

Rural Culture Preservation in Rural Tourism Development in Suburban Villages of Large Cities in China: Case Studies of Nanjing

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Abstract

In the context of rapid urbanization, many suburban villages in China have started the tourism-orient transformation by virtue of supporting policies and individual advantages. However, rural cultural decline under disruption and ignorance has become a major pressing issue limiting the rural tourism development and the urban-rural integration process. Recently, scholars and practitioners have drawn attention to the protection, conservation and revitalization of rural culture in tourism development. This research explores the protection and inheritance of rural culture in tourism transformation practices of suburban villages in large cities of China through qualitative and quantitative analysis derived from investigation of 17 culture-featured villages in suburbs of Nanjing, Jiangsu, China. The article identifies the changing patterns in demand and shifts in the attitudes toward rural culture during the rural tourism development through literature review and interviews. Rural culture protecting and promoting strategies are summarized, including culture-related industry introduction, rurality and characteristic highlighting and the collaboration of urban-rural operators. Further, real-time visiting numbers of the investigated villages are extracted from a local service platform (Nanjing Beautiful Countryside Big Data Service Platform) 5 times a day for a month to serve as an indicator of popularity, while comments and ratings from the tourists are aggregated from field interviews and major travel websites. The statistics confirm the influence of rural cultural elements on rural tourism satisfaction. Finally, the article points out the shortcomings in culture construction in the current rural tourism transformation and proposes a discussion on the authenticity of rural culture.

Keywords: Rural Culture, Suburban Villages, Tourism Transformation

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1. Introduction and Literature Review

China has seen an explosive rate of urbanization from 19.39% in 1980 to 60.6% in the end of 2020 (Figure 1, National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). Rapid urbanization has consumed its agricultural hinterlands, and profoundly impacts the economic, social and culture context of surrounding rural areas. Economic impact, technological improvement and government policies has deepened the central cities' penetration into and control of suburbs, leading to continuous outflows of population, rural land desolation and rural ideology breakdown in suburban rural area (Zhou & Ma, 2000; Zhang et al., 2016; Liu & Wang, 2018). Accompanying this trend is the collapse of rural culture. The patterned construction of rural residents has erased local feature, while the dilapidation and destroy of historic sites in rural areas under urbanization is commonly seen. Rural custom and lifestyle, being part of rural culture, are disappearing with the population loss as well.



Figure 1: Urbanization Rate of China.

Rural tourism has been considered as a practical way to revitalize the decaying rural area for the last two decades in China with reference to both native and international lessons. However, the introduction of tourism runs the risk of accelerating the demise of local rural culture. Academics claim that rural renewal under urban dominance is actually distortion of rural values, leads to the disappearance of rural cultural space and changes in functions, which eventually accelerates the extinction of traditional rural culture as well as in-situ cultural scape (Huang & Huang, 2018).

The dilemma has drawn academics and practitioners' attention to rural culture in the context of rural tourism development. Many researchers have discussed the concept, advantages and preservation methods through practices and case studies, showing constantly concerns for rural culture disruption in tourism development (Liu & Yu, 2012; He, 2004; You et al., 2012). Huang & Huang (2018) conducted a comprehensive and detailed review of rural culture research under urbanization and tourism development. By reviewing rural culture related researches, the article focuses on the influence and effectiveness of tourism development on rural culture, the practical method in rural culture preservation or utilization, etc., presenting ideas, directions and main scientific issues for rural culture conservation and reconstruction for future researches.

However, current studies mainly focus on villages with special cultural backgrounds or historical endowments, little attention has been paid to suburban villages, which have been greatly influenced by urbanization. While tangible and intangible culture of ancient villages in hinterland might be preserved due to separation from city center, customs and historic relics of suburban villages are disappearing even before people realizing their value.

Nevertheless, it is impossible and pointless to completely maintain suburban rural areas, the insist of original rural form and lifestyle is just a fantasy.

In fact, many designers have given their answers on rural culture preservation and promotion in tourism transformation practices in China. However, there is still a lack of systematic research in existing studies. This study aims to take fill this gap through a case study of Nanjing in Jiangsu Province. Rural tourism development history in suburban villages are reviewed first with a focus on the changing attitude toward rural culture. Then, the study concludes the culture preservation and promotion strategies based on cases in Nanjing. Seventeen culture featured rural tourist spots are surveyed for current performance, with general drawbacks and rural authenticity preservation being discussed afterwards.

2. Research methods

2.1 Study area

The study was carried out in the 6 suburban districts of Nanjing, the capital city of Jiangsu Province in southeastern part of China. Nanjing has a population of 8.5 million with an urbanization rate of 83.2% at the end of 2019. The furthest district can be reached within 1.5 hour through the highway network (Figure 2).

Rural tourism in Nanjing was started at the end of last century and experienced a continuous growth especially in the last decade under a series of supporting policies. At present, rural tourism receives roughly a quarter of total number of tourists in Nanjing (Yan, 2020).

