

Research on the development path of equestrian tourism characteristic town under the perspective of rural revitalisation

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ABSTRACT

Under the background of rural revitalisation strategy, equestrian tourism characteristic town, as a carrier of emerging industry integration, provides an innovative path for rural economic transformation and sustainable development through industrial synergy, cultural empowerment and ecological co-construction. Starting from the fit between rural revitalisation and equestrian tourism, this paper analyses the empowering effect of industrial integration on rural economy, the activating effect of cultural heritage on endogenous power, and the supporting significance of ecological priority on green development. The study proposes that equestrian tourism towns need to take infrastructure upgrading as the foundation, deepen the "equestrian +" industrial integration chain, cultivate special brand IP, innovate diversified operation mechanism, and build a model of villagers' participation in co-governance. At the same time, supporting policies, talent support and risk assessment system are needed to achieve a dynamic balance of economic value, social benefits and ecological protection. This paper provides theoretical reference and practical framework for the differentiated development of characteristic towns in the context of rural revitalisation.

KEYWORDS

rural revitalisation; equestrian tourism; characteristic town; industrial integration; sustainable development; cultural empowerment

The strategy of rural revitalisation, as the overall gripping force of the work of "three rural areas" in the new era, aims to achieve the goals of strong agriculture, beautiful countryside and rich farmers. With the rapid development of China's economy and society, the demand for tourism consumption is becoming increasingly diversified, and characteristic towns have become an important carrier to promote rural revitalisation by virtue of their unique industrial, cultural and ecological resource advantages. Equestrian tourism as a set of sports, leisure, cultural experience in one of the emerging forms of tourism, rapid development in recent years, the combination of equestrian tourism and the construction of small towns with characteristics, not only to meet the growing demand for high-quality tourism, but also for the countryside industrial upgrading, cultural inheritance and ecological protection injected into the new vitality. However, at present, equestrian tourism characteristic towns in China are facing problems such as imperfect infrastructure, low industrial integration and insufficient brand influence in the process of development^[1]. In this context, in-depth study of the development path and guarantee mechanism of equestrian tourism characteristic town under the perspective of rural revitalisation has important theoretical value and practical significance, which helps to explore the effective mode of rural revitalisation and the synergistic development of characteristic industries, and provides practical references for the promotion of comprehensive revitalisation of the countryside.

1 Rural revitalisation and equestrian tourism characteristics of the town of the point of convergence

(A) Industrial integration empowers rural economic revitalisation

Equestrian tourism towns form a multi-dimensional economic linkage model by integrating rural resources with the equestrian industry chain. Take Nantian Equestrian Culture Town in Haikanhai as an example, it takes equestrian as the core to build a composite industrial system of "race training + ecological agriculture + leisure and holiday", relying on the synergistic development mode of state-owned enterprises and private enterprises, integrating horse breeding, equestrian performances and other traditional industries with the depth of the tourism consumption scenario, and directly driving the surrounding farmers to participate in equestrian services. Another example is the Fengning China Horse Town, which has formed an industrial chain covering horse trading, riding experience, cultural and creative derivatives through the development of a 100-kilometre horse trail, international equestrian events and other special projects, prompting local villagers to diversify their employment from a single farming industry to a diversified service industry. With the help of resource integration and industry innovation, this kind of model can effectively activate the idle land and labour force in the countryside, promote the added value of agriculture and the value-added of the tertiary industry, and inject sustainable growth momentum into the rural economy^[2].

(B) Cultural heritage activates the endogenous power of the countryside

As a carrier of historical memory in the countryside, equestrian culture, its inheritance and innovation provide a spiritual core and brand value for the development of the countryside. Zhumadian International Equestrian Town takes "post horse culture" as its vein, and through restoring the ancient post road and organising cultural activities such as the Chinese National Horse Racing Championships, it has transformed the historical vein into an experience-able tourism product and strengthened the sense of regional cultural identity. Through the establishment of horse breeding co-operative, Tasburak Village of Kuldene Town, Gongliu County combines the traditional equestrian skills of the Kazakhs with modern horse racing, which not only preserves the national cultural characteristics, but also realises the economic transformation of cultural resources through horse improvement and events; Nawin Village of Debaosi County takes the non-genetic inheritance of the horse bone hu as the entry point, and builds the mode of "non-heritage+tourism". The village of Nawen in Debaos County takes the non-genetic inheritance of horse bone beard as an entry point to build "non-heritage + tourism" mode, and makes traditional culture become the core element to attract tourists through art training, folklore exhibition and performance. Such practice shows that equestrian culture is not only the identity mark of the countryside, but also can be creatively transformed to form a differentiated competitive advantage and drive the endogenous development of the countryside.

