



TECHNIUM
SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL

Vol. 37, 2022

**A new decade
for social changes**

www.techniumscience.com

ISSN 2668-7798



9 772668 779000

Research on the new trend of sustainable development of rural tourism in Xi'an in the post pandemic period

Bo Wan¹, Dr. Chuanchen Bi²

College of Graduate Study in Management, Khon Kaen University

chuabi@kku.ac.th

Abstract. In 2019, the COVID-19 broke out in Wuhan, China, and then spread to the whole country. In April of the following year, China announced that it had entered the Normalized Management stage for the COVID-19. This article describes the current situation of rural tourism in Xi'an by introducing the rise and development of rural tourism in Xi'an, as well as the impact of the COVID-19 on rural tourism in Xi'an. According to the current situation of rural tourism in Xi'an, the SWOT analysis has been introduced to find out the advantages, disadvantages, opportunities and challenges of rural tourism in Xi'an. Leverage Effect (advantage & opportunity), Inhibition (disadvantage & opportunity), Vulnerability. (advantages & threats) and Problems (disadvantages & threats) have been analyzed to obtain a corresponding strategic plan suitable for the sustainable development of rural tourism in Xi'an.

Keywords. Post-pandemic era; rural tourism; new trend of sustainable development; SWOT analysis

1 Introduction

Since the introduction of China's Targeted Poverty Alleviation Policy in 2014, it has promoted the rise of rural tourism across the country. However, the development of rural tourism in Xi'an has not been satisfactory, and the number of tourists in many places has not increased significantly. Especially, due to the COVID-19 Regular Epidemic Prevention and Control of China since 2020, the number of tourists has been at a low point for a long time, and some even experienced a negative growth. Resulting in some businesses are on the verge of bankruptcy, and the others have already closed down. In this situation, it is necessary to research how to use the national policy to boost the rural tourism income in Xi'an. This paper focuses on how to increase farmers' income through the sustainable development of rural tourism in the Post- pandemic era.

2 Literature review

2.1 Post-pandemic era

2.1.1 CCTV Client (2020)

The COVID-19 has been classified as an international public health emergency by the World Health Organization (WTO) due to its large scope and serious harm. Benefit from the scientific prevention and control, as well as the strict deployment and hard work, the situation

of the COVID-19 prevention and control in China has gradually stabilized. The industry in China has gradually revived, and a set of effective long-term mechanisms aimed at promoting the consumption growth have been explored and established. Under the situation of the Post-pandemic era, the first task is to release the consumption vitality which has been suppressed and frozen before.

2.2 The influence of the COVID-19 on tourism

Xia Changjie and Feng Xiaoxu (2020) During this pandemic, the tourism industry has been particularly affected due to its vulnerability and sensitivity. For a long time, the domestic and inbound tourism of China have almost stagnated.

Wang Shaohua, Wang Lu, Wang Mengyin, et al. (2020) With the concerted efforts of the whole country to fight the COVID-19 and the correct understanding of the scientific Prevention and Control of the virus, the pandemic has been gradually alleviated.

Dai Bin (2020) According to the judgment from the relevant experts, the tourism industry is a pillar industry of the national economy. It has suffered a fatal blow during the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the bad influence will not be the long-term one.

Dang Hong-Yan (2020) After the epidemic is over, the tourism in China will show a rapid development trend with more tenacious vitality. Due to the impact of the pandemic, most tourist attractions in China have issued announcements to stop receiving tourists, which lasted for a long time. There are also some towns that mainly rely on tourism have entered into complete closed management mode, resulting in a predicament of zero income situation for the local tourism-based enterprises and individuals.