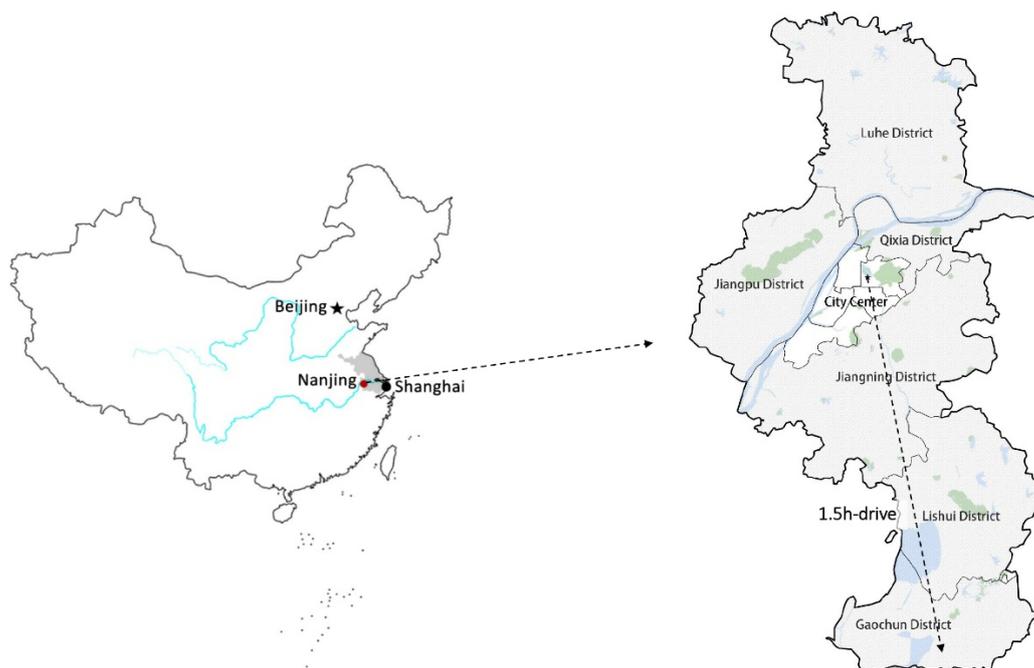


Figure 2: Location of Nanjing and municipal districts of the city.

2.2 Research design and data collecting

The research was conducted in 3 steps. Firstly, development history of rural tourism in Nanjing suburbs is investigated through statistical and archival analysis with a focus on rural culture.

Secondly, centralized field researches were carried out from October 2019 to May 2020. Rural culture presentation, architecture and landscape features, infrastructure and service level were recorded in order to sort out the culture-related strategies and problems for tourism transformation in suburban villages.

Finally, real-time visiting numbers of seventeen rural culture featured tourist spots are extracted from ‘Nanjing Rural Tourism Big Data Service Platform’, a service platform officially launched in Nanjing local service App in May, 2018 by government. The Platform provides activity information and real-time data of weather and visitor number of 63 major rural tourism spots in 6 suburban districts. Visitor number was collected 5 times a day for a month (6 May to 14 June) as an indicator of popularity. Tourists’ comments and ratings are aggregated through three popular travel websites in China (Figure 3).

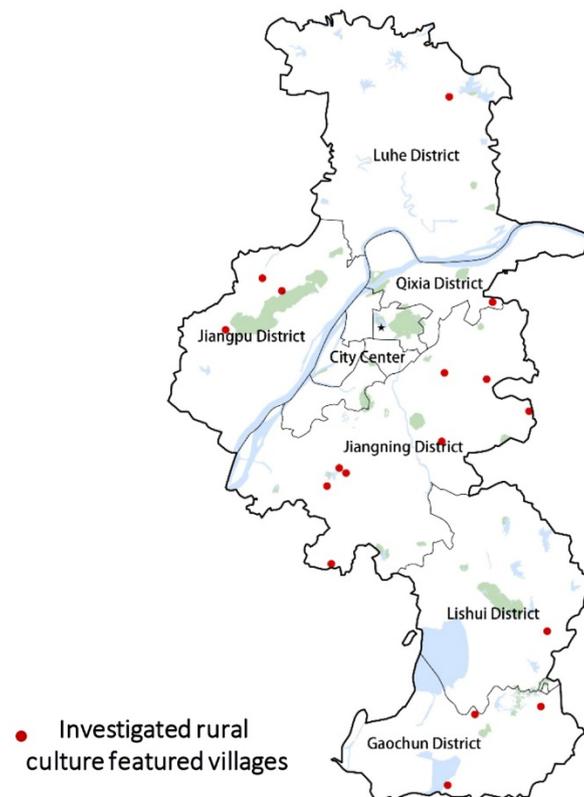


Figure 3: Location of the 17 investigated rural culture featured villages

3. Historical development of rural tourism in Nanjing suburbs

Based on the current situation, location and resources of the village while in accordance with the village’s evolutionary trends, suburban villages refer to villages located within suburban areas of the city with part or all land being statutory village planning land. Compared to traditional agriculture-dominant ones, suburban villages usually have higher economic and infrastructure level, meanwhile retain rural appearance and natural landscapes to a certain level.

Rural culture, which can be deemed as the sum of all things and phenomena created in the process of human interaction with rural nature (Zhang & Zhang, 2017), contains rural historic sites, custom and folks as well as agricultural landscape and lifestyle. These characteristics are usually emphasized as selling points in tourism. Recently, many rural tourism practices

attempt to combine traditional tourism with modern cultural industry, enriching the meaning of rural culture in the current context. Scholars claim that rural cultural tourism has become an innovative form of tourism that has injected vigor and vitality for the development (Zhao & Yu, 2015).

The historical development of suburban rural areas in Nanjing could be roughly divided into four phases in consideration of focuses, dominant forces and transformation outcomes. The attitude and related strategies towards rural culture have also changed at different stages.

3.1 The first phase, from 1990s to 2001, the spontaneous transformation

The development of rural tourism in Nanjing can be traced back to the end of last century. The budding stage is dominated by individual's spontaneous actions offering fundamental tourism product or service with rural features. The farmhouse homestay tourism is the dominant form of rural tourism in China at the early stage (Wang & Hu, 2002), which is basically household-run small business providing rural cater, accommodation and leisure activities relying on the land, house and local resources owned by farmers.