(C) Ecological Priority Builds the Foundation of Green Development

Equestrian tourism project development needs to strictly follow the ecological carrying capacity threshold, and its operational characteristics are highly compatible with the green development requirements of rural revitalisation. At the project site selection stage, priority can be given to the use of desertified grassland or degraded forest land, so as to realise the superposition of ecological restoration and industrial development through horse grazing. The construction of the race course should adopt permeable materials and native vegetation, and connect the horse stable manure treatment system with organic agriculture to build a closed loop of circular economy. In day-to-day operations, horse breeding standards should be incorporated into environmental performance assessment, with precise feeding to reduce excreta pollution, and riding routes planned to avoid bird habitats and water reserves. Such a development model transforms ecological protection from cost constraints to value creation, and when tourists pay a premium for the low-carbon riding experience, the ecological assets of the countryside are monetised and transformed, providing a long-term incentive mechanism for sustainable development.

2 Rural revitalisation perspective of equestrian tourism characteristics of the town development path

(A) Compact infrastructure, build functional composite carrier

Under the framework of the rural revitalisation strategy, the infrastructure construction of the equestrian tourism characteristic town needs to break through the single-function orientation and turn to the systematic upgrading targeting the composite carrier^[3]. The first task is to build a three-dimensional traffic network with internal and external connections, and to link the core area of the town with the surrounding villages, farmlands, mountains and other resource nodes into an organic whole by transforming rural roads, adding equestrian-themed stations and viewing platforms, which can meet the professional needs of equestrian events and riding experience, and also provide tourists with immersive countryside roaming paths. At the same time, public service facilities need to be embedded with equestrian cultural elements, such as transforming traditional farmhouses into comprehensive service stations with equestrian equipment leasing and folklore display functions, or setting up equestrian-themed cultural and creative sales areas in countryside bazaars, so as to make the infrastructure become a carrier for cultural dissemination. The layout of the service facilities should follow the principle of intensification, for example, combining the design of the horse care centre with the ecological car park, using modular construction technology to reduce the land occupation rate, and embedding agricultural products exhibition and sales, non-heritage cultural experience and other composite function modules in the visitor reception centre, forming a "one-stop multi-functional" service node.

Further, the construction of a digital management platform is the key to improving the operational efficiency of a speciality town. With the help of Internet of Things (IoT) technology, the town can achieve horse health monitoring, riding route planning and dynamic management of passenger flow, which can significantly optimise the efficiency of resource allocation. What needs more attention is that the infrastructure should carry the dual functions of ecological protection and social services, for example, building an ecological floodplain around the equestrian training ground, which can not only meet the drainage demand in the rainy season, but also create a wetland landscape; implanting the rural skills training function in the visitor centre, and regularly offering courses on equestrian care and tour guide service for villagers, so as to make the hardware become an incubator for capacity building. This kind of composite design can avoid homogeneous competition and form a virtuous cycle of "infrastructure-industrial ecology-social benefits".

(B) Deepen industrial integration and extend the value chain

The industrial integration of the equestrian tourism characteristics of the town needs to break through the traditional "sports + tourism" simple superposition mode, and turn to the whole industry chain penetration with equestrian as the

core^[4]. At the level of horizontal integration, the experiential mode of "equestrian + agriculture" should be constructed, such as the development of horseback picking, ranch adoption and other projects, so as to transform traditional agricultural activities into high value-added tourism products. At the same time, to promote the deep integration of "equestrian + culture", through the restoration of the history of local horse breeding, organising equestrian non-heritage skills exhibition, cultural resources into experience consumption scenes. This kind of integration needs to focus on the local expression, avoiding the shallow collage of cultural symbols, but through the scene restoration, skills inheritance and other ways to establish emotional connection.

In terms of vertical extension, special towns need to establish a complete value chain of "horse breeding - training - races - derivatives". Horse breeding can cooperate with colleges and universities and scientific research institutions to build a local horse breed conservation base; event operation should introduce a grading certification system to cultivate a gradient of products from folk events to professional competitions; or layout of the core racecourse around the harness workshop, equestrian-themed restaurants and other derivatives, through the linkage system to form an industrial ecosystem, so as to achieve a natural conversion of the consumption scene within the radius of the visitor's activities. What is more crucial is the development of derivatives, which should break through the category of souvenirs and expand to the fields of equestrian rehabilitation and equestrian education, such as the development of equestrian healing courses for young people for urban middle-class families or the launch of equestrian rehabilitation training programmes in cooperation with medical institutions, so as to promote the industrial form from tourism and consumption to scientific and technological services, and this kind of innovation requires the establishment of an industrial alliance, which ensures that the villagers participate in the distribution of profits through the mechanism of interest linkage to avoid the outflow of industrial value-added income. This kind of innovation needs to establish industrial alliances and ensure that villagers can participate in profit distribution through the benefit linkage mechanism to avoid the outflow of value-added income from the industry.

