done yet, and these are only the first steps towards the development of rural tourism in China.

One of the most important functions of rural tourism development as any socio-economic system is management. In the system of rural tourism management, it is appropriate to distinguish a number of levels of management on a territorial basis, each of which should have its own management bodies –

regional, municipal and local (objects) levels of management. At the same time, the governing bodies (subjects of management) of lower levels are the object of management for the levels above.

The rural tourism development management system includes three levels [77]:

1. National level, which ensures the creation of conditions for the development of rural tourism, including the legal framework, financial support, staffing, global information support.

2. Regional level, which ensures the formation of agritourism clusters, including complex tourist attraction facilities that work in the interests of many entrepreneurs engaged in rural tourism in the region.

3. Local. At this level, work is underway to support specific farmers working in the field of rural tourism, as well as to increase the tourist attractiveness of local cultural, material and natural heritage. Self-organization and cooperation of farmers play an important role at this level.

It is proposed to implement measures to improve the management of green tourism development in several stages (table 3.1).

The most important condition for the successful development of rural tourism is the active involvement of the local population in this type of activity, their clear understanding of the importance of rural tourism as a profitable and prestigious activity, their willingness to receive guests and strive for high quality services. Fulfillment of these conditions ensures the growth of self-esteem, self-organization, respect for their work, and the growth of the humanitarian potential of the Chinese village. To ensure that these conditions are met, the whole range of activities is aimed at providing grants and other support from the state, training and internships, creating facilities to attract tourists, etc.

Effective development of rural tourism is possible only if conditions are created for the use of all the resource opportunities provided by rural areas, including [86]:

- Rural nature: landscapes, recreational opportunities of forests, rivers and lakes, wildlife observation, etc.
- Rural lifestyle: walking and hiking, cycling, horseback riding, skiing, ATVs and snowmobiles, hunting, fishing, swimming and beach recreation.
- Local cultural and material heritage: architectural monuments, museums, gardens and parks, memorial sites and events, and other objects of material culture of historical, artistic or other value.
- Organized forms of leisure activities in rural areas: local holidays, cultural and folklore events, familiarization with local cuisine, participation in agricultural work and local crafts.

Table 3.1 – Stages of implementation of measures to improve the management of rural tourism development (compiled by the author)

| Name of the stage                                    | Terms of realization | Characteristics of the stage   |
|--|----------------------|--|
| Formation of the basis for rural tourism development | up to 3 years        | This stage involves solving the problems of optimizing legislation, developing national and regional programs for the development and state support of rural tourism, creating a system of training and forming a personnel reserve, developing rural tourism infrastructure, replicating the successful experience of existing rural tourism facilities and launching new pilot projects  |
| Organic growth                                       | up to 6 years        | It is expected that the potential developed at the previous stage will create a cumulative effect and will ensure a rapid increase in the number of rural tourism facilities, the number of overnight stays and the corresponding direct financial effect of rural tourism development   |
| Developed market                                     | up to 5 years        | At this stage, there may be a certain decrease in the number of rural tourism facilities due to the market's transition to a mature stage of development, but the profitability of existing facilities, the number of overnight stays, and total revenue from the industry continues to grow. The experience gained will also allow for additional adjustments to the existing mechanisms of state support and regulation of rural tourism. In addition, at this stage, the emergence of long-term effects of rural tourism development will become apparent: increased financial stability of farms, improved quality of life and consumption in rural areas, increased recognition of Chinese farmers' products, including on the world market, due to rural tourism |

At the same time, rural tourism services should be comprehensive and include: providing information about the recreation facility and reservations;

providing information on how to get to the place; providing all the necessary information on site (including about possible types of recreation, entertainment and activities); accommodation and meals; organizing leisure activities (entertainment, animation, socializing, active recreation); organizing departure; receiving feedback after the trip and targeted advertising aimed at “old guests”.

This entire chain of services can be implemented both by a single farmer or entrepreneur and by combining the efforts of interested residents of the entire village.

Among the effective mechanisms for supporting farmers and other entrepreneurs working in the field of rural tourism, it is worth noting [70]:

- Provision of grants to farmers and private entrepreneurs starting out in the field of rural tourism.
- Subsidizing the interest rate on loans taken out for the construction or reconstruction of rural tourism facilities.
- Compensation of part of the capital expenditures for the creation of rural tourism infrastructure facilities (except for accommodation facilities).
- Provision of state-funded places in state educational institutions for the training of specialists in the field of rural tourism.

The key goal of the policy to support the development of rural tourism in China is to ensure the outpacing development of this sector, the potential of which is currently underestimated.

In order to achieve this goal, several tasks need to be solved at each level of government:

At the national level [70]:

1. Optimization of the existing regulatory framework in terms of creating conditions for the development and functioning of rural tourism, including the development of a mechanism for subsidizing and grant support for rural tourism, the use of land for the placement of rural tourism facilities, a system for confirming regional origin and a system for environmental certification of food products.

2. Support for self-organization of rural tourism market participants through the creation and development of a single association of rural tourism in China.

3. Include expanded support for rural tourism and the development of the recreational potential of the regions in the relevant targeted programs, including the costs of promoting rural tourism services in China in the domestic and foreign markets.

4. Ensure systematic training of personnel for rural tourism, including educational and methodical materials, programs of professional retraining, advanced training, exchange of experience and internships.

5. Establishment of an inter-sectoral council for the development of rural tourism, which will play the role of a center for change management, coordination and control over the development of rural tourism in China.

At the regional level [18]:

1. Ensure the development of regional rural tourism development programs in accordance with a single concept of rural tourism development.

2. Development and implementation of an action plan for the development of tourism and recreational potential of the region through the creation of agritourism clusters, ensuring financing for the implementation of these plans from regional budgets, together with the state budget and the attraction of extra-budgetary sources.

3. Organize and conduct regional tourism events: concerts, tourist conventions, and other thematic events.

4. Promote the development of self-organization of rural tourism in the region and improve the professional qualifications of personnel working in this area.

5. Ensuring the formation of a system for disseminating information about the tourist and recreational potential of the region at the regional level.

6. Eliminating administrative barriers that hinder the development of rural tourism, informing farmers and entrepreneurs about existing state support measures in the field of rural tourism.

In general, the set of proposed measures can be presented in the form of a conceptual scheme (fig. 3.1).

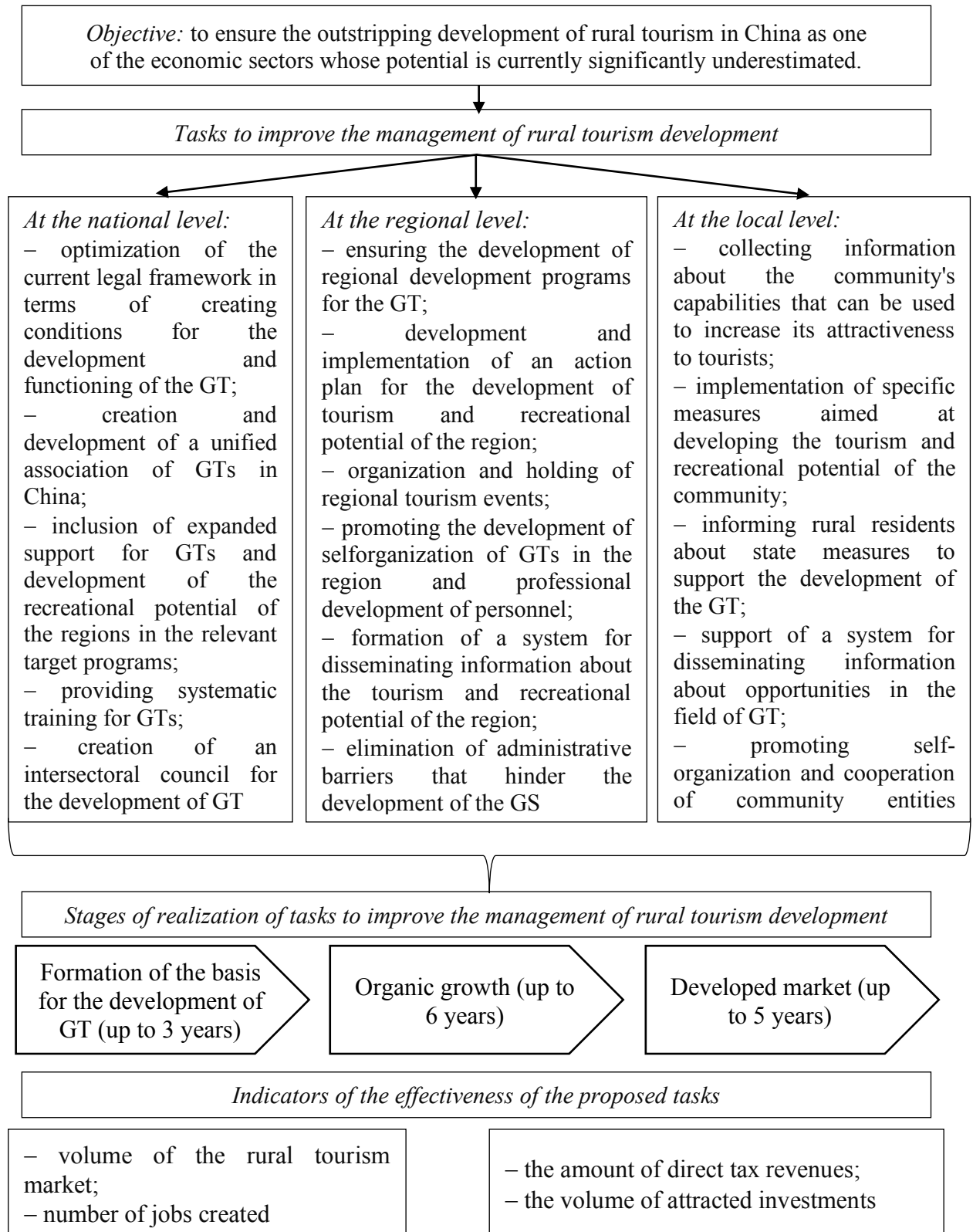


Figure 3.1 – Conceptual scheme of improving the management of rural tourism development (compiled by the author)