Rural culture is neglected or abandoned both in form and content. Most operators pay no attention to culture-related aspects while some others even choose to deliberately imitate foreign countryside or urban forms in farmyard redecoration, reflecting the urban-driven ideology and disdain for local rural attributes.

3.2 The second phase, from 2002 to 2010, the government promoted transformation

The emerging drawbacks of household business mode, including rural identity degradation and ecological resources abuse, posed an elevated risk for future development. Learned from domestic and international experience, the government are well-acknowledged with the potential and pitfalls in suburban rural tourism. Marked by Nanjing's Agricultural Tourism Development Plan in 2002, rural tourism began to embark on a government regulated development path (General Office of the CPC Nanjing Municipal Committee, 2008).

Rural culture gradually gained attention at this stage. Unlike household operations which kept indifference to rural culture, government promoted rural tourism project with a certain scale showed two opposing attitudes. One is to emphasize cultural characteristics in tourism for villages with special cultural assets. For example, ancient villages such as Yangliu Village have been preserved and consciously developed for tourism. Some other ones tend to highlight special cultural elements, such as the tea culture enhancement in Huanglongxian Village where tea has been grown for generations. The other attitude is to completely abandon rural elements, building urban style resorts that serve urban residents relying on excellent natural environment in countryside.

3.3 The third phase: from 2011-2016, the rapid top-down development

Suburban rural tourism has seen an improvement in service amenities and standard under the guidance of local government, while the long-standing homogeneity has led to the cooling down of the once-popular farmyard tourism. The government saw the problems and took actions under the guidance of national-level policies. In 2011, the idea of the construction of 'Beautiful Countryside' was proposed in Nanjing with pilot projects located in Jiangning District. Compare to the previous establishment of 'rural tourist spots', integration and

creation of ‘rural tourist area’ are development focus of this period.

The importance attached to rural culture has further increased due to the dilemma of homogenization. Apart from traditional rural culture emphasis methods, several villages attempted to introduce new culture-related elements into rural area. For instance, Danian Village succeeded in introducing cycling culture relying on the advantage of being the cycling venue for the 2th Youth Olympic. Some others aim to transform into theme parks with cultural elements, such as Machangshan Three Kingdoms Village. At this stage, the understanding and emphasis of rural culture is mostly reflected on physical appearance of settlements.

3.4 The fourth phase: since 2017, the collaborative development under retrospective

Rural tourism experienced rapid growth in both scale and quantity in the previous stage. New problems such as depopulation resulting from tourism-oriented gentrification are emerging, while old problems like homogeneity still remains. In 2017, the Government formally issued the *Province Characteristic Rural Areas Construction Action Plan in Jiangsu*, underlining the importance of diversification and multi-party cooperation in rural transformation.

Nowadays, there is a deeper understanding of and focus on rural culture. Unlike ‘placing cultural elements into the countryside’ in last phase, today’s practices tend to blend cultural elements with local rural characteristics of both appearance and lifestyle. On the premise of limited influence of local residents, rural tourism benefits both villagers and tourists rather than creates a purely tourist attraction. For example, the creation of Guanyin Collection in Guanyindian Village aims to combine traditional rural handicrafts with cultural creative products and modern pop-up store.

3.5 Changing attitude of rural culture in rural tourism development in Nanjing suburbs

During the whole period, we are seeing changes in leading force, construction scale and attitude towards rural culture in tourism-orient development. As the leading force changes from individual villagers to government and then to multi-party collaboration, construction scale also sees a corresponding change from household-scale business to village-scale tourism spots and then to a region-scale rural tourism network.

Accompanying the deepening understanding of rural culture is the richness of rural culture emphasis in rural tourism development. In terms of physical appearance, rural culture highlighting methods evaluate from tourism village template construction to in-situ rural style preservation. Tourism activities have also enriched from mere cultural heritage tour or folk-art experience to the full immersion rural lifestyle nowadays.

4. Rural culture preservation and promotion strategies for suburban villages in tourism adaption

General strategies responding to culture preservation and promotion could be extracted from practices in Nanjing in terms of industry transformation, spatial renewal as well as operation. Proper culture-related industry introduction is the basis of tourism transformation. Overall look integration, architecture and landscape design and application of materials and structures correspond to appearance renewal at different scales, while the multi-party construction and

maintenance are invisible factors of outcomes (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Outline of Rural culture preservation and promotion strategies

4.1 Culture-related industry introduction

Past experience confirmed that reckless copy of cultural elements in appearance hardly brings success but homogeneity and vicious competition in tourism development, rural culture should never be adopted as a decorative element but a core feature unifying industry and appearance. In practices, historical event emphasis, in-situ culture and characteristic enhancement and new culture-related industry introduction are major ways for tourism industry introducing and upgrading based on villages' own endowments.

Historical event emphasis is a common choice for villages with historical resources for in-depth exploration of tourism. Some other villages have succeeded in enhancing their own cultural assets. For example, Huanglongxian Village in Jiangning District managed to upgrade traditional agricultural industry and blend tea culture into tourism. Besides, new culture-related industries that fulfill the need of urban dwellers are also chosen by some villages with promising outcomes recently. Unlike several years ago when urban space and ideology eroded into countryside, today's new culture-related industry mostly succeeded in achieving the integration and co-development with original rural culture.

