Theoretical Construction and Empirical Research on Ethnic Village Tourism Development and Community Dynamics: A Comprehensive Literature Review

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ABSTRACT:

As an important part of cultural tourism, ethnic village tourism has been booming around the world, and has also attracted the academic community's in-depth attention to its complex social effects. This paper systematically combs and deeply analyzes the relevant research literature in the past two decades to explore the complex interactive relationship between economic benefits, cultural protection and community welfare in the development of ethnic village tourism. The study found that the development of ethnic village tourism presents a clear duality: on the one hand, it provides important economic development opportunities for remote areas, promotes infrastructure improvement and residents' income growth; on the other hand, it also poses unprecedented challenges to the integrity of traditional culture, environmental sustainability and community cohesion. Through the critical application of multiple theoretical frameworks such as social exchange theory, stakeholder theory, and community attachment theory, this paper deeply analyzes the multidimensional impact mechanism of tourism development on ethnic communities, and identifies key issues such as cultural commodification, reconstruction of power relations, and increased environmental pressure. At the same time, this study reveals the important role of community participation, governance innovation and sustainable development practices in alleviating negative impacts. Based on the literature analysis, this paper proposes a theoretical framework and policy recommendations for promoting the sustainable development of ethnic village tourism, providing an important reference for future research and practice.

Keywords: ethnic villages; tourism development; cultural authenticity;

org/licenses/by/4.0/). community resilience; sustainable tourism; cultural commercialization

1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of accelerating globalization and modernization, ethnic village tourism has become an important bridge between tradition and modernity, local and global (Tian et al., 2024). This unique form of tourism not only provides tourists with the opportunity to experience exotic cultures, but also injects new vitality into the economic development of many remote ethnic regions. However, as Smith (1977) pointed out in his pioneering research, ethnic tourism often packages the traditional culture of indigenous peoples into "strange customs" for consumption by outsiders. This phenomenon has aroused the academic community's continued attention to deep-seated issues such as cultural authenticity, community autonomy and sustainable development.

In recent years, with the implementation of China's rural revitalization strategy and the rapid development of the cultural tourism industry, ethnic villages represented by Xijiang Qianhu Miao Village, Guizhou, China, Hani Terraces in Yuanyang, Yunnan, and Ping'an Zhuang Village in Longsheng, Guangxi have become highly anticipated tourist destinations (He & Xu, 2024). These cases not only show the unique charm of ethnic culture, but also expose many challenges and contradictions faced in the process of tourism development. Therefore, in-depth theoretical analysis and empirical research on the development of ethnic village tourism and its impact on the community has important academic value and practical significance.

2. Theoretical basis and analytical framework

2.1 Application and extension of social exchange theory in ethnic tourism research

As an important theoretical tool to explain residents' tourism attitudes, social exchange theory provides a powerful analytical framework for understanding the complex responses of ethnic village communities to tourism development (Andereck et al., 2005). The core assumption of this theory is that individuals will evaluate the value of social interaction based on cost-benefit analysis, and when the perceived benefits exceed the costs, individuals are more inclined to support related activities (Gursoy et al., 2002). In the context of ethnic village tourism, residents will weigh the relationship between the economic benefits brought by tourism and the cultural, environmental, and social costs.

However, traditional social exchange theory shows certain limitations in explaining the complex tourism attitudes of ethnic communities. Wang et al. (2020) found through their research on religious tourism that the motivation categories of tourists include "pleasure-seeking travelers, devout believers, cultural enthusiasts, and religious pragmatists", and each type has a completely different impact on the local community. This finding tells us that in the study of ethnic village tourism, we need to go beyond simple cost-benefit calculations and pay more attention to the role of non-material factors such as cultural identity, emotional attachment, and spiritual values.

Charag et al. (2021) further confirmed this view in their study of tourism perceptions of residents in Kashmir. They found that residents' attitudes toward tourism development are not only influenced by economic factors, but also reflect concerns about cultural protection, environmental quality, and social stability. This multidimensional consideration goes beyond the scope of traditional social exchange theory and requires the construction of a more complex and nuanced theoretical model.