At the local level [39]:

1. Collect information on the landscape, socio-cultural and other features and capabilities of the territorial community that can be used to increase its attractiveness to tourists.

2. Developing and ensuring, together with the regional authorities and private investors, the implementation of specific measures aimed at developing the tourism and recreational potential of the community, such as the creation and improvement of hiking and walking trails, organizing and holding local tourist events (harvest festival, national holidays), etc.

3. Ensure that information on state measures to support the development of rural tourism is communicated to farmers, private entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders and organizations.

4. Ensuring the constant functioning of the feedback system with the authorities of the highest levels of government on rural tourism issues.

5. Create and maintain a system for disseminating information about community opportunities in rural tourism: information points, signs, maps, visual advertising, etc.

6. Promote self-organization and cooperation of community agricultural producers, farmers and organizations providing rural tourism services.

Thus, China has enormous resources for the development of rural tourism. With the right approach to the organization and promotion of rural tourism products, China can count on significant socio-economic dividends. Rural tourism can become a system that can solve the main socio-economic problems of rural areas. In general, a developed segment of rural tourism will have a positive impact on the competitiveness of rural areas and will contribute to: employment of the rural population (primarily for young people); increasing the level of income of the rural population; development of social and engineering infrastructure in rural areas; diversification of the rural economy; increase in sales of products of

personal subsidiary farms; stopping the migration of the rural population to cities, etc.

Strengthen environmental protection and ecological construction. Conduct a comprehensive survey and assessment of rural natural resources and cultural heritage. Formulate rural tourism development plans to ensure that tourism activities are coordinated with environmental protection. Promote diversification of the rural economy and reduce dependence on traditional agriculture. Sustainable resource management, formulate and implement guidelines for the sustainable use and conservation of natural resources. Promote environmentally friendly practices in agriculture, forestry and waste management to minimise negative impacts on the environment. Strengthen the protection of natural resources in villages and establish a strict resource management system to prevent over-exploitation and misuse. Implement ecological restoration projects to repair and rebuild damaged ecosystems and enhance the quality of rural ecosystems. Promote green agriculture, reduce the use of pesticides and chemical fertilisers, and protect farmland ecosystems.

Implement strict environmental protection measures to ensure that tourism activities do not damage the ecological environment. Promote sustainable tourism practices, such as waste classification, energy conservation and emission reduction. Formulate and implement nature conservation planning, including the protection of forests, wetlands, water resources and biodiversity. Promote sustainable agriculture and eco-agriculture models, reduce the use of pesticides and chemical fertilisers, and protect soil quality and water resources. Strengthen environmental monitoring and governance to ensure that the behaviour of tourists does not adversely affect the natural environment. Establish an incentive mechanism for environmental protection, and recognise and reward individuals and collectives with outstanding performance in environmental protection [17].

Cultural heritage protection. Protect and pass on rural cultural heritage. The government and society should increase efforts to protect and pass on the rural cultural heritage, protect and pass on the rural cultural heritage by setting up

a cultural heritage protection mechanism and an education system for cultural inheritance, establishing cultural protection zones and formulating relevant policies, and protecting the cultural heritage of the countryside, such as historical buildings, traditional customs and handicrafts.

Implement measures to protect and promote local customs, traditions and intangible cultural heritage. Encourage community participation and empower them to protect and display cultural heritage. Organise cultural activities and traditional festivals to strengthen local people's recognition of cultural traditions and awareness of their protection.

Improving infrastructure and public services. Evaluate and improve transport networks, communication systems, public facilities and tourism facilities to enhance accessibility and improve rural production and living conditions. Strengthen the construction of tourism service facilities and improve the quality and variety of tourism services, including rural accommodation, speciality catering and guided tours. Construct environmentally friendly accommodation facilities, such as eco-lodges and farmhouses. Promote the construction of facilities such as rural visitor centres, toilets and car parks to improve the reception capacity of rural tourism. Develop green energy, such as solar and wind energy, to reduce carbon footprint. Optimise the rural energy structure and promote clean energy to reduce carbon emissions [91].

Tourism resources development and planning. Evaluate natural and cultural resources: conduct surveys and research on natural resources, and classify and rate scenic landscapes, biodiversity and natural heritage. Identify and record cultural assets, including historical sites, traditional customs and intangible cultural heritage. Develop natural scenery, folk culture, and special agricultural experiences. Identify and develop unique tourism products and experiences consistent with sustainable tourism principles. Develop tourism products featuring natural landscapes, agricultural experiences, and folk culture. Promote agrotourism, eco-adventure tourism, community tourism and other initiatives that highlight local

authenticity. Promote rural tourism festivals, such as harvest festivals and folklore festivals.

When planning the development of rural tourism projects, it is important to do so under a scientific and standardised development system (fig. 3.2). Firstly, it is necessary to combine the local ecological environment and resource characteristics, and design tourism projects with low pollution, high resource utilisation and good economic benefits according to the principle of green environmental protection. Secondly, each project must be subject to environmental impact assessment, and the scale, quantity, colour, materials, shape and style of service facilities must be strictly controlled from the ecological point of view, advocating the use of natural landscapes as the mainstay, taking materials from the local area, and preserving as much as possible the original natural scenery, the tranquil ecological environment and the simple farming way of life. Finally, the planning and design must scientifically determine the environmental capacity and consider the carrying capacity of agricultural resources and their environment.

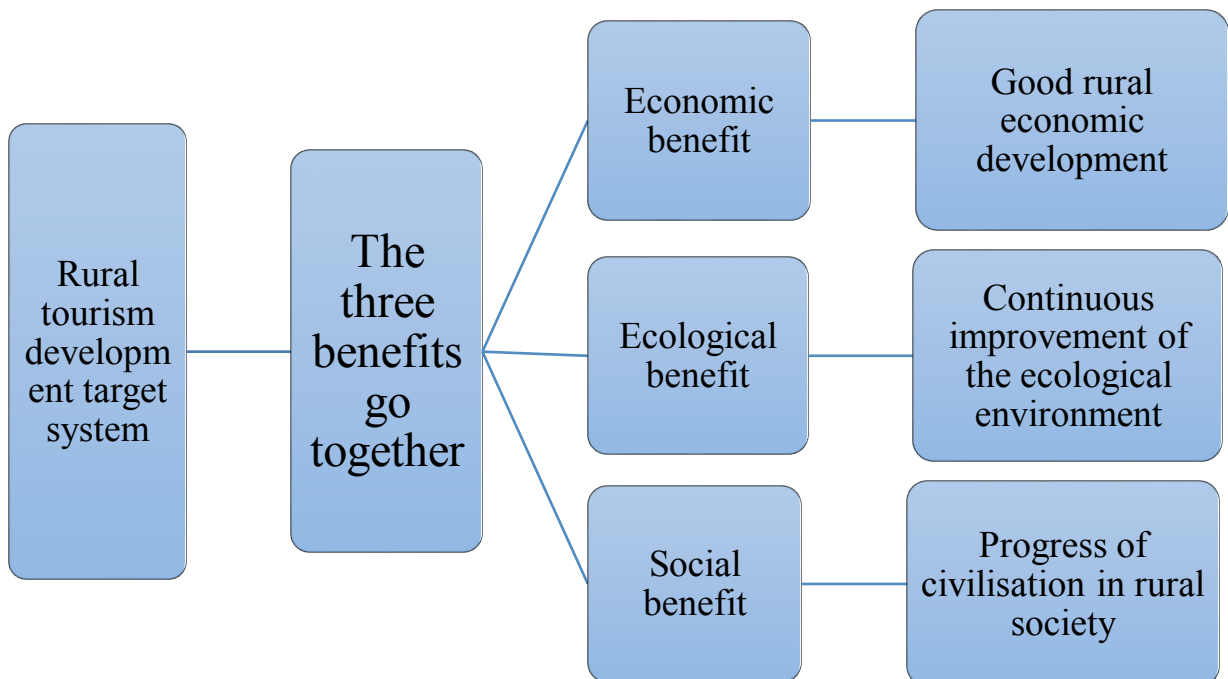


Figure 3.2 – Rural tourism development target system (compiled by the author according to [5])