(C) Cultivate brand IP, strengthen market attraction

Under the background of rural revitalisation strategy, the brand IP cultivation of equestrian tourism towns needs to be based on the endowment of regional cultural resources and build a differentiated and sustainable cultural symbol system.

First of all, relying on local horse breed conservation, traditional equestrian skills and other core resources, the characteristic town refines the cultural symbols with historical depth and emotional resonance, for example, combining the protection of endangered horse breeds with the inheritance of non-legacy skills to form the concept of "living culture museum". The town reconstructs cultural memory with the help of scenario narrative, such as restoring the function of the ancient horse gang post in the core area and interpreting the history of horse gang trade by combining with modern light and shadow technology, so that tourists can establish cultural identity in the immersive experience. The brand visual system design needs to break through the traditional symbol stacking, and integrate the equestrian elements with the rural architectural texture and natural landscape, for example, extracting the horsehair lines as the design language of the guide system, or abstracting the traditional stirrup shape into a landscape device, so as to achieve the functional translation of cultural symbols.

Secondly, the brand communication of the special town needs to build a "content + channel" dual-wheel drive mechanism. In terms of content production, the town can cooperate with university research teams to excavate local equestrian canonical books and folk stories, and develop a series of cultural derivatives, such as cultural and creative handicrafts named after equestrian movements, and thematic study courses designed in conjunction with the customs of festivals and seasons. In terms of communication channels, the town needs to break through the single cultural and tourism publicity framework, and cross-border linkage with sports events and art exhibitions, such as holding international equestrian photography contests and horse-themed contemporary art exhibitions, to expand the brand radiance through diversified media, and at the same time, establish digital brand archives, and use blockchain technology to confirm the right to deposit evidence of the horse's pedigree, and the skills of non-genetic inheritance bearers, so as to enhance the credibility of the brand.

Finally, brand value extension needs to focus on industrial chain synergy. The town can develop a hierarchical certification system and design experience products for different consumer groups, such as launching a private horse adoption plan for high-end customers, including genetic testing, customised training and other value-added services; developing equestrian-themed scripted kills and parent-child equestrian break-in games for the mass market, and enhancing user stickiness through gamification design. On this basis, the town should establish a brand alliance mechanism, and form a complementary matrix by combining the surrounding rural characteristic industries, for example, cooperating with organic farms to launch the theme line of "equestrian+farming", and building and sharing the customer source pool with B&B clusters to maximise the brand effect.

(D) Innovative operation mechanism to achieve sustainable development

The innovation of the operation mechanism of the equestrian tourism characteristic town needs to build a multi-dimensional common governance system guided by the government, operated by the market and participated by the

society^[5]. First, the government should improve the policy supply, formulate special support policies to guide social capital to participate in infrastructure construction, for example, to give volume rate incentives for the construction of equestrian-themed lodging, and to provide tax relief for the operation of non-heritage workshops. The establishment of cross-departmental coordination mechanism, co-ordination of agriculture, culture and tourism, sports and other departmental resources, the formation of a "project list + list of responsibilities" management mode, to ensure the effectiveness of the policy on the ground. Secondly, the cultivation of market players need to focus on professional division of labour, the introduction of strategic investors responsible for capital operation and market development, and local enterprises to set up joint venture operating companies, clear rights and responsibilities boundaries. For example, foreign capital will lead the construction of high-end hotels, and local cooperatives will be responsible for the operation of agricultural experience projects, so as to achieve complementary advantages through contractual cooperation. A dynamic assessment mechanism should be established to regularly assess the performance of the operating entities, and exit procedures should be initiated for those cooperators who fail to meet the standards, so as to ensure the sustainable development of the project. Thirdly, the balance between ecological protection and economic benefits should be embedded in the whole process of operation. The town needs to formulate carbon footprint accounting standards, and implement emission reduction reforms for horse breeding and visitor traffic, for example, promoting the use of biogas energy for heating stables, and constructing ecological trails to replace the traditional sightseeing bus routes. At the same time, the town should build an ecological compensation fund, extracting a fixed percentage of ticket revenue for the conservation of surrounding mountains and forests and water conservation, forming a closed loop of "development-protection-feedback", and actively exploring green financial tools, issuing carbon-neutral bonds to support eco-projects, and attracting the attention of ESG investment organisations.