2.2 The evolution and controversy of cultural authenticity theory

Cultural authenticity has always been a core topic in ethnic tourism research and one of the most controversial concepts. In his classic study, Cohen (1988) distinguished three levels: "objective authenticity", "constructed authenticity" and "existential authenticity", providing an important theoretical framework for understanding cultural authenticity in the tourism context. This framework reveals that authenticity is not a fixed essential attribute, but a process of dynamic construction under specific social and historical conditions.

In ethnic village tourism practices, the issue of cultural authenticity becomes more complicated. On the one hand, as Xie (2003) found in his study of bamboo pole dance in Hainan, traditional cultural elements are repackaged and displayed to cater to tourists' needs, leading to the so-called "cultural commodification" phenomenon. On the other hand, as recent research shows, some ethnic communities actively use tourism platforms to revitalize and pass on cultural traditions that are on the verge of being lost (Bui, 2024).

It is worth noting that Chinese scholars have formed a unique localized view on the issue of cultural authenticity. Zhang et al. (2009) pointed out that cultural commercialization may be a positive behavior of community residents to actively market themselves and transform culture and social relations into capital, which reflects the strong initiative of Chinese community residents. This view challenges the pessimistic view of Western scholars that cultural commercialization will inevitably lead to cultural decline, and puts forward a new idea of cultural adaptive development.

2.3 New progress in community resilience theory in ethnic tourism research

As an emerging theoretical concept, community resilience provides an important perspective for understanding how ethnic villages cope with the challenges brought by tourism development. Tian et al. (2024) conducted an in-depth study of Miao villages in Hunan Province and revealed the adaptability and resilience mechanisms of ethnic tourism communities in the face of external shocks. They found that community resilience is not only reflected in the diversified development of the economy, but more importantly, in the maintenance of cultural heritage and social cohesion.

Chen et al. (2020) emphasized the important role of human agency in their study of livelihood resilience in tourism communities. In the context of ethnic villages, this agency is manifested as the ability of community members to actively adapt to and utilize tourism development opportunities while maintaining cultural identity. This adaptability is not passive acceptance, but active choice and innovation.

The latest research progress shows that building community resilience requires a multi-level support system. From a micro perspective, it is necessary to enhance the adaptability of individuals and families; from a meso perspective, it is necessary to establish effective community organizations and governance mechanisms; from a macro perspective, it is necessary to improve policy support and institutional guarantees (Stoffelen & Ioannides, 2022).

2.4 Application of power relations theory in ethnic tourism governance

Power relations are a key factor affecting the development of ethnic village tourism, but they are often overlooked in early studies. In recent years, scholars have begun to pay attention to the allocation of power and the distribution of discourse power in the process of tourism development. Li et al. (2017) conducted a comparative study of Xijiang Qianhu Miao

Village and Tianlong Tunbao in Guizhou and found that the strength of community power perception directly affects residents' support and participation in tourism development.

Zhang (2024) used the analytical perspectives of tourist gaze and power narrative to deeply analyze the multi-governance model of the tourism ecological field of Xijiang Qianhu Miao Village. The study found that the traditional top-down governance model is transforming into multi-subject collaborative governance, but there are still problems of power asymmetry and uneven distribution of discourse power in this transformation process.

The complexity of power relations is also reflected in the game between different stakeholders. Government departments pursue economic development and political performance, tourism enterprises focus on maximizing commercial profits, and local communities are more concerned about cultural protection and improving the quality of life (McCombes & Vanclay, 2022). This diversified interest appeal makes tourism governance more complex and challenging.

3. Multi-dimensional influencing mechanism of ethnic village tourism development

3.1 Uneven economic impact and sustainability challenges

The economic impact of ethnic village tourism shows obvious imbalance, which is common all over the world. Ashley and Roe (2002) found in their study of tourism development in southern Africa that although tourism has brought new economic opportunities to poor areas, the distribution of benefits is often highly concentrated, and most local residents can only engage in low-skilled, low-income service jobs.

This economic imbalance is also prominent in the development of ethnic village tourism in China. Yang et al. (2013) found through a survey of multiple tourism communities that tourism revenue is mainly concentrated in the hands of a few individuals with capital advantages or political connections, while most ordinary villagers can only engage in marginal jobs such as tour guides, cleaning, and catering. This uneven distribution of income not only exacerbates the division within the community, but may also cause social contradictions and conflicts.