2.3 Recovery of rural tourism after the pandemic

In the Post-pandemic recovery and development stage, the short-distant tourism modes such as rural tourism and wellness tourism need to be focused. At present, under the background of the Regular Epidemic Prevention and Control and Rural Revitalization Policy, the rural tourism is fully developed to meet the diversified, comprehensive and personalized needs from tourists, and to promote the high-quality development of rural tourism. Helping rural revitalization has important practical and theoretical value. In recent years, with the concerted efforts of several departments, many measures to promote the development of rural tourism have been introduced one after another, such as the "Rural Tourism Poverty Alleviation Project Action Plan" issued by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in conjunction with the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Transport, and the State Council Poverty Alleviation Office. And the "Action plan for improving the quality and upgrading of rural tourism development" comes from the 13 departments including the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Thanks to the support of these favorable policies, rural tourism and poverty alleviation projects will complement each other and they achieve twice the result with half the effort. The rural tourism across the country will quickly and steadily regain its original vitality.

2.4. Sustainable Development

In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), headed by Mrs. Brunnland, released the report "Our Common Future". This report formally uses the concept of sustainable development, and makes a more systematic exposition of it, which has a wide range of influences. In this report, sustainable development is defined as, "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to

meet their needs. It includes two important concepts, the concept of needs, especially the basic needs of people around the world, which should be considered with special priority. And the concept of constraints, the constraints imposed by technological conditions and social organizations on the ability of the environment to meet immediate and future needs." The coverage includes international, regional, local and sector-specific. It is one of the basic requirements of the Scientific Outlook on Development.

2.4.1 Sustainable development of rural tourism

In the development of rural tourism, the construction of tourism resources and the protection of ecological environment are contradictory. The construction of tourism resources is for profit, but the construction process will bring more or less damage to the local natural ecological environment. Therefore, when developing tourism projects, it is necessary to choose the plan with the least cost of natural environment conflict, and try not to damage the local ecological environment, so that tourism development and protection of natural resources can get a balance. The rise of rural tourism has led to a large influx of tourists into this area, which is likely to pollute the local soil, water, and air. It is necessary to pay more attention to the promotion of environmental protection while promoting tourism projects, and to improve the environmental protection awareness of the tourists and villagers through scientific and reasonable guidance including the increased publicity. Only by protecting the natural ecological resources can the rural tourism develop for a long time. With the increasing standard of living, people pay more attention to the pursuit of "health and nature". Rural tourism must seize the opportunity to create a one-stop closed-loop economic chain of "play, catering, accommodation, shopping, and entertainment" to make the tourists linger.

3 Research methods

This research adopts qualitative research, mainly by collecting indirect data of rural tourism in Xi'an, and using the obtained data through SWOT model to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of rural tourism in Xi'an under the premise of Regular Epidemic Prevention and Control. The specific methods are as follows.

3.1 Indirect data analysis method

This paper mainly collects the data involved in master's literature, journals, official media announcements and research institutions since the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, to study the impact on rural tourism in Xi'an with the Regular Epidemic Prevention and Control. And the deep influence from the pandemic has also been studied.

3.2 SWOT model

By analyzing the collected data, the current advantages and disadvantages, opportunities and challenges of rural tourism under the Regular Epidemic Prevention and Control have been obtained. And the direction and trend of sustainable development of rural tourism have also been researched.

3.3 Innovation in research

This paper analyzes the obtained data through the SOWT model, and tries to draw new ideas for the sustainable development of rural tourism in Xi'an under Regular Epidemic Prevention and Control. Due to the limited level of the author, there might be some deficiencies in this paper, but I still hope to provide some help for my future research.

4 Introduction to rural tourism in Xi'an

4.1 Rise of rural tourism in Xi'an

Xi'an, known as Chang'an in ancient times, is the capital of Shaanxi Province. It has an advantageous geographical environment. It is adjacent to the Wei River in the north and the Qinling Mountains in the south. There are 11 districts and 2 counties in Xi'an, with a built-up area of about 868.2 square kilometers and a permanent population of about 12.873 million. It is located in the plain area and has the warm zone and semi-humid continental monsoon climate, with four distinct seasons, cold, warm, dry and wet. It also has a long history and profound cultural accumulation. Thirteen dynasties including Zhou, Qin, Han, Sui and Tang have chosen to build their capitals here, and it is one of the important birthplaces of Chinese civilization.