4.2 Rural culture emphasis in appearance

Being the most distinctive feature in rural areas, physical appearance shows irresistible attraction to urban dwellers tired of dull urban environment. Appearance related strategies are most preliminary and effective in rural culture preservation and promotion, which can be confirmed by both literature and researched comments.

The overall appearance of the village leaves a first impression on visitors. Learnt from previous dilemma that rural customs and culture are impossible to be appreciated with different architectural styles mingled in one village, overall appearance integration has become first step in village-based tourism development. Traditional appearance preservation, history and culture extraction, environment creation for newly-inserted cultural industry and rural lifestyle conservation are common strategies for culture emphasis. Pitifully, although majority of the investigated villages follow or show respect to original rural look, there are

still several projects choosing to completely abandon original feature, becoming replicas of precedents.

Then it comes to culture presentation in architecture and landscape design. This process is usually undertaken by planners and architects, whose strategies can be summarized as historical and cultural highlight in architecture, traditional rural space reconstruction and traditional activity promotion in public space. These methods are often used simultaneously in projects. Take Huashu Village as an instance, the designer attempts to reshape the specific public space – village entrance by renovating an old farmhouse and surrounding area. As the architect pointed out, ‘In traditional Chinese villages, the entrance is an important public node, serving as a demarcation point between the settlement and nature, with the functions of marking and separating, traffic organizing and leisure gathering (Zhou & Yin, 2017).’ Rural culture and lifestyle are underscored with traditional layout and architecture style, reshaping the village entrance to be a symbol of village, a place for public activities and a collection of local memory.

Finally, material application and construction methods are also unignorable in culture and rurality emphasis. Traditional vernacular forms and materials are inherited from generations of craftsmen, containing the knowledge and response to specific climate, topography, and resources, being part of rural history and culture. Nevertheless, the limitations of rural materials and construction methods including high expense and poor duration are unmissable currently. Nowadays, designers try to combine rural culture with the urban way of construction, striving to preserve the rural flavor and traditional memories while meet the ascending demand of residents and tourists. In actual practices, the new use of vernacular materials, rurality expression by modern material and rural application of modern construction realize the combination of rural culture preservation and modern function demands in current architecture design.

4.3 Multi-party construction & maintenance

Many suburban villages were reconstructed under the impetus of government and capital, flourished for a while and then declined without achieving sustainable development of the newly-inserted rural industries. These disappointing cases are strongly attributed to insufficient acknowledge of villages’ reality and disconnection between decision makers and actual users. Nowadays, the government, entrepreneurs and designers have all been aware of the importance of multi-partnership in both construction and operation period. The cooperation ensures the practical needs of actual users and enhances the sense of participation and honor in village development, greatly improving the sustainability of rural tourism.

The tourism-oriented transformation of suburban villages is not a one-shot deal but a long-lasting project requiring continuous operation and maintenance. As material basis, farmhouse decoration and environment improvement cannot guarantee the profit of tourism. Nowadays, a relatively mature rural tourism development model is commonly seen in Nanjing suburbs with the combination of ‘top-down’ construction led by government and ‘bottom-up’ operation led by individual participants. As a result, original villagers are able to have a voice and share the dividends in tourism transformation, new residents in the village could enjoy urban level living standard. With advantage in capital and operation compared to villagers and flexibility compared to government, the attendance of social enterprises can enhance the tourism sustainability to some extent.

5. The current status of culture featured rural tourism in Nanjing suburbs

5.1 Construction time of rural culture featured tourism villages

The shift of the importance of rural culture can be perceived in tourism development history. In the first stage, tourism operators basically paid no attention to rural culture. In the second stage, rural culture was mentioned in tourism introduction especially in top-down projects, but there were few rural culture focused ones. Along with the rapid development of rural tourism, rural culture also became one of the selling points of tourism in the third stage. In the fourth stage, which focuses on characteristic development, the proportion of rural culture featured villages sees a continuous increase with subtler highlights and richer tourism products (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Construction time of rural culture featured tourism villages

5.2 Focuses of rural culture featured tourism village

Referring to the status quo, the 17 investigated rural culture tourism spots can be roughly classified into 4 categories according to attributes and culture emphasis methods. The first and most common type is historical event emphasis ones (35%), extracting cultural elements from a certain period of time or event. Then it comes to the cultural focus on local endowment highlight (24%) and new culture-related feature introduction (24%), with the aim of unique cultural characteristics presentation or new cultural properties insertion. The last one is historic sites preservation in particular villages with long history (17%), preserving the authenticity in both form and lifestyle as much as possible.

It is important to note that most of the suburban villages have two or more focuses mentioned above. For example, though Guanyindian Village in Jiangning District features in local handicrafts and folklore display, cultural creative industry and B&B business are also indispensable parts. In this research, the 17 targeted villages are categorized by their main focus.

5.3 Distribution of major culture-featured tourism spots

Investigated rural tourist spots are dispersed in all 6 suburban districts of Nanjing. Nearly half of them are located in Jiangning District with a most even distribution, while others are dispersed near natural attractions (Figure 6). There is not an obvious agglomeration of the

seventeen villages. Two relatively gathered area are around Laoshan Area and Yinxing Lake area, both of which are the earliest rural tourism development areas with relatively mature economic foundation.

Compare to other types of villages (Leisure and Sightseeing, Agricultural Experience, Featured Tourism Spot, Agricultural Technology), economic conditions have greater impact on rural culture featured ones as they require certain investment and scale as well as resource endowments. This may more or less explain why Jiangning District owns most rural culture villages since it has the highest economic level.