Marketing and branding. Strengthen marketing activities and carry out brand building to create a green tourism brand in rural China. When conducting tourism promotion activities, make full use of various Internet APPs for online marketing. Conduct tourism festivals and cultural exchanges, and develop a comprehensive marketing and promotion plan in order to raise consumer awareness of rural tourism resources and attract tourists to rural green tourism destinations. The government and tourism enterprises should step up publicity and promotion of rural green tourism, utilising digital platforms, social media and partnerships with travel agents to reach potential tourists. For example, social media and online travel platforms to promote the projects of rural green tourism, on Tik Tok, Face Book, Twitter and other APPs, to establish social accounts, to broaden sales channels and strengthen the promotion of rural tourism resources [29]. Establish a representative tourism brand for the region, emphasising the concept of green, healthy and sustainable tourism. Increase advertising in major source areas to improve brand awareness, enhance the attractiveness of rural areas, and attract more domestic and foreign tourists to experience tourism.

Promote community participation. Empower community stakeholders with responsibilities and management rights. Encourage local residents to participate in the design and operation of tourism projects. Provide educational opportunities in tourism service skills and management training to enhance the professional skills of local residents.

Strengthen community governance and public service systems to improve the quality of life, well-being and income levels of residents. Advocate for the deep participation of farmers. The government and tourism enterprises should focus on the interests of farmers, establish a mechanism for farmers' participation and benefit-sharing, guide farmers to participate deeply in tourism development, and realise a win-win situation for farmers and the tourism industry. Carry out environmental protection publicity and education activities to raise the environmental awareness of rural residents and tourists, and take the initiative to participate in community environmental protection activities.

Increase farmers' income. Rural green tourism increases farmers' income and promotes the improvement of local residents' living standards through a variety of ways [3]:

Creating employment opportunities. The development of rural green tourism provides abundant employment opportunities for local residents. With the rise of tourism, residents can be directly involved in tourism services, such as working as tour guides, hotel and catering service staff, tour drivers, and tourism project operators. In addition, the expansion of tourism will lead to the development of related industries, such as agriculture, handicraft production and transport, further increasing employment opportunities.

Increasing sources of income. The prosperity of tourism drives the increase of local residents' income. Residents can earn income by operating lodgings, farmhouses, speciality catering, and selling tourist commodities in a variety of ways. Meanwhile, with the increase in the number of tourists, the sales of local agricultural products and handicrafts will also be boosted, bringing additional economic gains for residents.

Enhancement of quality of life. With the development of rural green tourism, the level of local infrastructure and public services has been upgraded, such as the improvement of road transport, water supply and electricity, and rubbish disposal, etc. These improvements directly enhance the quality of life of the residents. In addition, the development of tourism also promotes the improvement and upgrading of public services such as education and healthcare [11].

Promoting the dissemination of knowledge and skills. The development of rural green tourism requires local residents to acquire certain knowledge and skills, such as tourism services, environmental protection, and cultural heritage. This prompts residents to participate in training and learning, which improves their professional skills and comprehensive quality, and helps them gain better development opportunities in tourism and other industries.

Protecting and handing down cultural heritage. Rural green tourism emphasises the protection and inheritance of local cultural heritage. Through

the development of cultural tourism products, residents gain a deeper understanding and recognition of their region's culture and enhance their cultural self-confidence. At the same time, the protection and utilisation of cultural heritage also brings economic benefits to residents, such as through the production and sale of handicrafts and cultural performances.

Promoting social harmony. The development of tourism helps strengthen community cohesion and communication and co-operation among residents. Joint participation in the planning and operation of tourism projects can enhance mutual understanding and the spirit of co-operation among residents, and promote social harmony and stability.

### **3.2 Strategic prospects for the development of rural green tourism**

Rural green tourism, as an emerging form of tourism, emphasizes finding a balance between protecting the natural environment and promoting rural economic development. It responds to the growing global demand for sustainable development and green lifestyles. The thesis concludes with a questionnaire on rural green tourism development, which, through the survey and other data materials analyzed, yields several key contextual factors that drive rural green tourism development strategies.

Acceleration of urbanization process. With the acceleration of urbanization, the rural population continues to flow out of the countryside, agricultural production is gradually declining, and the countryside is facing a serious development dilemma. In order to solve this problem and achieve the overall prosperity of the countryside, the strategy of rural revitalization has been proposed and implemented. And rural tourism, as an important part of rural revitalization, has significant development prospects and promotion [65].

Shift in consumer tourism preferences. With the improvement of people's living standards and the increase of leisure time, consumer demand for tourism has

also undergone a transformation, and the demand of urban residents for returning to nature and enjoying tranquility is also increasing, and more and more people are inclined to experience nature, the pursuit of physical and mental health, and the search for authentic cultural exchange in the form of tourism. Green tourism in the countryside meets this market demand, providing city residents with the opportunity to understand and experience rural life. However, the more backward infrastructure and management mode in the countryside do not meet the expectations of consumers, who have many expectations, even the combination of high technology and rural tourism (fig. 3.3)

Popularity of low-carbon lifestyle. With the promotion of low-carbon lifestyle, rural tourism, as an emerging form of tourism, emphasizes on allowing tourists to get the feeling of appreciating the beauty and enjoying life in a good green environment, as well as learning and exploring nature and local culture. This type of tourism is not only in line with the green concept of today's society, but also can inject vitality and life into rural areas.

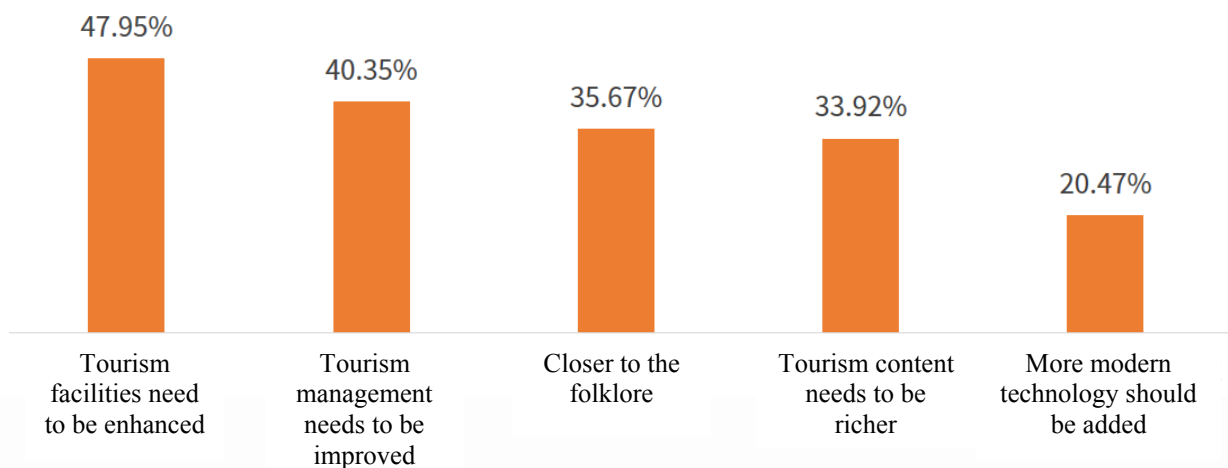


Figure 3.3 – The main expectations of Chinese travel consumers for the rural tourism market in 2020 (compiled by the author according to [56])

Global sustainable development trend. As global warming, ecological degradation and other problems become more and more serious, governments, enterprises and the public are paying more and more attention to the concept

of sustainable development. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize the importance of environmental protection, poverty reduction and sustainable economic growth, and rural green tourism can precisely play a positive role in these aspects.

**Urban-rural gap and rural revitalization.** Many countries face a widening urban-rural gap, with rural areas lagging behind in economic development and a serious outflow of young labour. Rural green tourism drives the local economy and provides new sources of income and employment opportunities in rural areas, becoming an important way to promote rural revitalization.

**Increased awareness of cultural protection.** People are beginning to realize the preciousness and fragility of traditional rural culture and ecological environment, and their willingness to support the protection and sustainable use of local natural resources and cultural heritage has increased. Rural green tourism encourages tourists to participate in conservation activities and increase their respect for the culture and natural environment of the destination [41].

**Advances in technology and transport.** The development of the Internet and transport has made remote rural areas easier to discover and visit from the outside world. This has facilitated the promotion and management of rural green tourism, while also bringing challenges and opportunities in terms of management of scenic spots, participation of local communities and fair distribution of tourism proceeds.