In the late 1990s, the district and county governments in Xi'an responded to the call of the Shaanxi Provincial Tourism Administration to develop natural tourism resources based on the geographical environment. With the construction of these years, the first batch of natural tourist attractions opened to tourists. Among them, the Xiangyu Forest Park in Chang'an District has a huge flow of people, but the supporting facilities such as catering and rest are almost zero, causing tourists to complain. Villagers near the scenic spot discovered this business opportunity and contacted the district government through the cadres of the village committee. After the investigation of the district committee, the first farmhouse projects approved by the government to be listed for operation were born here. It not only solves the problems faced by tourists, but also brings considerable income to local villagers. Villagers around the nearby tourist attractions that have been opened have followed suit, and many farmhouses have sprung up like bamboo shoots after a rain. Since then, rural tourism in Xi'an, headed by Chang'an District, has begun to take shape.

4.2 Development of rural tourism in Xi'an

The time has come to the beginning of the 21st century, and rural tourism projects have been vigorously built all over the country, and also Xi'an is not reluctant to be left behind. In 2014, with the introduction of the State Council's targeted poverty alleviation policy, the strategies of local governments to promote targeted poverty alleviation through rural tourism have been effectively implemented, and the development of rural tourism has been boosted by unprecedented development. Chang'an District's tourism industry started earlier and developed the fastest. It has national AAAA scenic spots such as Qinling Wildlife Park, Cuihua Mountain National Geopark, Guanzhong Folk Art Museum, Fengdong Modern Urban Agricultural Expo Park. And the popular scenic spots such as Zhongnan Mountain National Forest Park, Xiangyu Forest Park and Wanhua Mountain Scenic Spot. It has rich and diverse tourism resources and considerable tourism income, making it a leader in rural tourism in Xi'an.

Other areas in Xi'an which have slightly weaker tourism resources compared with Chang'an District still have their own tourism features. Lantian County has national AAAA scenic spots such as Tangyu Tourist Resort, Bailuyuan Film City, and Wangshun Mountain Forest Park, as well as many popular tourist attractions such as Liuyu Flying Man, Lantian Ape Man Ruins, Cai Wenji Memorial Hall, and Shuilu Nunnery. Tangyu has long been famous for the hot springs that have flourished since the Han and Tang dynasties, and has been a health resort since then. Bailuyuan was originally a little-known place. Influenced by the novel "White Deer Plain" written by Chen Zhongshi, a famous novelist in China, this place gradually became well known to the public. Later, it was built with huge sums of money when the film and television drama of the same name was filmed. The film and television city has made it unprecedentedly popular. Wang Shun Mountain, known as Yushan Mountain in ancient times,

became famous because of one of the twenty-four filial piety folk tales of Chinese virtues. Wang Shun buried his mother by carrying the soil, and is known as "the first filial piety mountain in the world". Huyi District is most famous for its peasant paintings (which have been selected as Intangible Cultural Heritage) and No. 8 Hutai grapes. The local peasant paintings have strong regional characteristics and are mostly based on figures, animals, flowers and birds. The color and exaggerated description bring a strong visual impact to the viewer. No. 8 Hutai grapes have large berries, high sweetness, unique fragrance and taste, and also it has large yield, heat resistance, cold resistance, and easy storage & transportation. It has been promoted by CCTV Agriculture Channel for many times, attracting many tourists to come to taste and pick. The other tourism resources in Huyi District are the Zhuque Forest Park and Taiping Forest Park, they are both the best place to spend the summer. Tourists will drive to them every time in the hot summer. The scenic spots are surrounded by mountains and rivers. They have lush forests and have refreshing and pleasant environment, and they are also the gathering places for many camping enthusiasts. Targeted poverty alleviation and rural tourism complement each other and play a crucial role in promoting rural tourism in various places. Due to the limited space of this article, it is impossible to introduce the development of rural tourism in all districts and counties of Xi'an in detail, but from the development history of rural tourism in these districts and counties mentioned above, we can see the general situation of rural tourism development in the entire Xi'an area.