More importantly, over-reliance on tourism has put ethnic villages at risk of economic vulnerability. The outbreak of COVID-19 has fully exposed the severity of this problem. Nepal (2020) pointed out that communities that are highly dependent on tourism suffered a severe economic shock during the epidemic, and many families lost their main source of income. This phenomenon reminds us that a single economic structure poses huge risks and we need to promote economic diversification.

Recent studies have begun to focus on new models of sustainable tourism development. Li et al. (2024) proposed in their evaluation of the quality of cultural tourism space in traditional villages that a multi-dimensional evaluation system should be established, which should not only consider economic benefits but also pay attention to the comprehensive effects of cultural heritage and environmental protection. This comprehensive evaluation method provides important guidance for achieving true sustainable development.

3.2 The complexity of cultural influence and the dual paths of cultural revitalization

Cultural impact is the most complex and sensitive issue in the study of ethnic village tourism. Traditional views often regard tourism development as a threat to cultural protection, and worry that cultural commercialization will lead to the deterioration and disappearance of traditional

culture. However, the latest research shows that the relationship between tourism and culture is far more complex and subtle than this simple opposition.

Adams (1997) found in his study of the Tana Toraja region in Indonesia that ethnic tourism actually provided local communities with opportunities to renegotiate and redefine traditions. Similarly, a case study of the Ta Oi ethnic group in Vietnam showed that cultural revitalization was not a top-down process, but rather a co-creation of the indigenous communities themselves, with different perspectives between generations influencing the specific ways in which cultural revitalization was achieved (Dinh et al., 2023).

This dual path of cultural revitalization is fully reflected in the practice of ethnic village tourism in China. On the one hand, many ethnic skills, festival rituals and architectural styles that are on the verge of extinction have been re-emphasized and promoted due to tourism demand. MacDonald and Jolliffe (2003)'s research shows that cultural tourism can provide important economic impetus and social support for the protection and inheritance of traditional culture.

On the other hand, the phenomenon of cultural commercialization does exist and may lead to the simplification and distortion of cultural connotations in some cases. In his classic study, Greenwood (1989) pointed out that when traditional culture is packaged as a tourism product, it often loses its original deep connotation and sacredness. However, Cohen's (1988) study reminds us that we should not regard all cultural changes as negative phenomena, because culture itself is a dynamic process of development.

The latest research has begun to focus on the subjectivity of cultural revitalization. Corntassel and Bryce (2012) proposed a "sustainable indigenous cultural self-determination method", emphasizing the leading role of indigenous communities in cultural protection and development. This view has been verified in the cultural revitalization practice of the Ta Oi people in Vietnam. The study found that community members actively choose how to present their culture to the outside world while maintaining their cultural traditional values and identity (Ardren, 2018).

3.3 Eco-political analysis of environmental impacts

The environmental impact of ethnic village tourism is not only a technical ecological issue, but also a political economic issue involving power relations, resource allocation and development models. Traditional environmental impact assessments often focus on visible physical changes, such as infrastructure construction, waste disposal, water resource consumption, etc., but ignore deeper ecological and political issues.

Berkes (2007) pointed out in his study on traditional ecological knowledge that many indigenous communities have rich environmental management wisdom, and these knowledge systems are often ignored or marginalized in modern tourism development. This problem is also prominent in the development of ethnic village tourism in China. Many villages have traditional ecological protection systems and practices, but in the process of tourism development, these traditional knowledge are often replaced by modern management models.

Honey (2008)'s study on ecotourism revealed the contradiction between environmental protection and tourism development. Although ecotourism is promoted as an environmentally friendly form of tourism, in practice, large-scale tourist flows still put pressure on fragile ecosystems. In the context of ethnic villages, this environmental pressure often overlaps with cultural shock, forming a

complex challenge.

Recent studies have begun to explore the perspective of environmental justice. This theory focuses on the unfair distribution of environmental risks and benefits among different social groups. In the development of ethnic village tourism, local residents often bear the main costs of environmental degradation, while foreign tourism companies and tourists enjoy the main benefits. This unfair distribution pattern exacerbates the complexity of environmental issues.

3.4 Generational Differences in Social Influence and Identity Reconstruction

The impact of tourism development on the social structure of ethnic villages shows obvious generational differences. The younger generation is more likely to accept the modern lifestyle and values brought by tourism, while the older generation is more inclined to maintain the traditional social order and cultural norms (Besculides et al., 2002).