**Government policy support.** Many countries and regions have begun to support the development of rural tourism through legislation and policies, such as providing financial subsidies, tax incentives, technical training and other measures, in order to promote the sustainable development of rural green tourism and the long-term positive development of villages (fig 3.4).

The strategic context for the development of rural green tourism is multifaceted, reflecting not only global trends in sustainable development and changes in consumer preferences, but also closely related to factors such as rural revitalization, ecological and cultural preservation and policy support. Effective

development and management of rural green tourism can bring many economic, social and environmental benefits to rural areas [30].

Outlook on the development strategy of rural green tourism.

In 2020, it is planned to be selected into the second batch of national rural tourism key villages, the number of provinces distribution

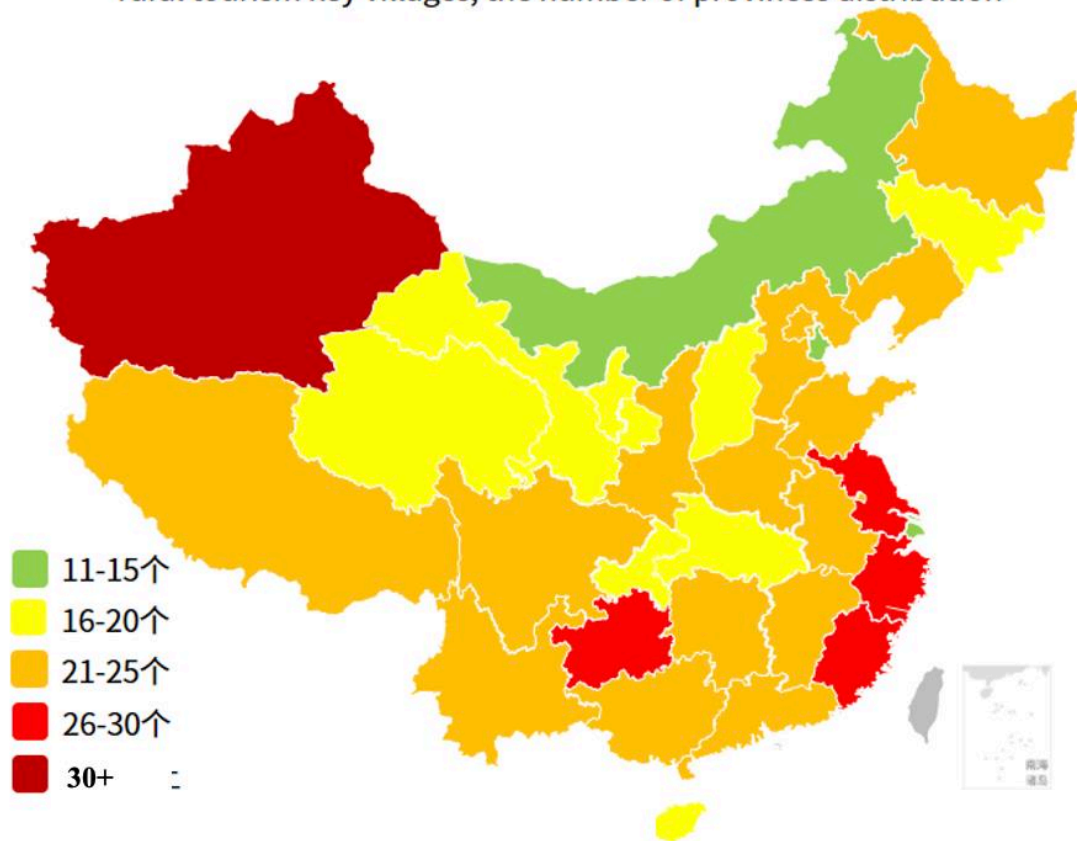


Figure 3.4 – Number of key villages to be supported in the second batch of national rural tourism in 2020 [56]

Internationally, the development mode and characteristics of green tourism vary from region to region, but today, countries around the world are generally centred on the core concepts of sustainable development, low-carbon economy and cultural heritage, pursuing the protection of the natural environment and cultural heritage, and providing tourism experiences that are closely related to nature and culture [73]:

- Ecotourism: emphasizing the protection of natural ecosystems and national education, tourism activities usually take place in natural environments, such as wildlife observation and hiking.

- Community-based tourism: encourages the participation of local communities in tourism planning and management to ensure that the benefits of tourism can benefit local residents while preserving the local culture and environment.
- Sustainable tourism operations: tourism operators adopt environmentally friendly measures, such as energy conservation and emission reduction, waste management, and the use of renewable energy, to reduce the impact of tourism activities on the environment.
- Certification and standards: the sustainability of tourism activities is guided and evaluated through international or regional green tourism certification systems, such as the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC).

Rural green tourism in Europe, North America and East Asia have their own characteristics, which provide experiences that can be learnt from for the development of rural green tourism in China.

In the European region, rural green tourism is characterised by its deep cultural heritage and beautiful rural scenery. Many European countries have historic farmsteads, ancient castles and unique rural traditions. Rural tourism is often combined with with a rich cultural heritage, such as ancient village preservation and wine estate tourism, which not only protects historic buildings and traditional crafts in the countryside, but also provides a unique cultural experience for tourists. Europe also has a more mature certification and standards system for green tourism, such as the EU Eco-label, which reduces the impact on the environment through a system of green building standards, the EU Common Agricultural Policy and the use of renewable energy sources, which help guide and regulate the sustainable development of rural tourism.

In North America, rural green tourism is usually combined with vast natural landscapes and outdoor activities. Tourists can participate in a variety of outdoor activities such as hiking, cycling, fishing, camping and wildlife observation. In addition, rural tourism in North America also emphasises the respect and

protection of aboriginal culture, and many tourism activities are integrated into the traditional culture and lifestyle of aboriginal people, allowing tourists to understand and experience the traditional lifestyle and culture of aboriginal people through rural tourism [69].

In East Asia, rural green tourism is often combined with traditional culture, historical sites and beautiful natural scenery, emphasising the harmonious coexistence of man and nature. For example, in Japan, rural tourism is known as “green tourism”, which emphasizes respect for and protection of the environment, while offering experiences closely linked to traditional culture, such as the tea ceremony, flower arrangement and traditional Japanese handicrafts. In China, rural tourism is often combined with elements such as ancient towns, villages and farmstores to provide unique cultural experiences. In addition, East Asia pays great attention to the use of modern technology to enhance tourists’ tourism experience, such as providing personalised services through advanced intelligent tourism systems, strengthening national education and management, raising the awareness of environmental protection among local residents and tourists, and promoting environmentally friendly and energy-saving tourism.

Drawing on international experience, China can focus on the following points when developing rural green tourism [69]:

- Protecting the ecological environment: when developing rural tourism, priority should be given to ecological environmental protection, avoiding over-exploitation and environmental pollution.
- Integrate local culture: integrate local traditional culture and historical sites into tourism products to provide unique cultural experiences.
- Enhance service quality: enhance the service quality of tourism employees through training and education to improve tourist satisfaction.
- Innovative marketing strategies: use social media, online platforms and other innovative means to publicise and promote tourism products.

- Community participation and cooperation: encourage local residents to participate in the development and operation of rural tourism to achieve win-win development.

In short, by drawing on successful international experiences and combining them with China's actual situation, we can promote the sustainable and healthy development of rural green tourism in China.

By learning from successful international experiences, China can promote the sustainable development of rural green tourism while protecting the rural environment and cultural heritage, and achieve a harmonious win-win situation for the economy, society and environment.

Conceptual model for rural tourism industry competitiveness evaluation was presented on fig 3.5, 3.6.

