

REVIEW ARTICLE

Youth Practice Empowering Rural Revitalization: Exploration of the Path of Agriculture - Culture - Tourism Integration Development in Xiaoliang Town

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Abstract

Driven by the rural revitalization strategy, traditional rural agriculture in China is gradually transforming into modern agriculture, and the integration of agriculture, culture, and tourism has become a new trend in rural economic development. Although Xiaoliang Town, Dianbai District, Maoming City, boasts rich historical buildings such as Shilu Western - style Building and Liang Clan Ancestral Hall, as well as unique regional culture, its integrated development of agriculture, culture, and tourism is hindered by problems like imperfect tourism route planning and insufficient cultural promotion. The Xinxing Xiangrong Practice Group of Guangdong University of Petrochemical Technology, taking youth practice as a starting point, has adopted innovative measures such as designing a “city walk” agriculture - culture - tourism map (iterating from the hand - drawn version 1.0 to the cloud version 2.0), carrying out offline interactive activities, and developing cultural and creative products. It has built an “online + offline” integrated promotion model, effectively activating the local historical and cultural resources. The relevant achievements have been recognized nationwide, injecting youthful vitality into rural revitalization and providing a reference path of “youth practice + integration of agriculture, culture, and tourism” for similar regions.

Keywords: Rural Revitalization, Integration of Agriculture, Culture, and Tourism, Youth Practice, Cultural Tourism Map, University - Local Government Collaboration, Cultural Activation, Practice Path.

1. Introduction

Since the proposal of the rural revitalization strategy, the protection of cultural heritage and the integration of cultural and tourism industries have become important ways to activate the endogenous driving force of rural areas. This integration can not only make effective use of rural historical and cultural resources but also inject new vitality into rural economic development, promoting the all - round development of rural areas. Guangdong Province has actively responded to the national strategy by launching relevant projects, clearly proposing to build 100 provincial - level models of beautiful towns, and requiring the strengthening of the function of towns connecting cities and villages to promote coordinated development between urban and

rural areas, narrow the urban - rural gap, and achieve common prosperity.

Cultural heritage, as an important carrier and spiritual foundation of Chinese civilization, is a crucial resource for China to demonstrate its cultural confidence and vitality. The protection and inheritance of cultural heritage is also a profound change in the way of survival of Chinese civilization. Xiaoliang Town, Dianbai District, Maoming City, as a famous historical and cultural town in Lingnan, is home to many historical buildings that carry local memories, such as Shilu Western - style Building, Liang Clan Ancestral Hall, Ancient Arcade Street, and Blockhouse Granary. These buildings have witnessed the development process of Xiaoliang Town, contain rich historical

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and cultural connotations, and are unique cultural treasures of the town. However, for a long time, the development of cultural and tourism in Xiaoliang Town has been restricted by many factors. The tourist routes are fragmented, with a lack of effective connection between various scenic spots, making it difficult for tourists to plan reasonable travel routes. There is insufficient cultural interpretation of these historical buildings, so that tourists cannot deeply understand the historical stories and cultural values behind them. The single promotion channel makes it hard for the cultural and tourism resources of Xiaoliang Town to be known to a wider audience. These problems have led to the failure to fully release the economic and cultural values of the historical resources in Xiaoliang Town, restricting the development of the local cultural and tourism industry and the process of rural revitalization.

1.1 The Intervention Logic of Youth Practice

The youth group is one of the most innovative groups in society. They have active thinking, dare to try new things, and play a core driving role in rural revitalization. Relying on the rich intellectual resources of colleges and universities, the Xinxing Xiangrong Practice Group has gathered young talents from various majors to solve the problems of rural characteristic industries with professional knowledge, allowing the power of youth to take root in the fields. With the clear goal of “protecting historical buildings and activating the value of cultural tourism”, the group has actively engaged in the practice of integrating agriculture, culture, and tourism in Xiaoliang Town.