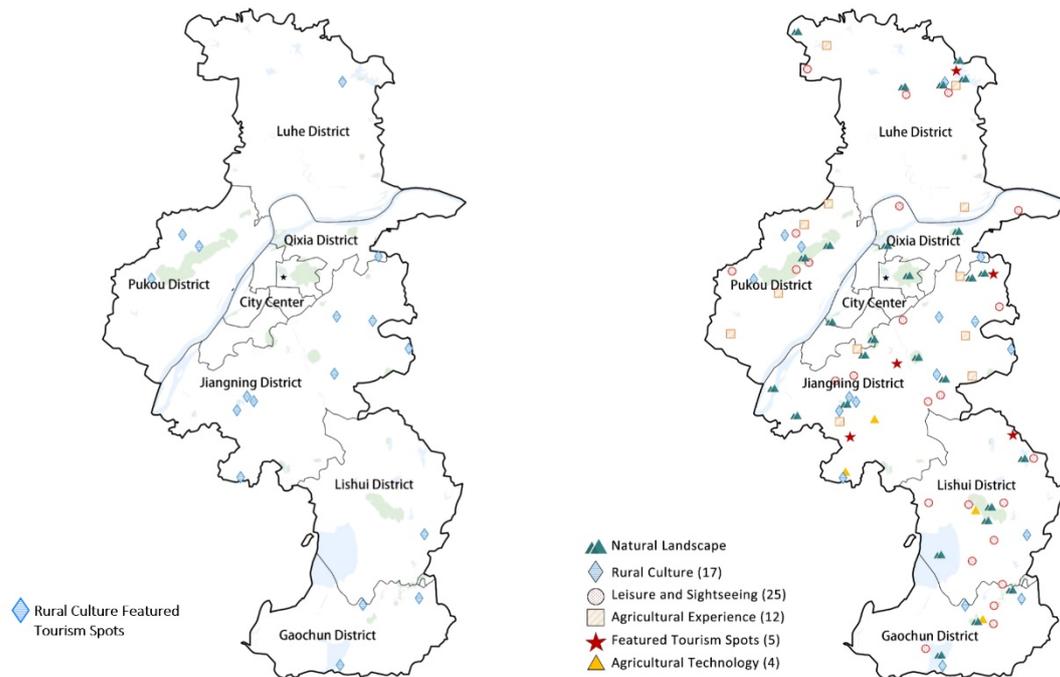


Figure 6: Distribution of culture-featured tourism spots and comparison with other categories

5.4 Temporal distribution of visitor number

The visiting number shows significant difference between working days and holidays. Specifically, weekends receive roughly twice the number of daily visitors during workdays (Figure 7). Calculated by kernel density analysis with the help of Arcgis 10.4, the heatmap of visitor numbers illustrates that rural tourist attractions receive most visitors at noon in both no in both weekdays and holidays since most urban dwellers opt for one-day trip to suburban villages which are usually 1-2 hour drive away (Figure 8). Pitifully, there are few visitors choose to stay overnight in culture featured ones although many villages are actively promoting their B&B business. Referring to individual villages, most of them are in similar situation yet some spots see a visiting peak at special events, and some others are in long-term slump. There is no clear difference among various culture focuses in visiting number (Figure 9).