4.3 The impact of the epidemic on rural travel in Xi'an

At the end of 2019, the COVID-19 pneumonia broke out in Wuhan, China, and then the epidemic spread to all parts of this country, bringing a huge impact on all walks of life. In April of the next year, the State Council announced that the prevention and control of the national COVID-19 pneumonia had entered a normalized management stage. At this time, the impact of the COVID-19 on the national cultural tourism industry had just begun, and it was naturally unavoidable in Xi'an. The peak tourist season of Xi'an starts in spring and stops in autumn every year. However, affected by the epidemic, many scenic spots in Xi'an issued a pandemic prevention and control announcement and announced the closure of the scenic spots with an unknown time for opening. The tourism industry in Xi'an has almost come to a standstill, and tourism-related industries seem to have been pressed to stop. Scenic spots, travel agencies, farmhouses, tourist shopping, etc. are facing a long-term state of being unable to make ends meet, and rural tourist attractions in many places have problems one after another. Merchants in Bailuyuan Folk Village in Lantian County have withdrawn their capital one by one, and the once bustling flow of people no longer exists, leaving only weeds and decay. The ancient town of Jiangjun Mountain in Huyi District used to be full of people, but now it has been demolished and it is full of broken walls. The strawberries in many strawberry orchards in Chang'an District are not picked by tourists, and the cost of picking them by themselves is too high. The growers finally chose to let the strawberries rot in the ground. Large-scale travel agencies use vacations and salary cuts to maintain their capital, while smaller travel agencies are unable to support most of them and choose to go bankrupt. Many tourism practitioners have also devoted themselves to other industries to maintain their livelihoods. Farmhouse operators who have lost tourists can only choose to transfer their stores or transform their operations. Based on the above phenomena, the impact of the COVID-19 on rural tourism in Xi'an is undoubtedly huge. According to incomplete statistics, the overall scale of rural tourism in Xi'an has shrunk by nearly half compared with before the pandemic, but it gradually has got stability

with time going by. With the joint efforts of all members of the tourism industry, the rural tourism in Xi'an will surely recover.

5 SWOT analysis of rural tourism in Xi'an

5.1 Strengths

5.1.1 Green and Original Ecology

In recent years, the economy in China has continued to develop, residents' living standards have continued to improve, and people have paid more attention to health and environmental protection. The greenness and environmental protection of rural tourism are exactly in line with this concept. During leisure time such as weekends or short vacations, more and more people choose rural tourism for a convenient travel.

5.1.2 Convenient transportation

The S107 Provincial Road (Guanzhong Ring Road), which is an elliptical ring road with a total length of 480 kilometers, has been constructed since 2004 and opened to traffic in 2008. It surrounds the entire Guanzhong area and connects a total of 13 districts, counties and more than 40 towns within the jurisdiction of 4 cities including Xi'an, Baoji, Xianyang and Weinan. It effectively breaks the geographical restrictions and provides the convenient traffic environment for rural tourism.

5.1.3 A solid agricultural foundation

The Xi'an area is located in the alluvial plain of the Weihe River, and is covered with loess which is suitable for planting. As early as the pre-Qin era in 221 BC, industrious farmers began to cultivate crops, and now it has expanded into a huge industry with various agricultural products such as grain, fruits, vegetables, and flowers. In recent years, Xi'an has implemented the new policy of "one village, one product" in many villages, which has effectively promoted the development of local rural tourism.

5.1.4 Rich and diverse folk culture

With the development and progress of the times, the Chinese people's yearning for a better life is increasing day by day, and the importance of spiritual life has also emerged. There are many rural tourist attractions in Xi'an that spread positive energy, such as Wang Shun Mountain in Lantian County which spreads the filial piety, Northwest People's Revolutionary University in Gaoling District which had cultivated revolutionary martyrs, and the first red base in Guanzhong area, "the former site of the Soviet government in Gepai Town", etc. Many tourists who are interested in folklore go these places.

5.2 Weaknesses

5.2.1 The infrastructure is backward

Due to their own nature, many rural tourist attractions are relatively remote, the supporting infrastructure of these scenic spots is relatively simple, and there are no clear road signs. In these spots, the road conditions are also always poor, the parking lot capacity is small, and the public toilets need to wait for a long time, which seriously affects the mood of tourists who come to play.

