

INTEGRATION OF SPORTS TOURISM AND RURAL TOURISM: A CASE STUDY OF CHINA AND SWITZERLAND

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With the rapid development of the world economy, sports tourism and rural tourism have been developed. The integrated development of sports tourism and rural tourism can make full use of the advantages of both, and improve the experience and benefits of tourism. Taking China and Switzerland as examples, this article discusses the current situation, problems and solutions of the integration of sports tourism and rural tourism. It is hoped that China and Switzerland can better promote the integrated development of sports tourism and rural tourism.

Keywords: rural leisure sports tourism; sports; economic development; industrial integration; China; Switzerland.

ИНТЕГРАЦИЯ СПОРТИВНОГО ТУРИЗМА И СЕЛЬСКОГО ТУРИЗМА: ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ НА ПРИМЕРЕ КИТАЯ И ШВЕЙЦАРИИ

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С быстрым развитием мировой экономики получили развитие спортивный туризм и сельский туризм. Интегрированное развитие спортивного и сельского туризма может в полной мере использовать преимущества обоих видов туризма, а также улучшить впечатления и выгоды от туризма. В этой статье на примере Китая и Швейцарии рассматривается текущая ситуация, проблемы и решения интеграции спортивного и сельского туризма. Есть надежда, что Китай и Швейцария смогут лучше содействовать комплексному развитию спортивного и сельского туризма.

Ключевые слова: сельский досугово-спортивный туризм; спорт; экономическое развитие; промышленная интеграция; Китай; Швейцария.

With the advancement of globalisation and people's growing need for a better life, tourism has become an increasingly important way for people to have leisure and entertainment. As two major branches of tourism, sports tourism and rural tourism have their own unique characteristics and attractions. The integration and development of sports tourism and rural tourism can give

full play to the advantages of both, improve the tourists' travelling experience and enhance the economic benefits of the tourism region, and make the scenic spots well-known. In this paper, we will take China and Switzerland as examples to explore the possibilities and prospects of the integration of sports tourism and rural tourism.

Rural tourism refers to tourism activities and phenomena that are related to all tourism resources in the countryside that can attract tourists. The purpose of rural tourism is to satisfy various tourism needs, such as sightseeing, leisure, vacation, learning, and shopping. Sports tourism refers to the activities of individuals who participate in or visit sports events from the time they temporarily leave their place of residence until they return [1]. Overall, rural sports tourism is a tourism experience centered around a variety of sports activities, including physical recreation, exercise, competition, rehabilitation, and cultural exchanges. It has a close connection between tourist sites, enterprises, and society. In a narrower sense, rural sports tourism focuses on meeting and adapting to the sports needs of tourists through a variety of activities. The aim is to promote the physical and mental health of tourists, as well as the material and spiritual civilization of society. It is considered a socio-economic and cultural activity, and an important part of the industrialization and commercialization of sports.

The integration of sports tourism and rural tourism can create diverse and distinctive tourism products to meet the needs of different tourists. This can also drive the development of related industries and increase local economic income. Organizing large-scale sports events and activities can enhance the visibility and reputation of tourist destinations, attracting more tourists to visit. Additionally, this integration aids in preserving and promoting traditional culture, allowing for greater understanding and recognition of rural and sports culture. Furthermore, the development of rural tourism can facilitate the restructuring of rural industries and enhance the quality and effectiveness of the rural economy.

Studying the effective integration of sports tourism and rural tourism to achieve complementary resources and mutual benefits is of great practical significance and social value. This will promote the development of tourism, as well as rural economic and social development [2]. Rural sports tourism can have a positive impact on a country's foreign exchange earnings, investment environment, employment opportunities, and foreign economic cooperation and exchanges. According to *the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) Olympic Magazine*, hosting the Olympic Games alone brought Australia \$42.7 billion in tourism revenues in the four years since 1997. A survey conducted in Lausanne, Switzerland, analyzed several developed European countries and found that sports contribute to a country's gross domestic product by approximately 1% to 2%. Hosting a large-scale sports event can attract a

significant number of tourists, including nearly 10,000 athletes, coaches, officials, and journalists, as well as a large number of spectators. Successfully hosting a large sports event can lead to significant economic benefits for the host site through the tourism consumption chain, including transportation, accommodation, food and beverage, and shopping [3].

