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Research on the Transformation Path of Green Consumption in Rural Tourism in Sichuan Province

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of the deepening of the "dual carbon" goals and the comprehensive implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, green consumption transformation is the core path to solving the difficulties in rural tourism development and achieving the synergistic transformation of ecological and economic value. As a major province in the country with rural tourism resources, Sichuan Province combines a diverse ecological foundation with the cultural endowment of Bashu. Despite its vast industrial scale, issues such as ecological pressure and homogeneous business formats under the traditional extensive development model are becoming increasingly prominent, making the demand for green upgrading urgent. From a theoretical perspective, it systematically explains the practical significance of Sichuan's rural tourism green consumption transformation in protecting the ecological foundation, activating the county economy, broadening farmers' income channels, and promoting the upgrading of the cultural tourism industry. It deeply analyzes the current challenges facing the transformation, such as an incomplete green supply system, insufficient consumption cognition and behavior transformation, lack of institutional standards and supervision, and weak professional talent support. It also proposes optimization paths from the perspectives of supply, consumption, institutions, and talent.

Keywords

Rural Tourism; Green Consumption; Rural Revitalization; Industries Are Thriving

1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of the deepening of the "dual carbon" goals and the comprehensive implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, green development has become the core direction of China's economic and social transformation, with green upgrading on the consumer side becoming a key driving force for industrial green transformation. As an important business model connecting urban-rural consumption and empowering rural development, rural

tourism's development model is rapidly shifting from extensive expansion to sustainable development focused on quality improvement. As a major province in the country for rural tourism resources, Sichuan boasts diverse rural ecological backgrounds such as the wetlands of the western Sichuan plateau, the hilly countryside of central Sichuan, and the mountain gorges of eastern Sichuan. It combines Bashu agricultural culture with multi-ethnic folk customs, has a solid foundation in the rural tourism industry, and a vast market scale. However, under the traditional rural tourism development model, issues such as high resource consumption, severe product homogenization, and ecological environment pressure have gradually emerged, and the sustainable development of the industry faces bottlenecks [1].

Green consumption transformation, driven by consumption demand and driving supply-side green upgrades, is the core path to solving the difficulties in rural tourism development in Sichuan Province and achieving a dual transformation of ecological and economic value. Promoting the transformation of green consumption in rural tourism not only aligns with the strategic requirements of national ecological civilization construction but also aligns with Sichuan Province's development positioning to build a strong cultural tourism province and to strengthen the ecological barrier of the upper Yangtze River.

2. The practical significance of the green consumption transformation of rural tourism in Sichuan Province

(1) Safeguarding the ecological foundation of Bashu rural areas

The ecological foundation of rural areas is the core resource for rural tourism development. The essence of green consumption transformation is to internalize ecological protection as the endogenous driving force for industrial development through market demand, achieving protective development and value transformation of ecological resources. Sichuan's rural ecosystems are rich in types and highly ecologically sensitive. They serve as an important ecological barrier in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River and as the core carriers of the Bashu rural landscape. Under the traditional extensive rural tourism development model, some areas suffer from excessive commercialization, ecological damage, and environmental pollution, eroding the core competitiveness of rural tourism [2].

Through market selection mechanisms, green consumption transformation forces tourism operators to adopt low-carbon development and environmentally friendly operation models, promoting strict adherence to ecological protection red lines in tourism development and reducing disturbances from tourism activities to natural ecology and rural living environments. At the same time, green consumption transforms ecological advantages into market value, allowing ecological protection to gain stable economic returns and forming a positive cycle of "protection-value-re-protection." This helps safeguard the natural pattern of

mountains, rivers, forests, fields, lakes, and grasslands in Bashu countryside, preserves the original rural landscape and ecological functions, and consolidates the resource foundation for the long-term development of rural tourism.

(2) Activate county-level economic growth momentum

The county is the main carrier space for rural tourism development. The green transformation of rural tourism is an important lever for cultivating new growth points in county economies and promoting high-quality development. Traditional rural tourism industries are relatively low-level, relying heavily on ticket sales, dining, and other low-end consumption segments, with limited industrial added value and difficulty fully realizing the driving effect on the county economy. The transformation of green consumption drives rural tourism to the higher end of the value chain, driving the development of diverse formats such as organic agriculture, ecological cultural creativity, low-carbon accommodation, and wellness services, expanding industry profit margins [3].