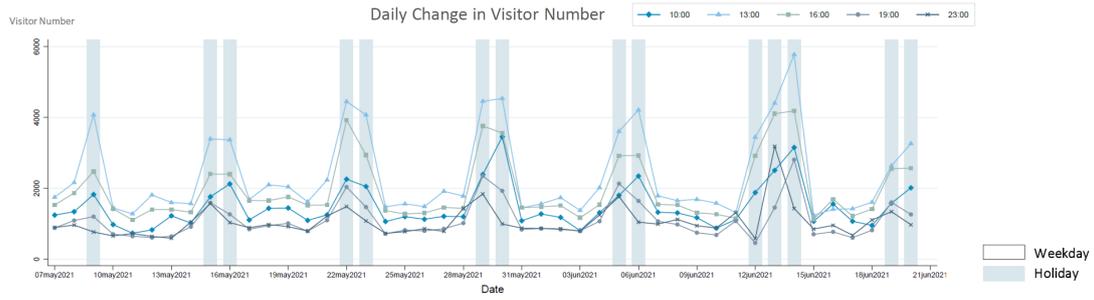


Figure 7: Daily and temporal change of visitor number

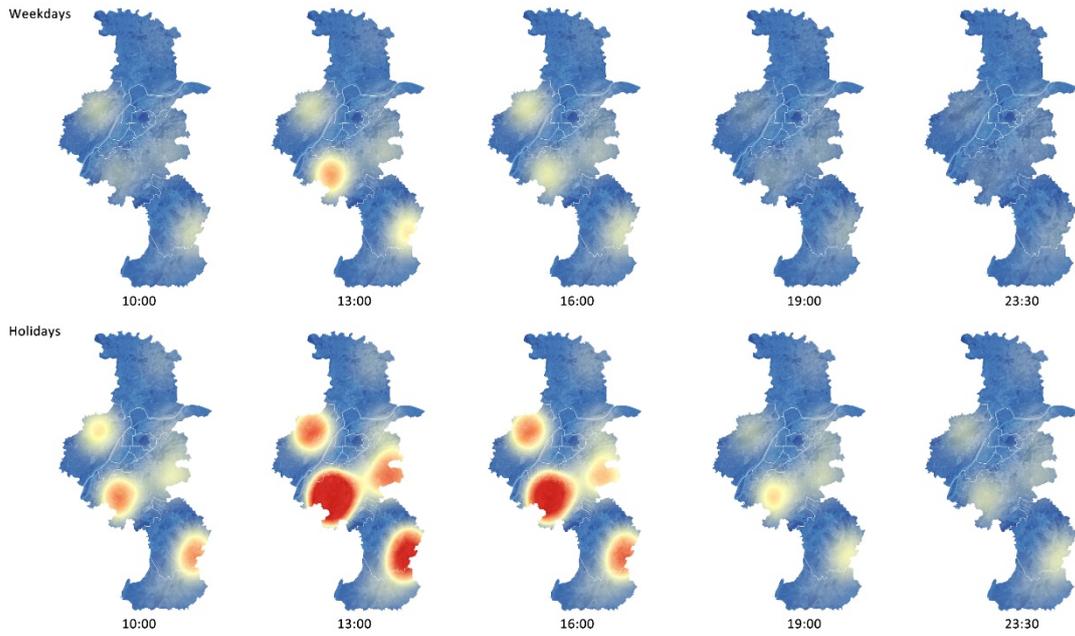


Figure 8: Heatmaps of culture featured tourism spots popularity

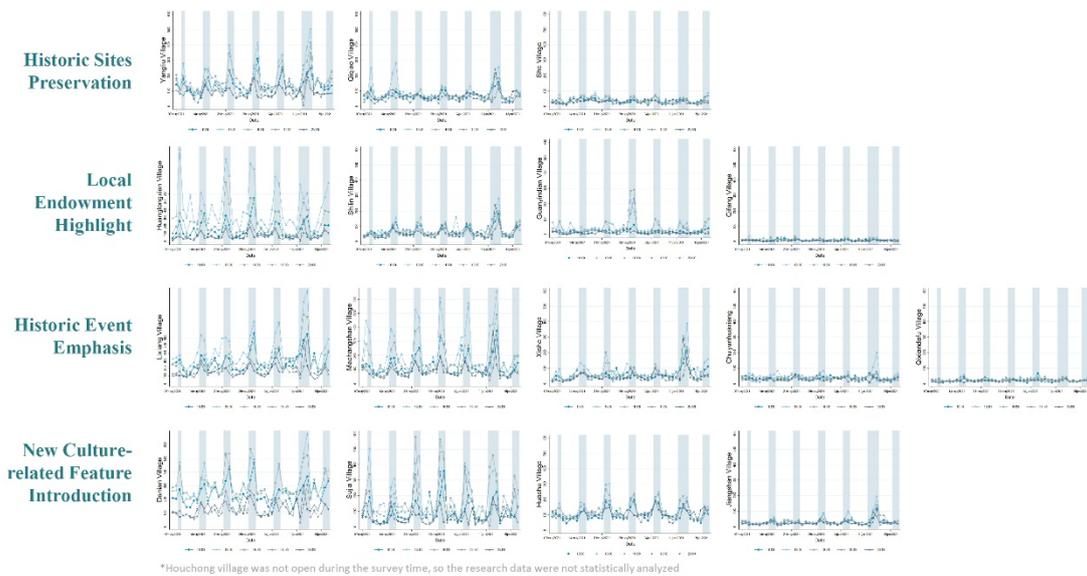


Figure 9: Daily and temporal distribution of visitor number of individual villages

In terms of geographical distribution, there is a high overlap of heatmaps of rural culture featured villages and all 63 observed rural tourism spots, which confirms that currently

villages highlighting rural culture still relies on mature rural tourism areas to some extent (Figure 10). It is worth mentioning the thriving trend of Lixiang Village, a tourist spot with excellent cultural emphasis, facility service and settlement renovation in transformation. The village have welcomed many visitors since officially opened in 2017 and received quite good comments. At present, the village have gradually driven the revitalization of surround area.

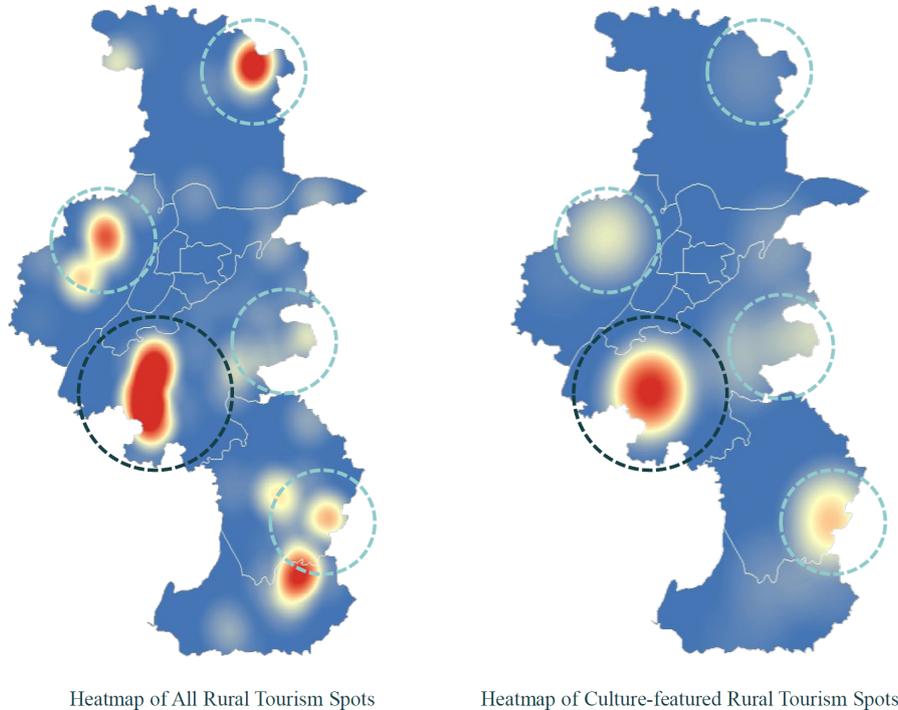


Figure 10: Heatmaps of rural culture featured villages

5.5 Tourist evaluation and rating

According to field interviews and ratings from travel websites, most of the tourists are satisfied with the culture featured tourist villages in Nanjing (Figure 11). Visitors' comments mostly focus on service and infrastructure, natural scenery, settlement environment, culture-related elements, activity richness, architecture and landscape as well as agricultural scenery. Among those, service, natural scenery, settlement environment and culture-related elements receive similar attention, being mentioned in half of the comments (Figure 12).