This generational difference is particularly evident in the process of reconstructing identity. Young people may view their ethnic identity as a cultural resource that can be displayed and traded, while older people emphasize the intrinsic value and spiritual significance of their identity. This cognitive difference not only affects individual tourism participation behavior, but also affects the cultural heritage and social cohesion of the entire community.

Jennings (2017)'s research shows that the impact of tourism on indigenous culture can be understood from two different perspectives: it can either commoditize and distort culture or promote cultural revitalization. This duality is more evident among the younger generation, who need to find a balance between traditional cultural inheritance and modern development needs.

The reconstruction of social networks is also an important aspect of tourism impact. Traditional blood and geographical relationships may be affected by new economic interests in the process of tourism development. Some studies have found that tourism development may lead to social stratification and interest differentiation within the community, thus affecting the traditional mutual assistance and cooperation mechanism (Xu et al., 2019).

4. Theory and practice of community participation and governance innovation

4.1 Localization of Participatory Development Theory

Community participation is widely considered to be a key factor in achieving sustainable tourism development, but the forms and effects of participation vary significantly in different cultural contexts. Although the participation ladder model proposed by Pretty (1995) provides a useful framework for evaluating the quality of participation, it needs to be adapted to the Chinese institutional environment.

Xu et al. (2019) found through their study of the evolution of community participation in Chinese tourism that Chinese-style community participation presents unique characteristics: strong government dominance, prominent collective decision-making mechanism, and diversified forms of participation. This model is different from both the Western individualistic participation model and the traditional patriarchal management style, forming a participatory governance model with Chinese characteristics.

In the specific practice of ethnic villages, community participation faces special challenges. Language barriers, differences in education levels, conflicts in cultural values and other factors may affect the effectiveness of participation. In their study of the vulnerability factors of ethnic villages, Li et al. (2023) pointed out that limited

management level, backward educational resources and regional economic development level are the main factors restricting the development of ethnic village tourism.

To overcome these challenges, some regions have begun to explore innovative participation mechanisms, such as establishing multilingual communication platforms, conducting targeted capacity building training, and creating culturally sensitive decision-making procedures to enhance the participation capacity and effectiveness of ethnic communities.

4.2 Construction of a collaborative governance model involving multiple entities

The traditional government-led tourism governance model has shown obvious limitations when facing the complex development of ethnic village tourism. In recent years, the multi-subject collaborative governance model has gradually become the focus of academic and practical circles (Bramwell & Lane, 2011).

This governance model emphasizes the coordination and cooperation of multiple parties such as the government, enterprises, communities, and non-governmental organizations, and achieves the balance and integration of different interests by establishing a platform and mechanism for equal dialogue. In the context of ethnic villages, this collaborative governance model needs to pay special attention to cultural differences and power asymmetry.

In their study of tourism governance in China, Sofield and Li (2011) pointed out that China's tourism governance is transforming from traditional administrative management to modern collaborative governance, but this transformation still faces many challenges. In particular, how to achieve true democratic participation and community autonomy within the existing political system framework in ethnic minority areas still requires further exploration and innovation.

The latest research has begun to focus on the role of digital technology in collaborative governance. By establishing a digital participation platform, using big data to analyze public sentiment and public opinion, and using artificial intelligence to assist decision-making, the transparency and efficiency of governance can be improved. However, it is also necessary to pay attention to the digital divide and ensure that all community members can participate equally in the digital governance process.

4.3 Theoretical Construction of Culturally Sensitive Governance

Culturally sensitive governance is an important concept in ethnic village tourism governance, which emphasizes that the uniqueness and integrity of ethnic culture should be fully respected and protected in the governance process. This governance model should not only consider economic efficiency and management effects, but also pay attention to cultural values and spiritual needs.

In theory, culturally sensitive governance requires the integration of knowledge systems from multiple disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, political science, management, etc. It requires governance to have cross-cultural understanding and communication skills, and to be able to find balance and common ground between different cultural values.

At the practical level, culturally sensitive governance requires the establishment of corresponding institutional arrangements and operating procedures. For example, in the decision-making process, the opinions of ethnic elders and cultural inheritors should be fully listened to, the time rhythm and spatial layout of ethnic traditions should be followed in project implementation, and the value system of ethnic culture should be considered in the distribution of benefits.