Sichuan Province has a large number of counties with significant differences in resource endowment. Green consumption transformation can fully tap into the differentiated ecological and cultural resources of various regions, transform resource advantages into industrial and economic advantages, and avoid homogeneous competition among county industries. At the same time, green rural tourism has strong industrial integration attributes, linking agricultural production, agricultural product processing, cultural tourism services, and other links, promoting deep integration of county-level primary, secondary, and tertiary industries, extending industrial chains, enhancing value chains, perfecting benefit chains, cultivating green growth poles for county economies, and promoting the transformation of county economies from resource-dependent to green, benefit-driven.

(3) Broaden channels for farmers to increase income and become prosperous

One of the core goals of the green transformation of rural tourism is to empower rural development, increase farmers' incomes, and allow them to share in the dividends of green development. In the traditional rural tourism development model, farmers are mostly at the end of the industrial chain, mainly providing primary catering and simple labor, with single income sources and a low proportion of earnings, resulting in insufficient inclusiveness driven by industry. The diverse business formats driven by green consumption provide farmers with more channels and space to deeply participate in industrial development [4].

Farmers can participate in green business models such as eco-homestays, agricultural experiences, handicraft cultural creations, and organic agricultural product sales through various means such as land transfer, equity investment, and independent operation, achieving nearby employment and entrepreneurship, and broadening channels for wage, operational, and property income. At the same time, the brand premium brought by green consumption can increase the added value of

rural agricultural products, allowing farmers to gain more income from realizing the value of ecological products. This not only helps consolidate and expand the achievements of poverty alleviation but also continuously enhances farmers' sense of gain and happiness, injecting lasting momentum into rural revitalization and promoting the implementation of common prosperity in rural areas.

(4) Promote the green upgrade of the cultural and tourism industry

Green consumption transformation is an important driving force for promoting supply-side structural reform in the cultural and tourism industry and achieving high-quality industrial development. As a major province in cultural tourism, Sichuan's cultural tourism industry continues to expand, but rural tourism has long suffered from extensive development methods, low product quality, and insufficient sustainability, which lags behind the ever-evolving demand for high-quality tourism. The upgrade in green consumption demand can force tourism operators to update their development concepts, abandon the traditional high-consumption, low-efficiency operation model, adopt energy-saving, consumption-reducing, and low-carbon, environmentally friendly green operation methods, and lower the environmental costs of industry development [5].

At the same time, green consumption promotes the deep integration of rural tourism with industries such as ecological agriculture, cultural creativity, sports and wellness, and nature education, enriching the green connotations and product forms of the cultural tourism industry and expanding the boundaries of industrial development. Through green leadership on the consumption side, promote the green restructuring of the entire rural tourism industry chain, assist Sichuan's cultural tourism industry in transforming from scale expansion to quality improvement, and accelerate the construction of a green, low-carbon, and rich cultural tourism powerhouse.

3. The Practical Dilemma of the Transformation of Green Consumption in Rural Tourism in Sichuan Province

(1) Prominent product homogenization issues and an incomplete green supply system

Product supply is the fundamental carrier for green consumption transformation. Currently, Sichuan's rural tourism green supply side faces multiple issues: insufficient total volume, suboptimal structure, and severe homogenization, making it difficult to match the growing demand for green consumption. In terms of product forms, most rural tourism in most regions still remains stuck in the traditional model of "flower viewing and fruit picking + farmhouse dining," with single formats and insufficient depth of experience. Product designs across regions are highly similar, lacking deep exploration of local ecological characteristics and cultural heritage, making it difficult to form differentiated market competitiveness.

From the perspective of green product supply, high-quality green formats account

for a relatively low proportion. Products that align with green consumption trends, such as low-carbon homestays, ecological study tours, forest wellness, and nature education, have lagged behind development. Moreover, the green attributes of products mostly remain at the conceptual level, lacking substantial low-carbon design and environmentally friendly operations. At the same time, the supporting supply chain system for green products is incomplete. Organic dining ingredients, eco-friendly room consumables, and ecological cultural and creative products are insufficient supply. There is yet to form a supply chain covering all aspects of "dining, accommodation, transportation, travel, shopping, and entertainment," resulting in a lack of green consumption scenarios and difficulty supporting the large-scale and normalized development of green consumption.

(2) Weak awareness of green consumption and low conversion of willingness to practice

Consumers' green awareness and behavioral awareness are the endogenous driving forces behind green consumption transformation, but currently, the rural tourism consumption market generally faces issues of superficial cognition and insufficient behavioral transformation. Most consumers have a vague understanding of green consumption in rural tourism, often equating "being close to nature" with green consumption, and lack sufficient understanding of the connotation and value of specific green consumption behaviors such as low-carbon travel, eco-friendly accommodation, reduced consumption, and waste sorting, lacking systematic green consumption concepts and knowledge reserves.