The intrinsic connection of rural sports tourism is mainly manifested in the aspects of complementary resources, mutual benefits, win-win branding and market sharing. The combined development of sports tourism and rural tourism can realize the complementary resources, enrich the tourism product system and improve the quality; provide more employment opportunities for local farmers and promote rural development; improve the popularity and reputation of rural tourism through the brand effect of sports events; and realize the market sharing, expand the market share, and improve the competitiveness, so as to promote the tourism industry and the economic and social development of rural areas.

Sports tourism is increasingly popular in China, and combining it with rural revitalization strategies can have a significant impact on the rural economy and ecological development. This can lead to rapid economic growth, increased income for farmers, improved rural industry, and a better ecological environment. The combination of rural sports tourism and revitalization strategies can ultimately achieve the goal of rural revitalization.

China is a country with rich natural resources and cultural heritage, providing a very large space for the development of sports tourism and rural tourism in China. In recent years, the Chinese government has been actively promoting the integration of the sports industry and rural tourism, providing robust policy support for this integration.

The Guizhou Provincial Sports Bureau has issued *the Decision of the Provincial Sports Bureau on Awarding Guizhou Sports Tourism Demonstration Points for the Year 2023*, deciding to award the title of "Guizhou Sports Tourism Demonstration Sites" to 11 projects in Guizhou Province. Guizhou Province has launched a total of 36 provincial sports tourism demonstration points for two consecutive years, including 28 rural revitalization sports tourism demonstration points, in conjunction with the 2022 Guizhou Provincial Sports Tourism Demonstration Points. This demonstrates Guizhou Province's high expectations for using sports and tourism to drive rural revitalization. After years of extensive excavation and development, sports and tourism have become a means of rural revitalization [4].

During the summer of 2023, the "Village Super" and "Village BA" in Qiandongnan Prefecture, Guizhou Province, are prominent examples of China's integrated development of sports and rural tourism. These models utilize the local natural landscape and ethnic cultural resources, combining traditional sports events with tourism activities to provide tourists with a unique sports

experience and rural flavor. The model's success is attributed to its integration with local culture and community resources, which has become a significant force in promoting local economic development and community revitalization. Tourists can gain a comprehensive understanding and experience of rural culture and traditions through these events, further enhancing their knowledge and identification with the local community.

Although the "Village Super" and "Village BA" models in Qiandongnan Prefecture, Guizhou Province, provide a successful example of integrating rural and sports tourism, the sustainability of the model still faces challenges. To achieve sustainable income, the revenue structure needs to be adjusted by combining large-scale events with daily rural tourism activities. Secondly, it is important to balance the needs of both local residents and tourists in order to prevent the cultural and environmental impacts of over-commercialization. In conclusion, this model serves as a valuable example of the integration of sports tourism and rural tourism. However, concerted efforts are needed to ensure its sustainability and to ensure that it truly benefits the local community and environment. The integration of traditional ethnic sports culture and rural tourism in Qiandongnan has significant potential and significance. This contributes to the interactive development of cultural heritage and tourism, promoting economic growth and social progress [5].

With the rapid development of social economy and science and technology, people in the pursuit of material basis, but also more and more the pursuit of spiritual and cultural cultivation. At present, although the development of rural sports tourism in China is rapid, there are still many problems, opportunities and challenges exist side by side. In the future, China should carry out more in-depth research and implement relevant policies to promote the healthy development of rural sports tourism. Accelerate the training of tourism talents and improve the service level of rural sports tourism. Finally, improving a strong management organisation is the key to promoting rural sports tourism. Do not talk on paper, to study the paper theory can be applied to practice, which is really can help the development of rural sports tourism. Government departments should also actively seek countermeasures, so that their own sports tourism brand to achieve real "go out". With the help of the rural revitalisation policy, rural sports tourism in all provinces of China can be developed to drive the development of the local rural economy, make local farmers get rid of poverty and become rich, and ultimately help to revitalise the countryside and achieve further development of the society.