Some studies have begun to explore the specific implementation paths of culturally sensitive governance. In his study of indigenous tourism in the Amazon region of Suriname, Cappucci (2016) proposed that the protection of authenticity and natural resources through action requires the active participation and leadership of indigenous communities. Similarly, some ethnic villages in China are also exploring a culture-led tourism development model, making cultural heritage the core driving force of tourism development.

5. Innovation and development of research methodology

5.1 Application of Multiple Case Study Method in Ethnic Tourism Research

The multiple case study method provides an effective methodological tool for in-depth understanding of the complexity of ethnic village tourism development. This method can identify the common laws and unique characteristics in different situations through comparative analysis of multiple cases, thus building a more comprehensive and accurate theoretical understanding.

Tian et al. (2024) used a multiple case study design to reveal how ethnic tourism communities under different institutional arrangements cope with the changes brought about by tourism. Their study covered field surveys from January to April 2020. Although affected by the COVID-19 epidemic, they still obtained rich data. This kind of research conducted in a special period provides a unique perspective for understanding community resilience.

The advantage of the multiple case study method is that it can handle complex causal relationships and contextual dependencies. In the study of ethnic village tourism, different geographical environments, cultural backgrounds, and institutional arrangements will affect the mode and effect of tourism development. By comparing and analyzing different cases, researchers can identify which factors are universal and which factors are specific to a specific situation.

However, multiple case study methods also face some challenges. How to select appropriate cases, how to ensure comparability between cases, how to balance in-depth description and theoretical generalization, etc. all require careful consideration by researchers. Especially in cross-cultural research, researchers also need to have sufficient cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural understanding.

5.2 Ethics and Practice of Participatory Action Research

Participatory Action Research (PAR), as a research method that emphasizes community subjectivity and practice orientation, has important application value in the study of ethnic village tourism. This method can not only generate academic knowledge, but also promote community capacity building and problem solving.

In the context of ethnic village research, participatory action research faces special ethical challenges. How to ensure that the research process is truly beneficial to community development, how to avoid research activities from interfering with traditional culture, and how to deal with the power relationship between researchers and research subjects all need to be taken seriously.

In his seminal work on decolonial research methods, Smith (1999) proposed that research should serve the interests of indigenous communities rather than simply the knowledge production of academia. This view has important guiding significance for the study of ethnic village tourism, reminding researchers to always put community welfare first.

Some studies have begun to explore culturally adaptive participatory research methods. For

example, fully listening to community opinions during the research design stage, using communication methods familiar to the community during data collection, and ensuring that the community can directly benefit during the results application stage. Although this method increases the complexity of the research, it can produce more in-depth and useful knowledge.

5.3 Emerging Applications of Digital Anthropology Methods

With the rapid development of digital technology, digital anthropology has begun to play an important role in the study of ethnic village tourism. This method uses digital technology to collect, analyze and present anthropological data, providing new tools and perspectives for understanding complex social and cultural phenomena.

In terms of data collection, digital technology can help researchers better record and preserve the rich content of ethnic culture, for example, by using high-definition video equipment to record traditional rituals and performances, using GPS positioning technology to record important cultural landscapes, and analyzing the attitudes of tourists and residents through social media platforms.

In terms of data analysis, big data technology and artificial intelligence algorithms make it possible to process large-scale text, image and video data. Researchers can use text mining technology to analyze the sentiment in online comments, use image recognition technology to track changes in cultural landscapes, and use social network analysis methods to understand the evolution of community relations.

In terms of result presentation, technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality provide new possibilities for presenting research results. Researchers can create virtual ethnic village environments to allow readers to experience different cultural scenes in person; they can also develop interactive digital maps to show the impact of tourism development on community spatial patterns, etc.

However, the application of digital anthropology methods also requires attention to some issues. The digital divide may lead to the exclusion of certain community members from the research process, digital records may change the original appearance of cultural practices, and ethical issues such as data privacy and cultural property protection also require special attention. Therefore, when using digital anthropology methods, researchers need to maintain critical thinking about technical tools to ensure that technology serves the goals of humanistic care and social justice.

5.4 Integration strategies for mixed methods research

Mixed method research has shown unique advantages in the study of ethnic village tourism, combining the strengths of quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding. Molina-Azorín and Font (2016) analyzed papers published in the Journal of Sustainable Tourism between 2005 and 2014 and found that the application of mixed method research in the field of sustainable tourism is becoming more and more common and can produce richer and more convincing research results.