More prominently, there is a clear "attitude-behavior" gap in the consumer market: most consumers recognize the environmental significance of green consumption at the value level, but in actual consumer decisions, factors such as price, convenience, and comfort still dominate. Consumers generally have low acceptance of premium pricing for green products and a weak willingness to actively practice green consumption, often giving up on green products due to high prices and complicated processes. Moreover, rural tourism scenes lack clear green consumption guidance, making it difficult for consumers to easily identify green products and practice green behaviors, further restricting the conversion of consumption intentions into actual behaviors.

(3) Inadequate support from supporting policies, and deficiencies in standard supervision mechanisms

A sound policy system and regulatory mechanism are the institutional guarantees for green consumption transformation. Currently, there are still obvious shortcomings in the supply of related systems, making it difficult to effectively guide and regulate the development of the green consumption market. In terms of policy support, existing support policies mostly focus on tourism project development and infrastructure construction, with very few incentive policies for green consumption, lacking direct guidance and subsidies for green consumption behaviors; Support for

green transformation of business entities is insufficient, and the coverage of policies such as fiscal subsidies, tax reductions, and green credit is limited, making it difficult to fully motivate business entities to green upgrading.

At the standards system level, Sichuan has yet to form a unified and comprehensive green standards system for rural tourism. Subfields such as green homestays, green dining, and green scenic spots lack clear local standards and certification norms, resulting in no basis for identifying green products in the market. The lack of standards directly triggers regulatory challenges. Some business entities use the banners of "green" and "ecological" to conduct false advertising, and phenomena of "pseudo-green" and "greenwashing" occur from time to time, disrupting the order of the green consumption market. At the same time, a multi-departmental collaborative regulatory framework has yet to form. The boundaries of regulatory responsibilities among departments such as culture and tourism, ecological environment, and market regulation are unclear, daily supervision of green business practices is insufficient, and the cost of violations is low, making it difficult to form effective constraints.

(4) There is a large shortage of professional operations talent, and green service capabilities need improvement

Talent is the core support for the green transformation of rural tourism. Currently, the supply-demand contradiction between talent in Sichuan's rural tourism sector is prominent, and the shortage of professional talent has become a major shortcoming restricting the green consumption transformation. From the perspective of practitioner structure, most frontline rural tourism practitioners are local farmers with generally low educational levels, generally lacking professional knowledge and skills in green operations, low-carbon management, and ecological services. The standardization and greening of services are low, making it difficult to provide consumers with professional green consumption guidance and high-quality green service experiences.

From the perspective of talent introduction and retention, rural areas generally face issues such as remote geographic locations, incomplete supporting facilities, and limited career development opportunities, making it difficult to attract professionals with green tourism operations, brand planning, and low-carbon technology application capabilities, resulting in a serious loss of high-end operations management talent. At the same time, a systematic training system for green services in rural tourism has not yet been established. Current training mostly focuses on basic service norms, with little mention of green concepts, low-carbon technologies, and ecological explanations. The training content is disconnected from actual transformation needs, making it difficult to effectively improve practitioners' green service capabilities.

4. Optimization paths for the transformation of green consumption in rural tourism in Sichuan Province

(1) Build a new green product system and cultivate new green consumption formats

To solve supply-side challenges, it is necessary to be guided by market green consumption demand, build a multi-level, specialized, and full-chain green product supply system, and consolidate the foundation for green consumption carriers. On one hand, based on the resource endowments of villages across Sichuan Province, differentiated product development strategies are implemented, deeply exploring regional ecological features and the connotations of Bashu culture and ethnic customs to create distinctive green tourism IPs. Focus on developing high-quality green formats such as ecological study tours, forest wellness, low-carbon homestays, organic farming experiences, and nature education, promoting the upgrade of rural tourism from sightseeing to experiential and wellness-oriented, and avoiding homogeneous competition.

On the other hand, extend the green consumption industry chain, promote the development and branding of tourism products such as green agricultural products, ecological cultural creativity, and environmentally friendly handicrafts, improve supporting supply for green dining, green accommodation, green transportation, and green shopping, and create green consumption scenarios covering the entire tourism process. At the same time, innovate green consumption carriers by creating a number of low-carbon tourism demonstration villages, zero-carbon homestay clusters, green agriculture experience parks, and other characteristic demonstration projects, promoting the upgrade of the green product system through point-to-area initiatives and cultivating new growth points for green consumption.