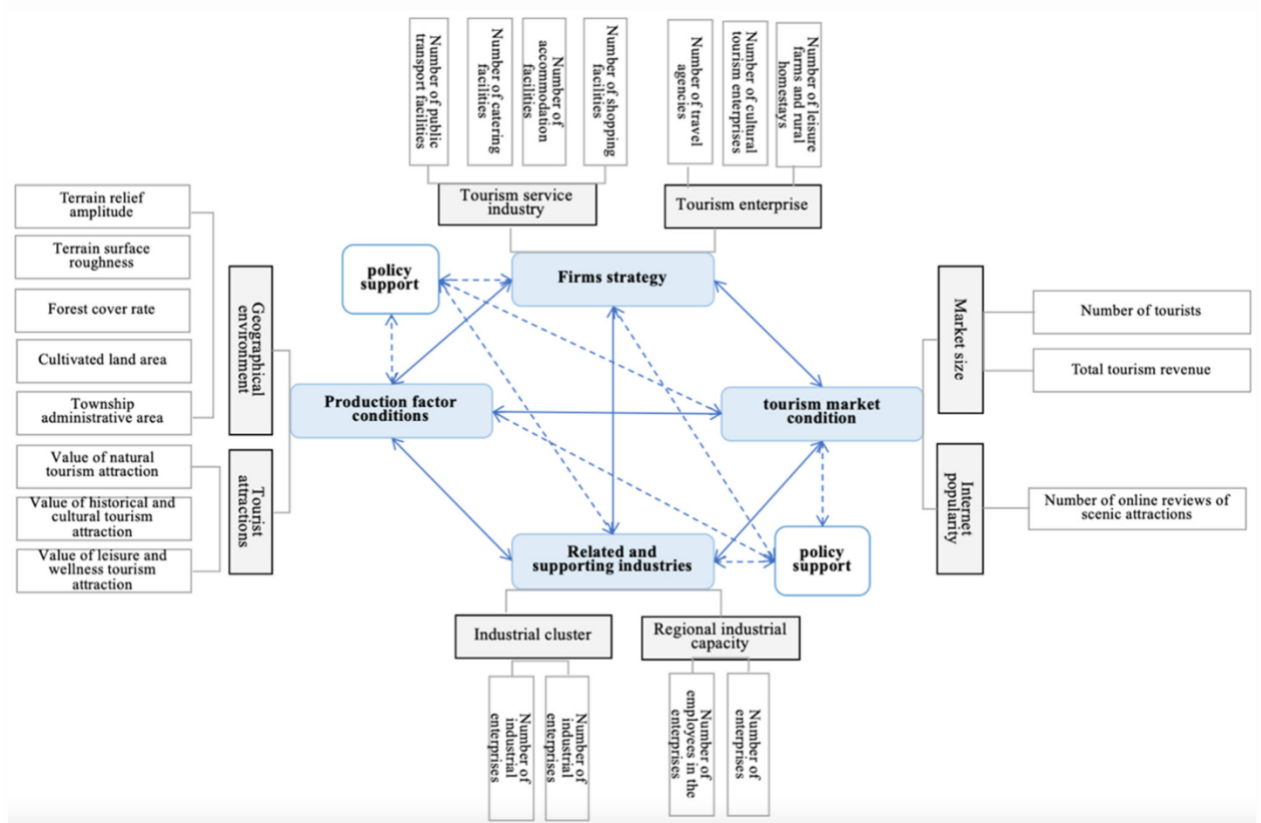


Figure 3.5 – Conceptual model for rural tourism industry competitiveness evaluation (compiled by the author according to [45])

The development strategy of rural green tourism [47]:

1. Principles for setting strategic goals: conducive to ecological and environmental benefits, economic benefits and social benefits, a reasonable balance of the three, and equitable development. It is conducive to enhancing social development and progress, increasing farmers' income and improving their living standards. Conducive to cultural heritage, cultural heritage protection, and good visitor experience.

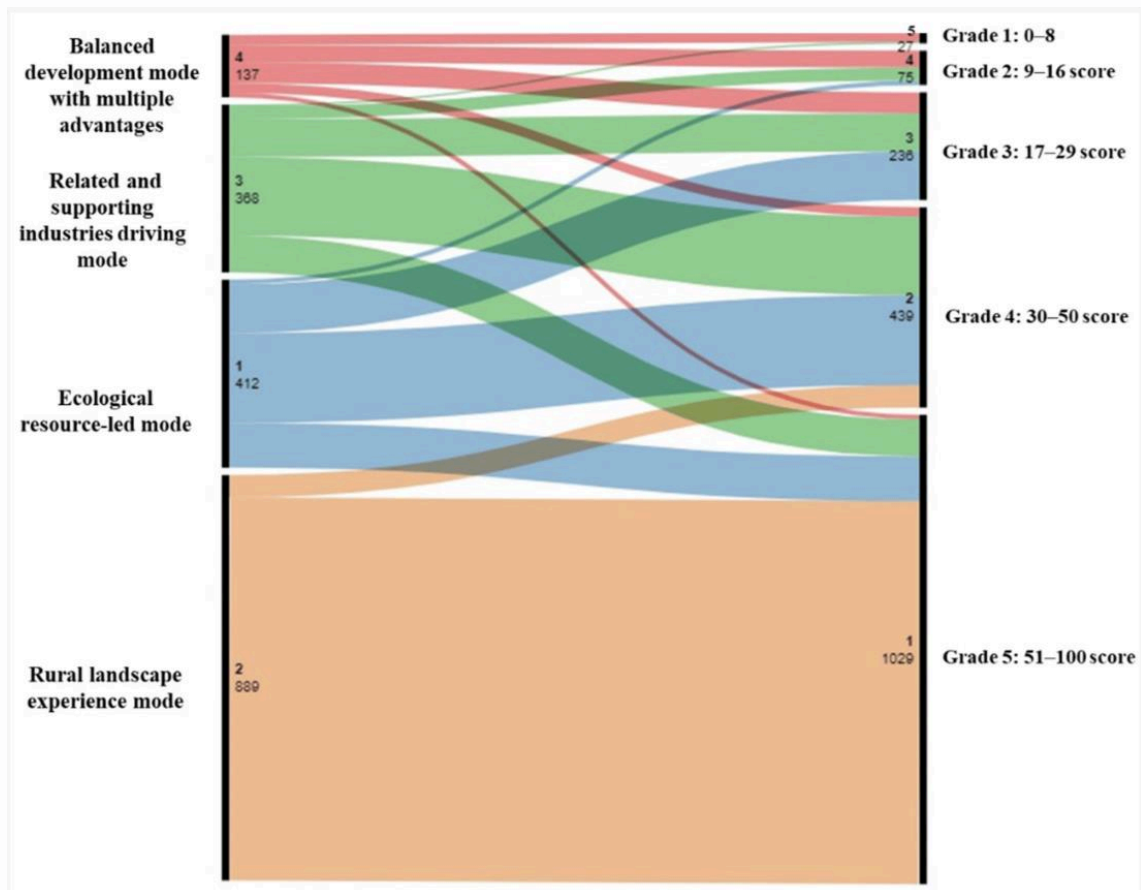


Figure 3.6 – Alluvial chart of comprehensive score levels corresponding to the four categories of development mode (compiled by the author according to [54])

2. Vision for the development strategy of rural green tourism. To make rural areas a tourist destination with unique charms, attracting domestic and foreign tourists to experience their natural beauty, cultural traditions and idyllic life. To realize economic diversification of rural areas, reduce dependence on traditional agriculture, and drive the rise of related industries through the

development of tourism. Promote the sustainable development of rural communities and improve the living standards of residents, while protecting and restoring the ecological environment and maintaining biodiversity. Strengthen the protection and inheritance of rural cultural heritage, and let more people understand and participate in the protection of rural culture through tourism activities. To establish a rural tourism ecosystem that is environmentally friendly, socially harmonious and economically prosperous, and to provide local residents and tourists with a high quality of life and tourism experience.

### 3. Setting of strategic objectives [83]:

#### (1) Ecological environmental protection and sustainable development objectives

Take effective measures to protect and improve the rural ecological environment, such as tree planting, water resource protection, rubbish disposal, etc., and promote biodiversity. Ensure that the development of tourism is coordinated with environmental protection, achieve rational use of resources and ecological protection, avoid over-exploitation, and reduce the pollution of the environment caused by tourism activities. Restore the already damaged ecological environment and enhance its ecological value.

Market competitiveness enhancement objective. Improve the market attractiveness of rural tourism through innovative tourism products and services, making it a preferred destination for domestic and foreign tourists.

Farmers' income increase objective. Create new employment opportunities and increase income sources for farmers through the development of tourism, such as lodging operations, sales of special agricultural products, handicrafts production, etc., to improve their economic situation.

Cultural heritage protection and inheritance. Strengthen the protection and inheritance of rural cultural heritage, display and disseminate local culture and history through tourism activities, and enhance cultural self-confidence. Encourage local communities to actively participate in the planning and management of rural

tourism to ensure that the fruits of tourism development can benefit community members and achieve benefit sharing.

Brand building and marketing promotion. Create a rural tourism brand with local characteristics, and enhance visibility and influence through effective marketing strategies.

Talent training and talent management strategy. Strengthen the cultivation and training of talents related to rural tourism, improve service quality and management level, and meet the needs of tourism development [34].

Construction of laws and regulations and policy support. Establish a sound policy support system and regulatory framework, strengthen industry supervision, and provide protection for the healthy development of rural tourism.

Infrastructure construction, environmental construction and public service enhancement objectives. Improve rural infrastructure, such as transport, communication, accommodation, catering, entertainment and medical facilities, in order to improve the service quality and tourism reception capacity of rural tourism, including tour guide services, accommodation conditions, catering services, etc., and to enhance tourists' tourism experience.

Target planning time: short-term (1–2 years): complete resource assessment, develop initial planning, and begin infrastructure development; medium-term (3–5 years): product development, marketing, community participation and initial formation of tourism brand; long-term (more than 5 years): continuous optimization of tourism products, improvement of service quality etc.

### **3.3 Information and analytical support for the formation of a strategy for the development of rural green tourism**

Monitoring and evaluation system. In order to ensure the healthy development of rural green tourism, it is necessary to construct a perfect monitoring and evaluation system. This system covers the following aspects:

Environmental quality monitoring: regularly monitor the air, water quality, soil and other environmental factors in rural green tourism destinations to ensure that the negative impacts of tourism activities on the environment are effectively controlled.