In the specific application of ethnic village tourism research, the mixed method can effectively integrate macro trend analysis and micro experience exploration. For example, researchers can first obtain the overall distribution of residents' tourism attitudes through questionnaire surveys, and then reveal the deep mechanism of attitude formation through in-depth interviews; or first understand the internal logic of cultural practices through

ethnographic observations, and then verify whether the observed patterns are universal through statistical analysis.

Recent studies have begun to explore more complex mixed methods designs. For example, Lee and Jan (2019) used a multi-stage mixed method in their study published in the journal Tourism Management. They first identified the key stages of rural community tourism sustainability through qualitative research, then verified the policy needs at different stages through quantitative analysis, and finally formed a phased policy recommendation framework. This research design provides an effective tool for understanding the complex sustainable development process.

However, mixed methods research also faces integration challenges. How to coordinate the philosophical differences between different paradigms, how to balance the weights of different types of data, and how to deal with contradictory research findings all require careful design and handling by researchers.

6. Comparative research and theoretical dialogue from a global perspective

6.1 Comparative Analysis of the Development of Ethnic Tourism in the Asia-Pacific Region

As one of the regions with the most diverse ethnic cultures in the world, the Asia-Pacific region provides a rich comparative case for the study of ethnic village tourism. The political systems, economic development levels, and cultural traditions of different countries and regions will affect the development model and effect of ethnic tourism.

In Southeast Asia, countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia have developed ethnic tourism products with their own characteristics. Ayaydin and Akgönül (2020) raised an important question in their study of Sami tourism in Finland: Does tourism really contribute to the protection of indigenous culture? Their study found that while tourism can provide economic income, it can also lead to the superficialization and commercialization of culture.

Similar phenomena have been found in other parts of Asia. Suntikul and Jachna (2013) studied the Pimei New Year celebration in Laos and found that traditional festivals face tension between authenticity and commercialism in the process of tourism. This tension exists not only at the performance level, but also involves issues of cultural values and spiritual beliefs at a deeper level.

The development of ethnic village tourism in China is unique in the Asia-Pacific region. On the one hand, China has 56 ethnic groups with extremely rich cultural diversity; on the other hand, China's political system and development model are significantly different from those of other countries. This uniqueness means that China's experience cannot be simply copied to other countries, and it also needs to be more deeply understood in international comparison.

6.2 Lessons from Aboriginal Tourism in Developed Countries

Developed countries have accumulated rich experience and lessons in the development of indigenous tourism, which provides important reference for ethnic village tourism in developing countries. Canada, Australia, New Zealand and other countries have formed a relatively complete system in protecting indigenous rights and promoting cultural tourism.

Canada's First Nations tourism development model emphasizes cultural self-determination and community control, and coordinates the relationship between the government, enterprises and communities by establishing special indigenous tourism organizations. The core of this model is to ensure the dominant position of

indigenous communities in tourism development and avoid excessive intervention of foreign capital and cultural plunder.

Australia's Aboriginal cultural tourism focuses more on educational functions and cultural exchanges. Through professional tour guide training and certification systems, tourists are ensured to have accurate and in-depth cultural experiences. At the same time, Australia has also established a strict cultural property protection system to prevent the improper use and commercialization of Aboriginal culture.

The development of Maori cultural tourism in New Zealand emphasizes cultural revival and identity reconstruction. Through the tourism platform, the Maori community not only showcases its culture to the outside world, but more importantly, rediscovers and strengthens its cultural identity in the process. This inward-looking cultural construction has important implications for understanding the relationship between tourism and cultural revitalization.

6.3 Theoretical dialogue and decolonization of knowledge production

In a globalized academic environment, ethnic village tourism research faces the problem of unequal knowledge production. The theories and methods of Western scholars are often regarded as "universal" standards, while non-Western knowledge systems are marginalized as "local" experiences. This knowledge hierarchy not only affects the quality of academic research, but also affects policy formulation and practice development.

In recent years, some scholars have begun to call for the decolonization of knowledge production, emphasizing theoretical construction and method innovation in different cultural backgrounds. In the field of ethnic village tourism research, this decolonization effort is manifested in the emphasis on and development of local theories.