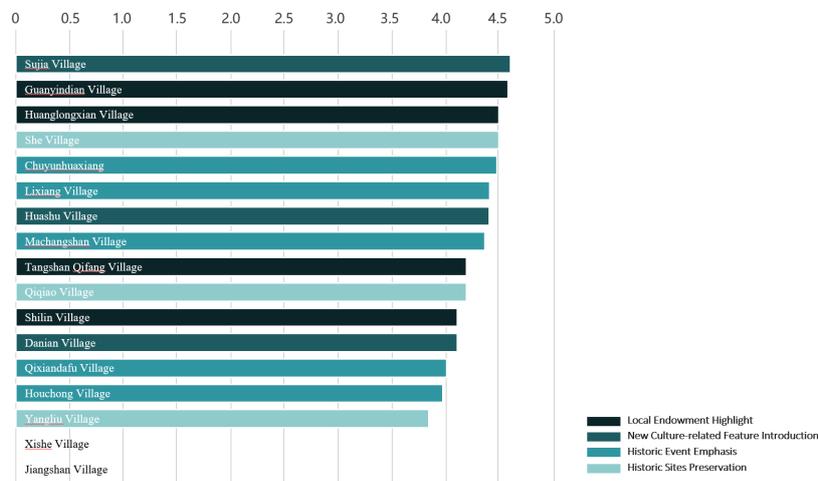


Figure 11: Ratings of culture featured rural tourism spots

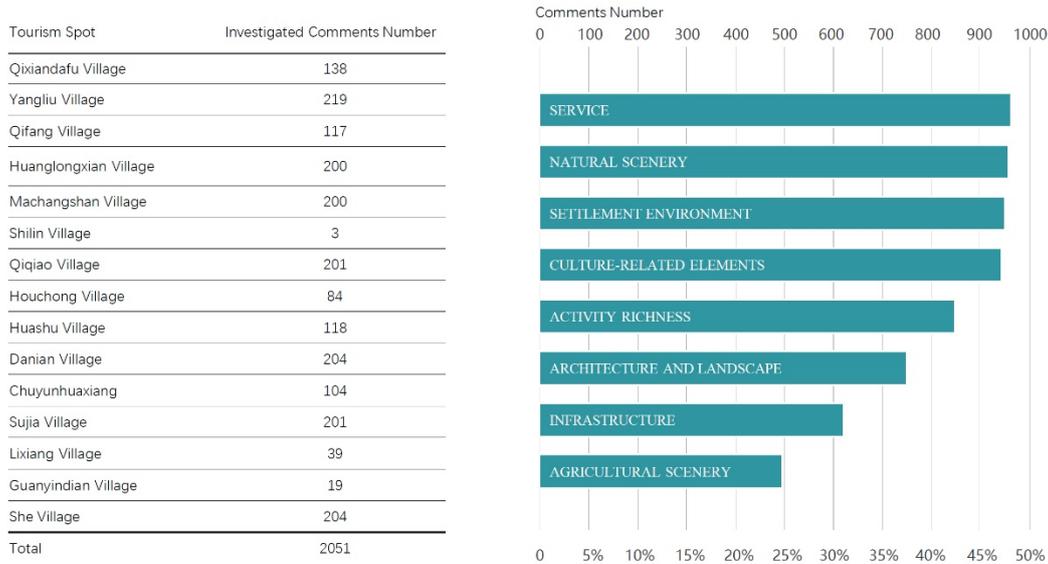


Figure 12: Visitor comments focuses

Common attributes can be found in villages with high rate, including improved infrastructure and facilities, clear selling points and accurate positioning. Meanwhile, some villages receive relatively low ratings and comments. Nearly 90 percent of poor reviews focus on infrastructure, service and activity richness, showing the most basic demand of travelers for rural tourism (Figure 13). In fact, culture emphasis or architecture design can hardly improve the tourism outcomes once those basic demands cannot be met.