Tourism impact assessment: assess the impact of rural green tourism on local society, economy, culture and other aspects, so as to adjust the development strategy in time and ensure the sustainability of tourism.

Tourist satisfaction survey: collect feedback from tourists on their satisfaction with rural green tourism through questionnaires and online evaluations, so as to improve the service quality in a targeted manner.

Safety hazard inspection: regularly conduct safety hazard inspections of rural green tourism destinations to ensure the personal safety of tourists.

Evaluation system construction. The evaluation system is an important support for the development of rural green tourism, which can help us fully understand the comprehensive performance of the destination and provide a direction for improvement. The evaluation system includes the following aspects [66]:

- Economic benefit evaluation: assess the contribution of rural green tourism to the local economy, including tourism income, employment opportunities, etc., in order to measure its contribution to economic development.
- Social benefit evaluation: Examine the impact of rural green tourism on local society, such as cultural heritage, community participation, etc., to ensure the harmonious symbiosis between tourism development and local society.
- Evaluation of environmental benefits: assess the impact of rural green tourism on the natural environment, including ecological protection, resource utilization, etc., in order to reflect its green development concept.
- Evaluation of service quality: Evaluate the service quality of rural green tourism from the perspective of tourists, including tour guide services,

accommodation facilities, catering services, etc., in order to enhance the tourists' experience.

When constructing the evaluation system, the principles of scientific, comprehensive, systematic and operable need to be followed. At the same time, the selection of evaluation indicators should be closely integrated with the characteristics and actual situation of rural green tourism to ensure the objectivity and accuracy of the evaluation results. By constructing a perfect monitoring, assessment and evaluation system, we can discover the problems and deficiencies in the development of rural green tourism in a timely manner and provide powerful support for continuous improvement and optimization. This will help promote the healthy development of rural green tourism and bring greater contribution to local economic and social development.

This thesis concludes with a rural green tourism monitoring assessment and evaluation form (table 3.2).

Table 3.2 – Rural green tourism monitoring assessment and evaluation form (compiled by the author)

| <i>Rural Green Tourism Monitoring and Evaluation Form</i> |                          |                   |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Basic Information</i>                                  |                          |                   |
| Country   |                          |                   |
| Geographic  |                          |                   |
| Type  |                          |                   |
| Annual  |                          |                   |
| Tourism   |                          |                   |
| Monitoring  |                          |                   |
| <i>Environmental Protection</i>                           |                          |                   |
| <i>Air Quality</i>  |                          |                   |
| <i>Indicator:</i>   | <i>Test results</i>      | <i>Evaluation</i> |
| PM2.5 annual mean:  |                          |                   |
| PM10 annual mean value:                                   |                          |                   |
| SO2 annual average value:                                 |                          |                   |
| NOx annual average value:                                 |                          |                   |
| <i>Water Conservation</i>                                 |                          |                   |
| <i>Indicator:</i>   | <i>Detection results</i> | <i>Evaluation</i> |
| Water quality rating:                                     |                          |                   |
| Water use efficiency:                                     |                          |                   |
| Sewage treatment:   |                          |                   |
| <i>Ecological Protection</i>                              |                          |                   |
| <i>Indicator:</i>   | <i>Detection results</i> | <i>Evaluation</i> |

|   |                                     |  |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| Forest cover:   |                                     |  |
| Wildlife species and numbers:   |                                     |  |
| Delineation of ecological reserves:                                   |                                     |  |
| Soil quality:   |                                     |  |
| Noise level:  |                                     |  |
| <i>Resource utilisation</i>   |                                     |  |
| Proportion of renewable energy use:                                   |                                     |  |
| Energy saving and emission reduction measures:                        |                                     |  |
| Total energy consumption:   |                                     |  |
| Land use structure:   |                                     |  |
| Land development intensity:   |                                     |  |
| <i>Evaluation of Comprehensive Social Benefits</i>                    |                                     |  |
| <i>Tourism revenue</i>  |                                     |  |
| <i>Project</i>  | <i>Rating points (1–10)</i>         | <i>Remarks</i>                         |
| Total annual tourism revenue:   |                                     |  |
| Per capita tourism spending:  |                                     |  |
| Ratio of tourism revenue to local GDP:                                |                                     |  |
| <i>Employment and social welfare</i>                                  |                                     |  |
| <i>Project</i>  | <i>Rating points (1–10)</i>         | <i>Remarks</i>                         |
| Employment opportunities provided by tourism:                         |                                     |  |
| Growth in per capita income of local residents:                       |                                     |  |
| Social welfare inputs and improvements:                               |                                     |  |
| <i>Community involvement</i>  |                                     |  |
| <i>Project</i>  | <i>Rating points (1–10)</i>         | <i>Remarks</i>                         |
| Degree of community participation in tourism planning and management: |                                     |  |
| Residents' satisfaction with tourism development:                     |                                     |  |
| Equity in the distribution of tourism benefits:                       |                                     |  |
| <i>Quality of tourism services</i>                                    |                                     |  |
| <i>Tourist facility</i>   |                                     |  |
| <i>Project</i>  | <i>Evaluation grade (A/B/C/D/E)</i> | <i>Recommendations for improvement</i> |
| Degree of tourism infrastructure improvement:                         |                                     |  |
| Tourism information service system:                                   |                                     |  |
| Construction of barrier-free facilities:                              |                                     |  |

| <i>Tourism Experience</i>                             |                                     |  |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Project</i>  | <i>Evaluation grade (A/B/C/D/E)</i> | <i>Recommendations for improvement</i> |
| Results of the Visitor Satisfaction Survey:           |                                     |  |
| Characteristic tourism project development situation: |                                     |  |
| Cultural heritage and display situation:              |                                     |  |
| Service quality of tour guide explanation:            |                                     |  |
| Accommodation service quality:                        |                                     |  |
| Catering service quality:                             |                                     |  |
| <i>Risk management</i>                                |                                     |  |
| <i>Projects</i>                                       | <i>Rating points (1–10)</i>         | <i>Remarks</i>                         |
| Natural Disaster Response:                            |                                     |  |
| Mechanisms for dealing with tourism safety accidents: |                                     |  |
| Tourism market risk assessment:                       |                                     |  |
| Safety degree of excursion facilities:                |                                     |  |
| Emergency rescue equipment:                           |                                     |  |

The assessment form covers key aspects of rural green tourism, and by monitoring and evaluating the indicators, it helps to ensure the sustainable development of rural tourism while protecting the environment, promoting the local economy, and enhancing the visitor experience. Governments and tourism administrations at all levels can conduct regular self-assessment and adjust their strategies based on this table, regularly monitoring the environmental and social impacts of tourism activities and assessing the impacts of tourism development on the local economy and the lives of residents. Development strategies will be adjusted according to the monitoring and assessment results, and a feedback mechanism will be established to achieve the long-term goal of green tourism.

### **Conclusions to section 3**

Having carried out the work on the development of recommendations for substantiation of the strategy for the development of rural green tourism, the following conclusions were drawn:

Rural green tourism emphasizes finding a balance between protecting the natural environment and promoting rural economic development, responding to the global demand for sustainable development and a green lifestyle. The acceleration of urbanization has led to the outflow of rural populations and the decline of agricultural production. The proposal of rural revitalization strategies aims to address these issues, with rural tourism becoming an essential component. The shift in consumer travel preferences, the popularity of low-carbon lifestyles, global trends in sustainable development, the disparity between urban and rural areas and rural revitalization, the rising awareness of cultural preservation, advancements in technology and transportation, and government policy support all provide a backdrop and opportunities for the development of rural green tourism.

The developmental patterns and characteristics of international green tourism revolve around sustainable development, low-carbon economy, and cultural heritage, seeking to preserve natural environments and cultural heritage. Ecotourism, community-based tourism, sustainable tourism management, certification, and standards are the primary models of international green tourism. Rural green tourism in Europe, North America, and East Asia each has its unique features, offering rich experiences and insights.

The vision of rural green tourism is to create unique and captivating tourist destinations, foster sustainable development in rural communities, and preserve ecological and cultural heritage. The strategic objectives encompass aspects such as ecological conservation, enhancement of market competitiveness, increase in farmers' income, protection and inheritance of cultural heritage, brand building and marketing promotion, talent cultivation and management, establishment of legal frameworks and policy support, improvement of infrastructure and public services, development and planning of tourism resources, marketing and branding, promotion of community participation, and increase in farmers' earnings, all while providing a reasonable balance of ecological, economic, and social benefits. The strategy aims to promote cultural inheritance and a positive tourist experience by

strengthening environmental protection and ecological construction, safeguarding cultural heritage, improving infrastructure and public services, developing and planning tourism resources, engaging in marketing and branding, fostering community involvement, increasing farmers' income, and providing policy support and incentives.