(E) Activating villagers' participation and sharing development dividends

The design of villagers' participation mechanism needs to follow the logic of "empowerment - empowerment - sharing". First, the establishment of skills training system, for different groups to open equestrian care, non-heritage crafts, tourism services and other special courses, through the examination and certification issued by the professional qualification certificate, enhance the competitiveness of the villagers' employment, at the same time, the town can set up a business incubation platform, provide low-interest loans and entrepreneurial guidance, to encourage the villagers to open the family equestrian experience halls, characteristics of the bed and breakfast, and to give traffic support to the outstanding projects and brand endorsement. Secondly, the benefit distribution mechanism needs to ensure fairness and transparency, the village collective cooperative can be set up, villagers to land, housing, labour and other elements of the shares, a clear equity ratio and dividend rules, and the establishment of a "guaranteed income + dividends by shares" model, to ensure that the villagers' basic income, 30% of the operating profit injected into the village collective fund for the construction of public utilities. The village collective fund is used for the construction of public utilities. At the same time actively implement the "villagers' representatives supervision committee" system, major decisions, financial expenditure for the whole process of supervision, regular disclosure of operational data, to prevent the transfer of benefits. Third, the cultural heritage needs to stimulate the endogenous momentum, the town can set up a non-genetic inheritance studio, by the old artists with apprenticeship, the production of horse harnesses, equestrian etiquette and other skills into the primary and secondary school vernacular curriculum, and regularly held annual horse culture festival, organising villagers to carry out equestrian competitions, folklore exhibitions, for the excellent inheritors awarded the title of "village cultural ambassador" and give special subsidies, the development of villagers' oral history project, regular disclosure of the operation to prevent the transfer of benefits. The excellent inheritors are awarded the title of "village cultural ambassador" and given special subsidies, and the villagers' oral history project is developed to record the stories of equestrian cultural inheritance, which is permanently preserved and disseminated through the digital museum, so as to enhance the villagers' sense of cultural pride.

3 Rural revitalisation perspective of equestrian tourism characteristics of the town development path guarantee mechanism

(A) Improve the policy system, strengthen the system supply

In order to meet the strategic orientation of rural revitalisation, in the construction of the policy system of equestrian tourism town, one is to formulate a special land use policy, for equestrian venues, ancillary facilities and other land needs, to explore the flexibility of the transfer, long-term leasing and other ways of supplying land to ensure that the project is landed; the second is to establish a financial support mechanism, set up a special fund for the development of equestrian tourism in the countryside, and subsidies or discounts are given to infrastructure construction and industrial integration projects in line with the planning; the third is to introduce an industrial access and exit system, which specifies the standards for the development of small town industries, and guides the entry of quality enterprises. Subsidies or

discounts; Third, the introduction of industrial access and exit system, clear town industry development standards, guiding high-quality enterprises to move in, and at the same time do not meet the requirements of the project in a timely manner to clean up, so as to form a scientific and perfect institutional framework.

(B) Cultivate professional talents and consolidate intellectual support

In the process of rural revitalisation, the cultivation of professional talents in equestrian tourism towns needs to build a diversified training system. Relying on vocational colleges and universities to open equestrian management, tourism services and other professional courses, directional training of hands-on talents; encourage colleges and towns to establish industry-academia-research cooperation, to carry out research on the horse industry economy, event operation and other topics, to transport the combination of theory and practice of composite talents; organisation of industry experts to carry out technical guidance and training on a regular basis, the villagers of the equestrian skills, service norms, etc., to enhance the overall level of practitioners, to build a solid intellectual foundation for the development of small towns. To build a solid intellectual foundation for the development of the town.

(C) Sound supervision and assessment to prevent development risks

To promote the healthy development of equestrian tourism characteristic towns in the context of rural revitalisation, a sound supervision and assessment mechanism is indispensable. To build a multi-sectoral joint supervision system, the town's construction and operation of ecological protection, safety, production, service quality and other all-round supervision; the development of a dynamic assessment index system, covering economic benefits, social benefits, ecological benefits and other dimensions, and regularly carry out the project assessment; the establishment of a risk early warning mechanism for market fluctuations, operation and management of the potential risks, in advance of the formulation of a response to the plan to ensure that the town's development is stable to the far future.

4 Conclusion

The strategy of rural revitalisation provides a historic opportunity for the development of equestrian tourism characteristic towns, and through the synergistic promotion of industrial integration, cultural empowerment and ecological co-construction, the model effectively activates the value of rural resources and forms a dynamic balance of economic, social and ecological benefits. Future research needs to further focus on the following directions: first, the refined design of policy support, exploring differentiated land supply and ecological compensation mechanism, such as Hainan equestrian town of state-owned enterprises and private enterprises to collaborate with the development experience; second, the depth of the application of digital management technology, building an intelligent monitoring system covering the health of the horses, tourist behaviour and resource consumption, reference to the Kangping Liaojin town of the "four states of unity" intelligent management system. The third is cross-regional industry chain collaboration, relying on international events and cultural exchanges to strengthen brand radiation, such as Fengning China Horse Town through the practice of 100 kilometres of horse trails linking multiple industries. With the help of multi-dimensional innovation, the equestrian tourism town is expected to become an important carrier for the implementation of the rural revitalisation strategy, and provide a more resilient practice sample for the integrated development of urban and rural areas.

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