Chinese scholars have made some progress in this regard. For example, the application of the concept of "harmony" in tourism development, the embodiment of the idea of "harmony between man and nature" in ecotourism, and the role of the culture of "reciprocity" in the relationship between host and guest all reflect the contribution of Chinese cultural tradition to tourism theory.

However, theoretical dialogue should not be a simple cultural relativism, but should seek universal understanding on the basis of recognizing differences. This requires researchers to have an open mind and cross-cultural dialogue ability, respect the unique value of local knowledge, and make their own voices heard in the international academic community.

7. Policy innovation under the guidance of sustainable development goals

7.1 The integration of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and ethnic tourism

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides an important guiding framework for the development of the global tourism industry. Among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), many goals are closely related to the development of ethnic village tourism, including poverty eradication (SDG1), quality education (SDG4), gender equality (SDG5), decent work and economic growth (SDG8), reduced inequality (SDG10), sustainable cities and communities (SDG11), responsible consumption and production (SDG12), climate action (SDG13), peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG16), etc.

Khizar et al. (2023) pointed out in their study on sustainable rural tourism that SDGs provide a systematic development framework for this field.

Especially after the official adoption of SDGs in 2015, the global academic community has significantly increased its attention to sustainable development, which has promoted the rapid development of related research.

In China, the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy is highly consistent with the goals of the SDGs. Liu et al. (2020) showed that the Chinese government has effectively integrated rural tourism into the broader initiative of rural revitalization, forming a sustainable development model with Chinese characteristics. This model emphasizes the coordination and unity of economic development, environmental protection and social progress.

7.2 Construction of cultural sustainability indicator system

Traditional sustainable tourism research mainly focuses on the three dimensions of economy, environment and society, but pays relatively little attention to cultural sustainability. In recent years, scholars have begun to recognize the important role of cultural dimension in sustainable development and have tried to build a corresponding indicator system.

The latest research has made important progress in the development of cultural sustainability indicators. Through a survey of 1,000 tourism stakeholders, researchers identified seven most important cultural sustainability indicators: Authenticity, Awareness, Commodification and Transformation, Empowerment, Parallel Development, Promotion, and Sustainability Practices.

The construction of this indicator system provides an important tool for evaluating the cultural impact of ethnic village tourism. The authenticity index focuses on the authenticity of cultural displays; the awareness index evaluates the community's level of awareness of cultural values; the commercialization and transformation index monitors the direction and degree of cultural change; the empowerment index measures the community's participation in cultural decision-making; the parallel development index evaluates the coordination between traditional culture and modern development; the promotion index focuses on the effect of cultural communication; and the sustainable practice index evaluates the effectiveness of cultural protection measures.

7.3 Innovation of policy tools and optimization of implementation mechanisms

Policy innovation is the key driving force for the sustainable development of ethnic village tourism. Traditional policy tools often adopt a "one-size-fits-all" approach and are difficult to adapt to the special needs of different ethnic villages. In recent years, some regions have begun to explore more flexible and precise policy tools.

Differentiated policies are an important direction for innovation. We should formulate personalized development strategies and support measures based on the cultural characteristics, resource endowments, development levels and other factors of different ethnic villages. For example, we can increase support for cultural protection and inheritance for villages with rich cultural resources but weak economic foundations; and we can give priority to developing low-impact ecotourism products for villages with fragile ecological environments.

Participatory policy making is another important innovation. Traditional policy making is often a top-down process that lacks the participation of grassroots communities. The new policy making model emphasizes the participation of multiple entities and ensures that policies can truly reflect the needs and wishes of the community by establishing a regular dialogue mechanism.

Optimizing the policy implementation mechanism is also a key link. Some studies have found that

poor policy effects are often not due to policy design problems, but deviations in the implementation process. The effectiveness and quality of policy implementation can be improved by establishing a dynamic monitoring system, improving the feedback mechanism, and strengthening implementation supervision.

8. Technology empowerment and the development prospects of smart tourism

8.1 Application of digital technology in the protection of national culture

Digital technology provides new possibilities for the protection and inheritance of national culture. Through digital recording, virtual reality reconstruction, artificial intelligence analysis and other technical means, the rich content of national culture can be better preserved and displayed.

In terms of cultural records, technologies such as high-definition video, 3D scanning, and drone aerial photography can comprehensively record cultural elements such as traditional architecture, handicrafts, and performing arts. These digital records not only preserve precious cultural heritage for future generations, but also provide researchers with rich analytical materials.