5.2.2 Serious homogenization of tourism projects

The tourism industry involves 6 aspects including "food, housing, travel, play, entertainment and shopping". At present, the content of rural tourism in Xi'an is too simple. Most of the attractions only satisfy the two aspects including eating and entertainment. They mainly provide tourists with meals with farmhouse characteristics, as well as some tea tasting, mahjong, fishing, hot springs, picking and other items, which can easily make tourists feel fatigued.

5.2.3 The quality of employees is not up to standard

Most of the practitioners of rural tourism are local villagers, and they are directly employed without any tourism-related training. This leads to impatient treatment of tourists, poor service awareness, arrogant attitude, and even more disputes with tourists, which will greatly damage the reputation of local rural tourism.

5.2.4 Lack of industry supervision

Many rural tourism projects have developed so far. Although the relevant management departments have formulated a number of management measures, due to the wide distribution of the projects and the large number of practitioners, there has been no effective supervision on whether they are implemented in accordance with the law. Most of the rural tourism projects are self-employed, the food safety and the accommodation hygiene related to the rural tourism are only depend on the operator's self-consciousness. The phenomenon of bad businessmen ripping off their customers often occurs, which can easily have a negative impact on the overall reputation of rural tourism in Xi'an.

5.3 Opportunities

5.3.1 Policies boost the development of rural tourism

Since the execution of the targeted poverty alleviation policy in China, local governments and relevant functional departments have successively issued a number of favorable policies for rural tourism, such as "one village, one product", "rural tourism year" and other favorable policies, and these policies will bring strong boost to the development of rural tourism in Xi'an.

5.3.2 Economic growth brings more tourists

People's income has continued to grow, and per capita disposable income has also increased year after year due to China's rapid economic development. One of the ways for people to relax and relieve stress after work is to get close to nature. Every weekend, a large number of families travel for fun, and rural tourism with a short distance and convenient transportation is the first choice.

5.3.3 Technology helps rural revitalization

In 2016, the overall planning of smart tourism in Xi'an began to be implemented, the inheritance and application innovation of new technologies and data analysis in the tourism industry have been made a good use, these included the Internet of Things, mobile Internet, big data, cloud computing, and AR. The technical staffs from the Science and Technology Bureau and the Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute have been regularly arranged to go to the countryside to help farmers solve various problems in agricultural planting and production, and at the same time it promotes new technologies related to agriculture.

5.4 Threats

5.4.1 Intense competition in the tourism

Other cities in Shaanxi Province including Baoji, Weinan, Xianyang, Shangluo, Hanzhong, Ankang, Yan'an, and Yulin are vigorously developing local rural tourism resources, and they have made a great achievement. For example, Yuanjia Village, Liquan County, Xianyang City, under the joint construction of various scientific measures such as reasonable planning, strict management, and effective supervision, has become the benchmark of Shaanxi's rural tourism industry, and also has strong competition in the China's rural tourism market. In contrast, much rural tourism in Xi'an is still in a relatively primary stage, and the industry competitiveness is seriously lacking.

5.4.2 Limited by climate

Most of the rural tourism trips in Xi'an are outdoor attractions, which are easily affected by external factors, of which climate is the most influential external factor. And outing, mountain climbing, picking, flower viewing, fishing, and so on are all highly seasonal activities. Rural tourism related to these projects only has tourists in the corresponding seasons, however, these seasons only last for 2 or 3 months. After these seasons, few tourists came to the attractions, and the business could only be closed for the remaining half of the year, this severely restricts the development of rural tourism.

5.4.3 Diversified needs from tourists

As tourists get richer in travel experience, they will put forward higher requirements for scenic spots. When selecting scenic spots, similar scenic spots that have already been visited will be excluded. The rural tourism model in Xi'an is too simple, and many scenic spots are firstly excluded. Rural tourism in Xi'an should continue to expand new attractions and tourism models, and meet the needs of tourists by creating new and diversified projects.