Compared to China, Switzerland has more mature market and industrial system for sports tourism. Switzerland is one of the leaders in the sports tourism market, with a wide range of destinations covering various program types such as soccer, tennis, golf, skiing, and mountaineering, which generate significant economic returns.

Switzerland is renowned for its outdoor sports and rural landscapes. And the development of its sports tourism and rural tourism is already relatively mature, with many well-known outdoor brands and destinations already in Switzerland. According to the "Switzerland Tourism Industry Investment Outlook and Risk Analysis Report 2022-2026", Switzerland's tourism industry generates 8% of its GNP. The country is renowned for its ski resorts in the Alpine region, which attract 43% of the world's skiers annually [6].

For example, the "Red Bull Cliff Jump", organized by the Switzerland National Tourist Office in cooperation with Red Bull, combines extreme sports with the beauty of the countryside, attracting tourists and athletes from all over the world.

Another example is Mühlen, a traditional Switzerland mountain village, which is not only closed to cars, but also offers visitors a peaceful vacation environment. And the site's 360° view restaurant, Piz Gloria, offers visitors a great dining experience. In addition, the 50 kilometers of ski trails offer unobstructed views of the Eiger. And the Skyline ski playground attracts countless freestyle skiers and snowboarders. Meanwhile the Cantonal Tourist Office of Bern organizes various concerts, shows and world ski competitions every year, attracting crowds from all over the world. Here, visitors can participate in local skiing, paragliding and other specialty sports activities, and gain a deeper understanding of the culture and lifestyle of the Switzerland countryside. This kind of special sports experience not only increases the participation and satisfaction of tourists, but also brings new development opportunities for rural tourism.

These examples demonstrate that integrating sports tourism and rural tourism can have positive effects on the cantons of Switzerland. Firstly, it can promote the development of the local economy, increase employment opportunities, and improve the living standards of residents. Secondly, it can help to protect and preserve local natural and cultural resources, as well as enhance the popularity and influence of the countryside. In addition, it can enhance tourists' travel experience and increase their satisfaction and loyalty towards tourism.

However, Switzerland government departments also need to pay attention to some problems in the process of integrated development. Firstly, it is necessary to protect the local natural environment and social culture to avoid overdevelopment and destruction. Secondly, it is necessary to focus on the safety and experience of tourists and provide quality services and facilities. Finally, cooperation with other related industries should be strengthened to form a complete industrial chain and a good ecosystem.

The integration of sports tourism and rural tourism has shown significant potential worldwide. This integration not only promotes local economic development but also provides tourists with a unique and enriching experience.

However, challenges and issues still exist. To achieve sustainable development, it is necessary for all parties to collaborate in strengthening scientific planning, improving infrastructure, enhancing service quality, and prioritizing environmental protection and cultural heritage. To promote the integration of sports and rural tourism, the government should introduce policies, strengthen infrastructure, and train professionals. Additionally, rural characteristics should be combined with sports elements to create innovative tourism products. These initiatives will promote the joint development of sports tourism and rural tourism, creating a mutually beneficial and win-win situation. This will enrich tourists' travel experience and promote the sustainable development of the industry.

In general, the integration of sports tourism and rural tourism is a development direction with great potential and prospects. China and Switzerland have already achieved certain results and experiences in this regard. By learning from each other's success stories and lessons learnt, China and Switzerland can better promote the integrated development of sports tourism and rural tourism, and provide tourists with richer, more diversified and better quality tourism experiences and services. At the same time, I believe that the Chinese and Switzerland governments need to pay attention to and solve the problems and challenges that may arise in the process of integration to ensure that the sustainable development goal of integrating sports tourism and rural tourism can be realised.

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