The practice group carried out its work through a series of orderly steps. Firstly, it conducted field research. Team members went deep into every corner of Xiaoliang Town, visited local historical buildings, communicated with villagers and village cadres, and learned about the local historical culture, the current situation of tourism resources, and the problems in development. On the basis of the research, it designed plans. Aiming at the pain points in the development of cultural and tourism in Xiaoliang Town, it worked out practical solutions, such as the design of the “city walk” agriculture - culture - tourism map. Finally, it carried out the implementation and promotion, putting the designed plans into practice and promoting them through various channels and activities to let more people know about the cultural and tourism resources of Xiaoliang Town. When integrated with vivid regional characteristics, the cultural and tourism IP will burst out infinite vitality.

Among them, the “city walk” agriculture - culture - tourism map, as the core carrier, has played a key role. It has organically connected the historical building resources of Xiaoliang Town with the tourism experience scenes, providing clear travel guidance for tourists, effectively solving the bottleneck problems such as scattered scenic spots and vague routes in the development of cultural and tourism in Xiaoliang Town, and laying a solid foundation for the integrated development of agriculture, culture, and tourism in the town.

2. Literature Review

Extensive studies have explored the role of agriculture-culture-tourism integration in rural revitalization. Researchers have highlighted rural cultural heritage as a core carrier of Chinese civilization, emphasizing that its protection and inheritance are pivotal for sustaining rural vitality. A large body of literature has discussed how integrating agricultural resources (e.g., farmland landscapes, agrarian practices) with cultural elements (e.g., folk traditions, historical sites) and tourism functions (e.g., experiential activities, accommodation services) can drive economic growth in rural areas, with case studies demonstrating its potential to boost local incomes and employment.

Scholars have also examined practical pathways: some argue that systematic planning is essential to address resource fragmentation, while others emphasize the creation of distinctive cultural-tourism IPs as a means to enhance regional attractiveness. Additionally, the school-local collaborative mechanism has been investigated as a supportive framework, with studies noting that university intellectual input, government resource allocation, and villager participation can collectively optimize the implementation of integration strategies.

Notably, recent attention has focused on the role of youth in this context. Studies have shown that young individuals, with their innovative mindset and digital skills, contribute to transforming traditional cultural resources into modern products—such as digital tourism tools and cultural and creative goods—thereby bridging the gap between heritage preservation and contemporary market demands. Meanwhile, research on mass participation has underscored that engaging villagers as active cultural communicators, rather than passive onlookers, strengthens cultural identity and fosters sustainable development.

Despite these insights, debates persist regarding the effectiveness of existing models in balancing

economic benefits with cultural authenticity, and questions remain about how to scale successful practices to diverse rural contexts.

2.1 Field Research and Resource Sorting

Members of the Xinxing Xiangrong Practice Group first conducted a comprehensive and in - depth field visit to Xiaoliang Town. They went to historical buildings such as Shilu Western - style Building, Xiangpo Village Arcade Street, Blockhouse Granary, and Liang Clan Ancestral Hall, carefully observing the details of the buildings' appearance, structure, and decoration, and feeling the historical atmosphere contained in them. During the visit, team members had in - depth exchanges with local elderly people and village cadres, collected information such as the legends, historical backgrounds, and development processes of these historical buildings, and sorted out the historical context and unique architectural characteristics of each building. Through this field research method, the practice group has a comprehensive grasp of the current situation of historical and cultural resources in Xiaoliang Town, providing first - hand information for the subsequent map design, activity planning, and other work.

2.2 Design and Iteration of Agriculture - Culture - Tourism Map

1.0 Version Hand - drawn Map Design: On the basis of sufficient research, the practice group, combining the distribution and functional characteristics of historical buildings in Xiaoliang Town, began to design the first version of the “city walk” hand - drawn tourist route map. Giving full play to their professional advantages, team members took functional zones such as “nostalgic leisure circle” and “folk custom experience circle” as the framework, connecting the Fanrong Road commercial belt with three major historical building sites including Shilu Western - style Building, Liang Clan Ancestral Hall, Ancient Arcade Street, and Blockhouse Granary, forming a tourism loop of “one belt, three points, and four circles”. This design not only solves the problems of scattered scenic spots and vague routes in Xiaoliang Town but also allows tourists to choose appropriate tourist areas according to their own interests, improving the tourists' travel experience.