In terms of cultural reconstruction, virtual reality and augmented reality technologies can reproduce cultural scenes that have disappeared or changed. Visitors can experience traditional lifestyles, participate in virtual festival ceremonies, and feel the historical cultural atmosphere through VR devices. This immersive experience not only enhances the attractiveness of tourism, but also improves the effectiveness of cultural education.

In terms of cultural analysis, big data and artificial intelligence technologies can help identify the laws and trends of cultural change. By analyzing large amounts of text, image, and video data, researchers can more accurately grasp the context of cultural development and provide a scientific basis for the formulation of cultural protection policies.

8.2 Construction and Optimization of Smart Tourism Platform

As a product of the deep integration of digital technology and the tourism industry, smart tourism provides new opportunities for the development of ethnic village tourism. By building a smart tourism platform, it is possible to achieve personalized tourist services, precise tourism management, and digital cultural display.

In terms of tourist services, the smart tourism platform can provide full digital services. From pre-trip information query and itinerary planning, to navigation and real-time translation during the trip, to post-trip evaluation sharing and relationship maintenance, digital technology can run through the entire process of the tourism experience.

In terms of tourism management, the smart tourism platform can achieve precise flow control and resource allocation. By real-time monitoring of tourist flow, analyzing tourist behavior, and predicting tourism demand, managers can adjust service supply in a timely manner to avoid overcrowding or idle resources.

In terms of cultural display, the smart tourism platform can innovate the ways and means of cultural dissemination. Through AR guided tours, interactive games, social sharing and other functions, tourists can have a deeper understanding and experience of national culture, while also injecting new vitality into cultural heritage.

8.3 Ethical Considerations and Risk Prevention in Technology Application

Although technology empowerment has brought many opportunities for the development of ethnic village tourism, we also need to pay

attention to the ethical issues and potential risks. The application of technology should serve the goals of cultural protection and community development, rather than becoming a new tool for exploitation and control.

Data sovereignty is an important ethical issue. National cultural data often have profound spiritual and symbolic significance and should not be collected, used, or disseminated at will. It is necessary to establish a corresponding data governance mechanism to ensure that the collection and use of data is subject to the informed consent of the community and that the control of the data is always in the hands of the community.

The digital divide is another issue that needs attention. If the application of technology exacerbates the differences in digital capabilities between different groups, it may lead to new inequalities and exclusion. Therefore, while promoting the application of technology, it is necessary to strengthen digital literacy education to ensure that all community members can benefit from technological development.

The risks of cultural representation cannot be ignored. Although digital technology can record and display culture, it may also solidify and simplify the complexity of culture. It is necessary to maintain the dynamics and diversity of culture in the application of technology and avoid simplifying rich culture into standardized digital products.

9. Conclusion

As an important link between tradition and modernity, local and global, the research significance of ethnic village tourism development has far exceeded the scope of simple academic discussion. Through the systematic sorting and in-depth analysis of relevant literature, this study reveals the intricate dynamic relationship between economic development, cultural protection and community welfare in the development of ethnic village tourism. This phenomenon not only carries the vision and pursuit of a better life for ethnic communities, but also bears the dual pressure of cultural inheritance and change under the impact of modernization.

Current research shows that the development of ethnic village tourism is at a critical historical node. Driven by the wave of globalization, these once closed cultural enclaves are experiencing unprecedented openness and integration, while also facing severe challenges such as cultural homogenization, environmental degradation and social differentiation. How to protect cultural roots while stimulating economic vitality, how to maintain traditional wisdom while meeting modern needs, and how to ensure social equity while pursuing development efficiency, these issues are not only related to the future destiny of ethnic villages, but also to the protection and inheritance of human cultural diversity.

Looking to the future, research on ethnic village tourism needs to achieve new breakthroughs in theoretical innovation, methodological innovation, and practical exploration. Only by building a more comprehensive, dynamic, and culturally sensitive analytical framework, developing a more inclusive, participatory, and collaborative research method, and exploring a more sustainable, equitable, and resilient development model, can we truly achieve high-quality development of ethnic village tourism and allow these precious cultural treasures to shine more brightly in the glory of modern civilization. This is not only the mission of academic research, but also the responsibility and commitment that our generation should bear for history and the future.

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