The construction of a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system encompasses environmental quality monitoring, tourism impact assessment, tourist satisfaction surveys, and safety risk investigations. The evaluation framework encompasses assessments in economic benefits, social benefits, environmental benefits, and service quality.

Through the implementation of these strategies, rural areas can evolve into attractive green tourism destinations, simultaneously achieving dual objectives of environmental conservation and community development. This chapter, through empirical research, provides a detailed background analysis, international experience references, goal setting, implementation recommendations, and monitoring and evaluation methods for the development strategies of rural green tourism. The aim is to promote the healthy growth of rural green tourism and contribute to the economic and social development of rural areas.

## CONCLUSIONS

With the increasing global demand for green tourism, rural green tourism, as a new form of tourism, is becoming increasingly important. Rural green tourism is an important factor in the development and revitalization of rural areas. This article analyzes and studies rural green tourism in the context of the Chinese market. Through a comprehensive and in-depth analysis and research on the current situation, problems, and development strategies of rural green tourism, a series of strategic objectives and implementation measures aimed at promoting the sustainable development of rural green tourism are proposed. These measures not only help to protect and inherit rural cultural heritage, but also increase farmers' income, improve rural living standards, and achieve the protection of the ecological environment and the sustainable use of tourism resources.

During the research process, we found that the development of rural green tourism cannot be separated from the strong support of the government, the active participation of the community, and the positive response of the market. By formulating reasonable policies, strengthening infrastructure construction, promoting green tourism concepts, protecting natural environment and cultural heritage, and other measures, we can effectively promote the healthy development of rural green tourism and achieve the goal of rural revitalization strategy. Looking forward to the future, rural green tourism will continue to be an important force in promoting rural economic development, promoting social harmony and environmental protection. Rural green tourism can become a key way to achieve sustainable development goals and contribute to building a beautiful China.

This study first analyzes the importance and research background of rural green tourism, including the growth of global demand for green tourism, the implementation of rural revitalization strategies, the transformation of consumer preferences, and the global trend of environmental protection. Then, the article elaborates on the current situation of rural green tourism, including the development of tourism resources, the expansion of market size, the construction

of infrastructure, and the current situation of environmental protection. On this basis, it proposes the goals of rural green tourism development strategy, including ecological environment protection, market competitiveness improvement, farmers' income increase, cultural heritage protection and inheritance, brand building and marketing promotion.

In the part of strategy implementation, this article proposes a series of specific measures, such as strengthening environmental protection and ecological construction, cultural heritage protection, infrastructure and public service improvement, marketing and brand building, community participation and capacity building, increasing farmers' income, environmental management and protection, policy support and incentives, monitoring and evaluation system construction, etc. These measures aim to comprehensively promote the development of rural green tourism and achieve coordinated economic, social and environmental development.

This study also emphasizes the important role of policy support in the development of rural green tourism, especially in the 2024 document of the Chinese central government, which emphasizes the development direction and policy support for leisure agriculture and rural tourism. Thesis proposes the importance of establishing a monitoring and evaluation system to ensure the sustainable development of rural tourism and provide direction for improvement. The development strategy of rural green tourism is summarized, and suggestions for future research are proposed. Through the implementation of these strategies, rural areas can develop into attractive green tourism destinations while achieving the dual goals of environmental protection and community development.

Finally, we recognize that the development of rural green tourism is a long-term and complex process that requires continuous exploration and practice. The research is only the first step, and there is still much work to be done in the future. We look forward to working with more peers and partners to jointly promote the development of rural green tourism and strive to build a better, greener and harmonious society.

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## ANNEXES

## Annex A

### Consumer Questionnaire for Rural Tourism Market

Please fill in:  $\surd$  in front of your option.

1. *What is your age range?*

- Below 18 years old
- 18-30 years old
- 31-45 years old
- 46-60 years old
- Above 60 years old

2. *What is your gender?*

- Male
- Female
- Other

3. *What is your occupation?*

- Student
- Teacher/Scholar
- Enterprise employee
- Freelancer

Others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. *What is your average monthly income range?*

- Below RMB 3,000
- 3000-5000RMB
- 5001-8000RMB
- 8001-12000RMB
- More than 12001RMB

5. *What type of community do you currently live in?*

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural
- Other

6. *How many rural tourism events have you attended in the past year?*

- 0 times
- 1-2 times
- 3-5 times
- More than 5 times

7. *What is your main reason for choosing rural tourism? (Multiple choices allowed)*

- To get close to nature
- To experience rural culture
- To relax and reduce stress
- To learn about agriculture
- Support local economy
- Others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

8. *What is the activity you are most interested in when travelling in the countryside? (Multiple choices allowed)*

- Hiking and nature exploration
- Farm experiences (e.g., picking, farming)
- Visiting historical sites and cultural attractions
- Participating in local festivals and cultural events
- Tasting local food and buying produce
- Handicraft making
- Others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

9. *Which type of accommodation do you prefer when travelling in the countryside?*

- Traditional hotel
- Nongjiale or B&B
- Eco-lodge or resort
- Camping
- Others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

10. *Which factors are most important to you when choosing a rural tourism destination?*

- Scenery and natural environment
- Tourism costs (e.g. transport and accommodation costs)
- Tourism facilities and services
- Local culture and activities
- Sustainable tourism practices
- Safety and hygiene conditions

Word-of-mouth and recommendation

*11. How important do you attach to sustainable practices in rural tourism?*

Very important

Important

Fairly

Not very important

Not important

*12. How do you think rural tourism should contribute to local environmental protection and economic development?*

By providing environmental education programmes

By supporting local small businesses and agricultural products

By protecting and restoring natural landscapes

By creating jobs related to environmental protection

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

*13. Would you be willing to pay extra for a rural tourism product with sustainable features?*

Yes, I would be willing to pay more

Probably, depending on how much the extra cost is

No, I would not be willing to pay additional costs

Not sure

*14. Other Feedback:*

Do you have any suggestions or ideas that could help rural destinations improve their sustainability and attractiveness?

*15. Would you like to receive more information and offers about rural green tourism?*

Yes

No

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your feedback is very valuable to us and will help us to better understand and meet your tourism needs.

We will keep your personal information strictly confidential. Thank you again for your participation and support!

## Annex B

### Questionnaire on Green Tourism Development in Villages

Dear community residents, Hello, in order to fully understand the current situation of green development of village tourism, in order to better the protection and development of the village, we will conduct a survey on the local situation, this survey is in the form of anonymous, your answers will be used for the use of academic analyses, the information will not be made public, please feel free to answer the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your support and understanding!

*1. Your age*

- 18 years old and below
- 19-30 years
- 31-45 years
- 46-60 years
- Over 61 years

*2. Your gender*

- Male
- Female
- Other

*3. Your highest education*

- High school / junior college and below
- College
- Undergraduate
- Postgraduate and above

*4. Your status is*

- Indigenous resident
- Temporary resident
- Other

*5. Your average monthly income*

- Less than 5000 yuan
- 5001-10000 yuan

- 10001-15000 yuan
- 15001-20000 yuan
- More than 20001 yuan

6. *How much is your annual disposable income?*

- 20000 yuan and below
- 20001-36000 yuan
- 36001-48000 yuan
- 48001-60000 yuan
- More than 60000 yuan

7. *What is the current mode of production of most people in your village?*

- Catering
- Scenic spot workers
- Small traders
- Farming
- Working outside
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

8. *Are you engaged in tourism-related work?*

- Yes
- No

9. *How much is your yearly income related to tourism industry?*

- 20000 and below
- 20001-36000 yuan
- 36001-48000 yuan
- 48001-60000 yuan
- More than 60000 yuan

11. *How is the level of tourism development in your village*

- Very developed, with many tourists and obvious off-peak seasons, giving a big boost to the economic development of the village.
- Generally developed, with a limited number of tourists, very obvious off-peak seasons, and some promotion of the village's development
- development is relatively lagging behind, few tourists, poor tourism facilities, limited impact on the economic development of the village
- Almost no tourism development;
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

12. *What do you think are the main reasons affecting the economic development of villages at present? (Multiple choices allowed)*

- Lack of financial support
- Insufficient policy support
- Outdated infrastructure
- Irrational planning
- Serious environmental pollution
- Population loss
- Poor natural resources
- Inconvenient transport
- Low motivation of community villagers
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

13. *In your opinion, what is the protection status of local cultural heritage?*

- Very good
- Comparatively good
- Average
- Very poor

14. *In your opinion, what is the protection status of local natural heritage?*

- Very good
- Comparatively good
- Average
- Very poor

15. *In your opinion, what are the problems in the process of protection and inheritance of local cultural and natural heritage? (Multiple choices allowed)*

- The protection policy is unreasonable.
- Villagers' awareness of protection and inheritance is not strong
- Invasion of foreign culture and loss of local culture
- Damage to traditional buildings
- Insufficient financial support