2.0 Version Digital Upgrade: In order to adapt to the communication trend of the Internet era and expand the influence of historical and cultural resources in Xiaoliang Town, the practice group carried out a digital

upgrade of the map and launched a cloud version. Using advanced digital technology, technicians transformed the hand - drawn map into an online interactive form. Tourists can enter the cloud map by scanning a QR code with their mobile phones to obtain an immersive travel experience. The cloud map not only contains detailed route information but also integrates pictures, audio explanations, video introductions, and other contents of historical buildings, enabling tourists to more intuitively and deeply understand the historical culture of Xiaoliang Town. At the same time, the cloud map breaks through the limitations of time and space, allowing tourists to learn about the cultural and tourism resources of Xiaoliang Town at any time and anywhere, making the historical and cultural resources of Xiaoliang Town reach a wider audience.

2.3 Planning and Implementation of Offline Interactive Activities

“Answer Questions, Collect Stamps, and Get Prizes” Activity: The Xinxing Xiangrong Practice Group carefully planned and held the “Answer Questions, Collect Stamps, and Get Prizes” activity in Xiaoliang Cultural Square. Team members designed a series of interesting questions around the historical buildings of Xiaoliang Town, which involve not only the historical background and architectural characteristics of the buildings but also some local folk culture knowledge. Participants can get corresponding characteristic building stamps by answering questions during their visit to historical buildings. When they collect 4 characteristic building stamps and the exclusive “Xiaoliang Town” stamp, they can exchange for exquisite cultural and creative gifts. The design of the activity fully considers the needs of people of different age groups, attracting thousands of villagers to participate, enabling the public to deepen their understanding of local culture and strengthen their cultural identity in a relaxed and pleasant game interaction.

Cultural and Creative Market Activity: The practice group developed a series of cultural and creative products based on the characteristics of the ancient buildings in Xiaoliang Town, such as postcards with the Chinese - Western style of Shilu Western - style Building as the design element, key chains, fans, and stamps inspired by the European - style decorations of the arcade buildings. These cultural and creative products not only carry the cultural memory of Xiaoliang Town but also have practical value, which are deeply loved by people. The practice group held

a cultural and creative market activity in Xiaoliang Town, setting up special exhibition stalls to display and sell these cultural and creative products. The market activity not only attracted local villagers to stop and buy but also received attention and support from government departments, becoming an important link connecting cultural protection and industrial development and exploring a new path for the development of the cultural and tourism industry in Xiaoliang Town.

2.4 Construction and Operation of University-Local Government Collaboration Mechanism

The practice group has actively established in - depth cooperative relations with the government of Xiaoliang Town and village committees, and jointly built a collaborative mechanism of “university guidance+ government support + villager participation”, providing theoretical support and practical paradigms for promoting the endogenous development of rural revitalization. In this mechanism, colleges and universities give full play to their professional advantages and provide intellectual support for the integrated development of agriculture, culture, and tourism in Xiaoliang Town, such as completing map design and activity planning. The government provides resource support such as venues and tools for practical activities, coordinates relations among various parties, and ensures the smooth implementation of the activities. Villagers actively participate in the practice by narrating history and serving as guides, providing rich local resources and human support for the activities. This linkage model not only ensures the implementation and effectiveness of practical activities but also promotes the transformation of historical building protection from “government - led” to “full participation”, forming a good development atmosphere.

3. Results

Through a series of activities carried out by the practice group, the popularity of historical buildings in Xiaoliang Town has been significantly improved. 70% of the participating villagers said that through these activities, they have re - recognized the value of the old buildings around them and have a deeper understanding of the local historical culture. Young people have also increased their interest in local culture through research manuals, stamp - collecting games, etc., and take the initiative to learn about the historical stories and cultural traditions of Xiaoliang Town. This not only improves the local residents’

awareness of protecting historical buildings but also lays a solid mass foundation for the inheritance and continuation of the historical culture of Xiaoliang Town.