<p>S</p> <p>S1 green, original ecology</p> <p>S2 convenient transport</p> <p>S3 strong agricultural foundation</p> <p>S4 rich and diverse folk culture</p>	<p>W</p> <p>W1 outdated infrastructure</p> <p>W2 homogenized tourism</p> <p>W3 substandard workers</p> <p>W4 lack of industry regulation</p>
<p>O</p> <p>O1 policy support</p> <p>O2 economic growth</p> <p>O3 technology help</p>	<p>T</p> <p>T1 fierce competition</p> <p>T2 climate restrictions</p> <p>T3 diversified needs</p>

5.5 SWOT analysis results for rural tourism in Xi'an

5.5.1 Leverage Effect (advantage & opportunity)

Some favorable opportunities such as targeted poverty alleviation and technological assistance to agriculture can be made a good use to vigorously promote own advantages and also attract more potential customers to experience the tourism modes like the currently advocated green tourism and close to nature, resulting in a self-development.

5.5.2 Inhibition (disadvantage & opportunity)

The construction of various infrastructures should be accelerated with the help of various favorable policies carried out by the local government. It is important to take the opportunity from science and technology support to agriculture policy to expand and to innovate the diversified tourism projects. Systematic and effective training should be carried out for the practitioners, and only after meeting the training requirements will they be allowed to take up their posts.

5.5.3 Vulnerability (advantage & threat)

Under the premise of fierce competition in the industry and increasing tourist demand, it should highlight its own advantages. The spots should vigorously promote and publicize green and original ecological tourism, and with the help of their own agricultural foundation, they also should launch a variety of tourism projects in different seasons that match the current season.

5.5.4 Problems (advantages & threats)

It is important to improve the construction of infrastructure as soon as possible, and continue to innovate and develop diversified tourism projects according to the different needs of customers. Strengthen the supervision of rural tourism projects in various districts and counties are also needed. The ability to quickly handle customer complaints, and make positive and positive responses to customers' suggestions should be provided. Only in this way can they take a place in the highly competitive industry.

6 Conclusions

Xi'an is rich in rural tourism resources, it also has tourism resources that meet the current tourists' pursuit of green and original ecological tourism. This city has achieved convenient transportation, solid agricultural foundation, and colorful folk culture. Making a use of these advantages combined with policy support, China's economic growth, and technology to help rural revitalization projects can obtain own rapid development. However, it cannot be ignored that there are obvious shortcomings such as insufficient tourism infrastructure, too many repetitive projects, and poor services in the entire industry, inadequate supervision. At the same time, intense industry competition, climate restrictions, and diversified customer needs are the serious challenges. On the whole, rural tourism in Xi'an has a good development prospect, but if it cannot improve its own problems as soon as possible, it will become a barrier affecting future development.

References

- [1] CCTV News Client. Accelerating the restoration of production and living order under the normalization of epidemic prevention and control [EB / OL]. Beijing, China Daily, 30, March, 2020. Online at <http://www.ce.cn/xwzx/gnsz/gdxw/202003/28/t20200328-34572148.shtml>
- [2] Xia Jiechang, Feng Xiaoxu. Impact and countermeasures of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism[J]. China's Circulation Economy, 2020, 34 (3): 3-10. doi: 10.14089/j.cnki.cn11-3664/f.2020.03.001
- [3] Wang Shaohua, Wang Lu, Wang Mengyin, etc. Research on the impact characterization and impact mechanism of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism in Henan Province [J]. Regional Research and Development, 2020. 39(2)

- [4] Dai Bin. The impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on the tourism industry and the countermeasures[J]. People's Forum-Academic Frontiers, 2020(6):4652. doi: 10. 16619 / j.cnki.rmltxsqy.2020.06.006
- [5] Dang Hongyan. Evolution mechanism and coping strategies of tourism crisis in major epidemics[J]. Macroeconomic Management, 2020(5):43-50. doi:10.19709/j.cnki.11-3199/f.2020.05.007