16. *Which of the following energy sources are clean energy? (Multiple choice)*

- Coal
- Nuclear power
- Biogas
- Solar energy
- Oil

- Orange Pole
- Natural gas

17. Does your household use solar energy (e.g. solar water heater, solar panels)?

- Yes
- No

18. What is the main way to heat your home in winter? (Multiple choice)

- Electric heating
- Coal-fired fireplace
- Air-conditioning
- Diesel heating
- Wood-burning heating
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

19. What is the main method of wastewater treatment in your home? (Multiple choices allowed)

- Direct discharge to rivers, lakes, sea, etc.
- Recycling in household water purification system
- Directly discharged to sewage treatment plant

20. Waste disposal in your community is:

- Landfill
- Burning
- Piling it up in open spaces
- Sending to waste treatment plant
- Sorting and treating
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

21. What do you think is the most important factor for the development of rural green tourism?

- Water quality
- Air quality
- Forest cover
- Wildlife protection
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

## Annex C



Навчально-науковий інститут «Каразінська школа бізнесу»  
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Університет Йорка  
Університет прикладних наук Голландії  
Університет Менделя в Брно  
Вірменський державний економічний університет  
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Глобальний коледж Хайека  
Університетський центр імені Абдельхафіда Буссуфа в місті Міла

## **ПРОБЛЕМИ ТА ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ ЗАБЕЗПЕЧЕННЯ СТІЙКОГО СОЦІАЛЬНО-ЕКОНОМІЧНОГО РОЗВИТКУ ТЕРИТОРІЙ**

**МАТЕРІАЛИ**  
**Міжнародної науково-практичної інтернет-конференції**  
27–28 жовтня 2023 року



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**Редакційна колегія:**

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### **EFFECT OF RURAL TOURISM ON RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA**

Rural tourism is a new driving force for the sustainable development of the tourism industry. As an effective way to implement the Rural Revitalization Strategy – a kind of rural development policy issued by China’s central government on 18 October 2017; it gives priority to the development of agricultural and rural areas, and its purpose is to make the countryside a beautiful place for living and working in peace and contentment – it has played a great role in accelerating the agricultural and rural modernization, urban–rural integration, as well as poverty alleviation in poor areas. The rural tourism experience of rural life is aimed at enjoying rural pastoral beauty, engaging in the agricultural planting and breeding industry, rural primitive ecological environment, and folk culture in order to attract the attention of tourists. This makes rural tourism a new multi-modal tourism involving play, relaxation, vacation, creation, shopping, and learning. Rural tourism is a form of tourism with tourism vacation as its purpose and the rural environment as its carrier. At present, it comprises a popular and important direction of tourism development in China. Meanwhile, as a relatively complete regional social community composed of a certain number of people living in rural areas, the role of rural communities in rural development has become increasingly obvious in China. Specifically, they can affect the rural culture, rural education, ecological environment, etc.

With the rapid development of rural tourism and the significant increase in the role of rural communities in rural development, in recent years, the interest of many scholars has been aroused, regarding exploration of the relationships between rural tourism and community development. Guo and Huang [1] have claimed that there is a dual interactive relationship between rural community development and rural tourism. This idea has also been supported by the following studies: Jing-Ming [3] considered that supporting and participating in rural tourism development is one of the basic responsibilities of rural communities. As a part of rural tourism resources, rural community residents are not onlookers of rural tourism activities. Every rural community resident has the right to participate in the development of rural tourism resources. In the construction of rural tourism is also the responsibility of rural communities. The active participation of rural communities in rural tourism is conducive to the sustainable and healthy development of rural tourism and the improvement of farmer income levels. Sustainable rural tourism development is inseparable from the support of rural community development. Due to the rapid expansion of rural tourism, a large number of outsiders enter rural areas. Although rural

tourism can promote rural economic development, it also brings a series of problems, such as environmental and ecological problems, conflict between outsiders and locals, and so on. They found that one of the functions of the rural community is as a direct undertaker for solving these problems brought about by rural tourism. To better solve these problems, the function of rural community must be given full play, in order to realize the sustainable development of rural tourism and rural community. In addition, Wang and Hao [5] have pointed out that rural tourism development is inseparable from the extensive participation of rural communities. However, to enable rural communities to participate in the development of rural tourism, the government needs to reasonably support and guide rural community participation. With the promotion of new rural construction in China, Jie [2] finds that the relationship between rural tourism and rural community development has become more strong.

Rural tourism in China is closely related to the economic and social development of rural communities. The original intention of developing rural tourism in many rural areas is to realize its economic function. The previous literature has shown that rural tourism can produce positive effects in adjusting the rural industrial structure, improving the income of farmers, and promoting local transfer of the rural surplus labor force. Generally speaking, rural tourism plays a role in driving the economic and social development of rural areas. In detail, the relationship between rural tourism and rural community economic development must be re-understood and recognized from the perspective of agricultural modernization and rural communities, giving full play to the role of optimizing resource allocation. Rural tourism helps rural communities to realize their economic role through large industrial relevance and strong driving to other industries. In the context of the rapid development of urban–rural integration, it is very important to take “people-oriented” as the core concept to reshape the regional function of rural tourism scenic spots and communities integrating urban and rural areas. This is conducive to the sustainable development of rural tourism and rural communities. Community culture is an effective allocation resource in the existence and development of rural tourism.

Rural tourism is a significant step forward in the accomplishment of ethnic rural rejuvenation. Using the Shiyi Qiang Stockaded hamlet in Beichuan Qiang Autonomous county of Sichuan province as a sample, Wang et al. [6] investigated the relationship between rural tourism and rural communities using the notion of community empowerment. They revealed that rural tourism could improve community cohesiveness. Community involvement in rural tourism was not only an essential type of farmer’s participation in tourism and commercial growth, but also an effective strategy to establish a new socialist countryside. Their findings indicated that rural tourism might help to strengthen rural community civilization and capability. Meanwhile, rural tourism has developed as a new force in recent years, serving as a highlight of rural economic growth and an essential method of addressing the issue of local citizens’ employment. Using Jiangxinzhou as the study object, they studied the influence of rural tourism on community people’ employment. They found that rural tourism could promote the employment of community residents. Lin et al. [4]

used survey data from five rural tourism villages in the Ningde World Geopark to perform an empirical study. They believed that rural tourism contributed to the well-being of the community's rural residents. Xian-feng and Jian [7] used the ancient city village of Ningxia as a sample to study the effect of rural tourism on Hui community. They found that rural tourism had an influence on Hui community residents' food patterns, kinship, and female status.

Thus, with the rapid growth of China's economy, the income of the population has been increasing. People spend more on leisure and entertainment, not just material needs. For this reason, China's rural tourism has developed vigorously. Meanwhile, in this wave of rapid rural tourism development, China's rural community development has also developed rapidly. Rural tourism is a noteworthy driver of community development. Therefore, with this background, we took China as an example to explore how sustainable rural tourism affects rural community development in the long- and short run over the period 1994–2020. Based on previous studies, sustainable rural tourism was measured using two indicators: Economic benefits of rural tourism and number of rural tourists. Rural community development was measured through the number of community service institutions. Meanwhile, some other key variables were also used to realize this basic aim. Using the autoregressive distributed lag bounds technique to conduct the empirical analyses, the key results suggest that sustainable rural tourism positively and significantly affects rural community development. Considering the results of this paper, it can be found that sustainable rural tourism is making a positive contribution to China's rural community development, whether in the long or short run.

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### **OPTIMIZATION OF TALENT INCENTIVE SYSTEM FOR 90s GENERATION IN CHINESE SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED PRIVATE ENTERPRISES**

Chinese private enterprises have always been an indispensable part of the Chinese economy, creating a substantial number of job opportunities and contributing to economic growth. However, in the ever-evolving business environment, effectively attracting and motivating the new generation of employees, especially the 90s generation, has become a key challenge for business management. This study aims to explore the current state of talent incentive systems for 90s generation employees in Chinese private enterprises, using Qingdao HX Group as a case study.

90s generation employees represent a new workforce with different values and expectations compared to their predecessors. They seek more opportunities for development, job satisfaction, and work-life balance. Therefore, researching how to design and implement incentive systems that suit them is crucial, which is the core issue of this study. People in this age group now make up a large part of the labour force and consumer groups in China and have a great influence on the country's economic and social development. According to static data, China's population aged 24-34 accounts for 14.7 per cent of the population [1].

Research shows that companies should make changes in HR management for employees after 90 years of age because they are knowledgeable, full of opinions, have the ability to learn quickly, but they are self-centred and crave for attention. Companies should be people orientated, objective, fair, have a good corporate culture and atmosphere [2].

Optimising the talent reward system in Chinese small and medium-sized private enterprises for the 90s generation can help attract and retain young and promising employees. Here are some steps that can be helpful in this process:

It is necessary to analyse the market and competitiveness, study what other enterprises in the same industry offer in terms of talent incentives and rewards, and compare their benefits and rewards with competitors to see what improvements can be made.

Also, the development of personalised development plans is relevant / Provide employees with the opportunity to develop personalised development plans that will