3.1 The Development of Cultural and Tourism has Formed a Characteristic Brand and Demonstration Effect

The “Xiaoliang Research Tourism Route Map” designed by the practice group, with its unique creativity and practical value, has successfully been selected into the top 100 national college students’ summer practice achievements and has won excellent works in the national college students’ summer activity practice display achievements for two consecutive years. The “city walk” model has become a well - known cultural and tourism business card of Xiaoliang Town, attracting a large number of tourists to visit, which has greatly promoted the development of the local cultural and tourism industry. At the same time, this model has also become a landmark achievement of Maoming City, providing reference for the cultural and tourism development of other towns in Maoming City and playing a good demonstration role.

3.2 Obvious Effect of Youth Empowerment

Through the mode of “practice education + social service”, the practice group has provided a platform for young students participating in the practice to combine theoretical knowledge with practical application. In the process of practice, team members have transformed their professional knowledge into practical results. For example, students majoring in design have used their skills to develop characteristic cultural and creative products, turning ancient buildings into tangible, interactive, and immersive living cultural spaces. Students operate online platforms through new media technologies, making important contributions to the promotion of cultural and tourism in Xiaoliang Town. Through these practical activities, a group of young talents with both cultural feelings and innovative ability have been cultivated, providing solid intellectual support for rural revitalization. At the same time, this “grounded” practice has also provided replicable and promotable experience for colleges and universities to serve local development, promoting the in - depth integration of colleges and universities with local areas.

4. Discussion

The youth group has active thinking and has a keen insight into and proficient use of new media

technologies and modern aesthetics. They are good at using new media technologies and creative thinking. New media and new technologies have reconstructed the form and narrative discourse of agriculture - culture - tourism integration reports. They transform rural historical and cultural resources into products that conform to modern aesthetics, such as cloud maps and cultural and creative IPs. These innovative products not only meet the needs of modern tourists but also inject freshness and vitality into rural cultural and tourism, effectively solving the pain points in the development of rural cultural and tourism, such as single promotion channels and lack of attractive products.

Interactive activities such as “answer questions and collect stamps” and “cultural and creative market” carried out by the practice group provide opportunities for local villagers and tourists to participate in cultural protection and inheritance. Through these activities, villagers have transformed from cultural onlookers to participants and communicators. Mass cultural activities, as a bridge connecting tradition and modernity, culture and life, are an important position for inheriting and developing excellent traditional Chinese culture. In the process of participation, they have deepened their understanding and love for local culture and enhanced their cultural identity and sense of pride. This “co - construction and sharing” pattern of cultural protection is not only conducive to the inheritance and development of historical culture but also can gather the joint efforts for rural development, providing a reference for the integration of agriculture, culture, and tourism to empower rural revitalization.

In - depth cooperation between colleges and universities and local governments is an important guarantee for promoting the integrated development of rural agriculture, culture, and tourism. Colleges and universities have rich intellectual resources and professional talents, which can provide professional guidance and support for rural development. Local governments are familiar with the local actual situation and can provide necessary resources and guarantees for practical activities. This university-local government collaboration model can not only make up for the shortage of rural talents but also ensure that practical results are accurately connected with local needs, realizing a benign cycle of “practice-feedback- optimization” and building a solid mechanism guarantee for the sustainable development of rural cultural and tourism.

5. Conclusion

The practice in Xiaoliang Town has fully proved that the involvement of youth power has provided new ideas and methods for the integrated development of rural agriculture, culture, and tourism. With the agriculture - culture - tourism map as the core carrier, the Xinxing Xiangrong Practice Group has successfully activated the contemporary value of historical and cultural resources in Xiaoliang Town through the innovative model of “online promotion + offline interaction”, achieving a win - win situation between cultural protection and economic development. This path of “youth practice empowering rural revitalization” has not only created a unique cultural and tourism business card for Xiaoliang Town but also provided valuable experience for similar regions across the country. For rural areas to achieve sustainable development and radiate lasting vitality in cultural inheritance, it is necessary to take root in local characteristics, fully tap and utilize local historical and cultural resources, gather youth wisdom, give play to the innovative advantages of the youth group, build a collaborative mechanism, strengthen cooperation among colleges and universities, governments, villagers, and other parties, and form a strong joint force to promote rural development. It can not only activate the endogenous driving force of rural revitalization but also provide a Chinese solution for global rural sustainable development.

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