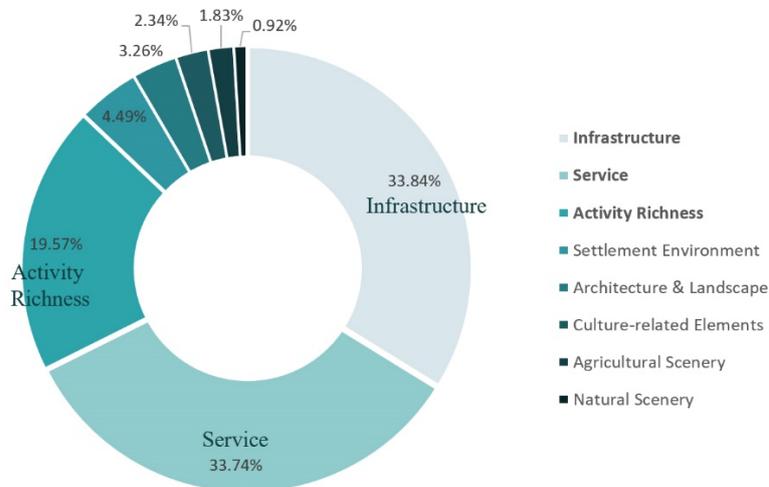


Figure 13: Focuses of Poor Reviews and Suggestions

It is possible to outline the common problems in current practices by analyzing poor reviews and villages with unsatisfying performance. The first and most obvious problem is the poor infrastructure and service level which seriously affect visitors' attitude towards rural tourism. Interviews show that some visitors disappointed by low-level tourism experience express their contempt for rural area and culture, claiming those to be just dilapidated with no worth for appreciation and preservation. Secondly, it is a pity to point out that rural culture is just a gimmick rather than focus in some villages, which means the core of those villages is still the outdated farmyard experience, showing little competitiveness to other categories. Finally, the misalignment between envisioned orientation and status quo strongly limits the development.

For instance, several projects put too much efforts on specific building reconstruction, yet without sufficient supporting facilities and services, it is hard to attract the public with only concepts or a single building.

6. Discussions and Conclusion

6.1 Rural authenticity preservation in tourism introduction

The ‘authenticity’ of countryside has always been a topic in rural renovation especially in actual renewal projects. On one hand, its importance cannot be denied as it carries not only the history and culture but also residents’ memory and faith. On the other hand, as the dominance of agricultural production in the suburban villages of large cities has disappeared, countryside can no longer and has no need to take on the role of agricultural production for the central city. With rural land and traditional value under tremendous impact, it is almost impossible stop the continuing decline of suburban rural areas even with top-down regulations.

Many scholars have criticized that tourism development may do some harm to rural authenticity. However, at present, the unsatisfying living condition and insufficient employment are further accelerating the depopulation and decline of suburban villages. The decaying suburban villages, though many of which are historically or culturally valuable to preserve, are disappearing under urbanization even before people realized their value, not to mention conscious rural authenticity preservation.

The introduction of rural tourism is a tested way for rural revitalization worldwide. Providing new economic growth points, reasonable rural tourism development can help rural population return and raise people’s awareness of rural history and culture, which eventually benefit the preservation of rural authenticity. Lixiang Village is an excellent example for a hollow-out village revitalizing through tourism introduction. Though being an important historic site for War of Resistance against Japan, Lixiang was not free from hollowing out and ageing. With tourism introduction started in 2016 focusing on cultural theme blending with original rural lifestyle, Lixiang has gradually come out of the status quo of desolation and depression, becoming a new tourism spot and an educational area.

In recognition of the significance of rural tourism development, considerable attention should be addressed to balance between the corresponding promotion and interruption. Tourism development which completely disregards rural authenticity can hardly result in satisfactory outcome hence they are usually unable to meet the images and demands of visitors who are attracted by rurality and authenticity. However, it is also impossible and senseless to completely maintain the original village appearance in tourism development in today’s China especially in suburbs of large cities. Sometimes the reckless insist of rural authenticity conservation may lead to pitfalls that limit the further development or cause original villagers to abandon their home since their basic needs are restricted. Though the original buildings might be preserved through this way, rural authenticity is somewhat disappearing as the customs, folks and lifestyle are lost along with the loss of native residents.

In actual tourism transformation practices, two phenomena that do more or less harm to rural authenticity should be alerted. First one is the mis-understanding and mis-adoption of rural culture. In general sense, rural culture excavation is helpful for culture heritage and rural authenticity preservation. However, ‘cultural’ symbols are blindly installed into some villages

to create cultural or historic theme parks. Still centered on basic tourism products, these projects are actually a great destruction of the authenticity of countryside and are also difficult to be economically successful.

The second problem are reflected in comments especially the negative ones. Although urban tourists are showing increasing interest on rural culture, architecture and landscape design in rural trips, the fundamental demands of tourism are still the first criteria. When these basic requirements, for instance, service, facility or activity richness, are not met, tourists are unwilling and unable to enjoy the rest assets, which greatly limits the in-depth and high-level development of tourism. What makes things worse, as public's attitude towards countryside remains to be 'poor, dirty and boring', the meaning and value of rurality and culture preservation cannot be acknowledged by the public especially in suburbs, hence rurality authenticity preservation will be half the effort.

To sum up, the preservation of rural authenticity in tourism introduction calls for a careful balance. Rurality preservation in physical appearance is essential, yet urban-standard facilities and services is the guarantee of tourism and other industry development. Finally, a well-established public participation mechanism is the invisible factor to ensure the sustainability of tourism, preserving the non-physical components of rural authenticity.

6.2 Conclusion and Limitations

By analyzing the history and current situation of tourism villages in Nanjing suburbs, this paper provides a more comprehensive review of culture preservation and promotion in tourism development. Strategies in terms of culture-related industry introduction, rural culture emphasis in appearance and multi-partnership management have been commonly acknowledged in current practices as useful way to preserve and promote rural culture. Infrastructure and service level, settlement environment and culture-related elements strongly affect the visitors' satisfaction and preference for rural culture featured tourist villages.

There are also some limitations calling for further and finer researches. The relatively concentrated observations might lead to ignorance of seasonal and holiday changes, and the Covid-19 epidemic and related policies may lead to accidental comments. Further researches could be focuses on the differences and underlying reasons for culture-featured tourism villages and other categories of rural tourism attractions with respects of distribution, performance and specific transformation strategies.

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