(2) Enhance consumers' green literacy and foster a new trend of green consumption

To promote green transformation on the consumer side, it is necessary to balance publicity guidance with incentives and constraints, cultivate consumers' green consumption concepts, and drive the transformation of green intentions into green behaviors. First, strengthen the promotion and popularization of green consumption, relying on new media platforms, scenic area publicity platforms, rural tourism service centers, and other channels, using scenario-based and accessible methods to popularize knowledge about green consumption in rural tourism, convey low-carbon and environmental protection concepts, and enhance consumers' understanding and value recognition of green consumption.

Second, establish a green consumption incentive mechanism, implement systems such as green consumption points, green consumption discounts, and eco-friendly gift redemption. Reward consumers who choose low-carbon travel, carry clean plate campaigns, bring their own toiletries, or participate in waste sorting, lowering the cost threshold for green consumption and strengthening positive incentives for green consumption. Finally, create a green consumption social atmosphere, leverage the leading role of green consumption demonstration projects, guide consumers to

internalize green concepts into conscious behavior, and gradually form a new consumption trend of "recognizing green, choosing green, and practicing green."

(3) Improve new standards for green consumption and optimize new supporting policies and mechanisms

To improve the institutional guarantee system, efforts must be made in coordination from three dimensions: standard setting, policy support, and regulatory norms, to build a favorable institutional environment for the transformation of green consumption. First, accelerate the improvement of the local standard system, formulate and introduce local standards and evaluation norms for subfields such as rural green homestays, green dining, and green scenic spots in Sichuan Province, establish a unified green certification and labeling system, clarify the criteria for identifying green products, and enable consumers to clearly identify and choose with confidence.

Second, strengthen policy support by increasing fiscal subsidies for rural tourism green transformation projects, and implementing preferential policies such as tax reductions, green credit, and land guarantees for green business entities; Set up a special green consumption guidance fund, reward green consumption demonstration projects and outstanding business entities, and fully mobilize market entities' enthusiasm for green transformation. Third, improve collaborative supervision mechanisms, establish joint supervision models among culture and tourism, ecological environment, and market supervision, strengthen daily supervision and inspection of green tourism products and services, increase penalties for false green advertising and illegal operations, regulate the green consumption market order, and safeguard consumers' legitimate rights and interests.

(4) Cultivate new talents in professional services and enhance new capabilities in green operations

To break the talent bottleneck, it is necessary to build a three-in-one talent support system combining "introduction + cultivation + retention" to provide solid talent guarantees for the transformation of green consumption. On one hand, improve talent introduction policies by attracting professionals in fields such as green tourism operations, low-carbon technology applications, brand planning, and ecological interpretation through salary incentives, entrepreneurship support, and development platform building to bring professionals to rural areas, strengthen the high-end operations team, and enhance the professionalism of green development in rural tourism.

On the other hand, systematic cultivation of local talent is being strengthened, establishing a long-term training mechanism through school-local cooperation. Relying on the professional resources of universities and vocational colleges, targeted training on green operation concepts, low-carbon service skills, and ecological knowledge is provided for local farmers and frontline practitioners,

comprehensively enhancing practitioners' green service capabilities and overall competence. At the same time, a talent incentive and guarantee mechanism will be established to recognize and support practitioners who excel in green rural tourism development, optimize the rural talent development environment, and ensure talent attracts, retains, and utilizes them effectively.

5. Conclusion

The transformation of green consumption in rural tourism in Sichuan Province is an inevitable requirement for practicing the concept of green development and building a solid ecological barrier in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River. It is also a key measure to empower rural revitalization and promote high-quality development of the cultural tourism industry, possessing significant ecological, economic, social, and industrial value. The current transformation process still faces multiple practical difficulties such as insufficient supply of green products, poor transformation of consumer awareness, an incomplete institutional guarantee system, and weak support from professional talent. It is a systematic project involving supply, consumption, institutions, and talent.

To promote the transformation of green consumption in rural tourism in Sichuan Province, systematic thinking and coordinated efforts are required: building a green product system as the foundation to consolidate consumption carriers; Centered on improving consumers' green literacy, it activates internal motivation; Ensuring the improvement of the standard and policy system to regulate market order; Supported by the construction of a professional talent team, service capabilities are strengthened. Through the joint participation of multiple stakeholders such as government, market, consumers, and farmers, the entire green upgrade of rural tourism will be gradually realized, promoting the coordinated progress of ecological protection and economic development, injecting green momentum into Sichuan's rural revitalization and building a strong cultural tourism province, and providing a reference theoretical logic and practical path for the green transformation of rural tourism in similar regions nationwide.

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