

Mechanism of Tourists' Happiness in Traditional Village Tourism: A Perspective Grounded in Nostalgia and Cultural Attachment

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Abstract In recent years, traditional villages have emerged as popular tourist destinations due to their distinctive resource value. Typically situated in remote and less developed areas, traditional villages boast primitive natural surroundings and rich historical and cultural heritage. These characteristics offer urban dwellers a temporary escape from the complexities of modern life, allowing them to experience physical and mental rejuvenation, mental relaxation, and overall happiness during their visit. By conducting a review of the existing literature concerning tourists' happiness in traditional villages, this study establishes a framework to understand tourists' happiness in traditional village tourism. Using the Qiangang ancient village in Conghua District, Guangzhou as a case study, the research examines the current state of rural characteristics, the establishment of cultural brands, and the promotion of the active utilization of ancient villages within the context of integrating culture, sports, tourism, and agriculture. Based on this analysis, the author proposes strategies to enhance tourists' happiness, including the preservation and development of rural characteristics, the promotion and preservation of local cultural attributes, and the collaborative advancement of culture, sports, tourism, and agriculture to engage key stakeholders actively.

Keywords Traditional village, Qiangang ancient village, Nostalgia, Cultural attachment, Happiness

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In March 2024, the United Nations published the *World Happiness Report* for the twelfth consecutive year. This report serves as a tool for governments to assess the global happiness levels, enhance their focus on happiness, and develop policies in alignment with these findings. The report presented at the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China emphasized the importance of utilizing the power granted by the Party and the people to promote the well-being and happiness of the populace. The report discusses the concept of “happiness” seven times, “well-being” three times, and “benefit” four times. This underscores the significance of prioritizing the happiness of individuals as a fundamental objective of the nation. Throughout history, happiness has consistently been regarded as the paramount objective for decision-makers to strive for and nurture.

Contemporary society has transitioned into an era characterized by urban dominance. In China, for instance, the urbanization rate among permanent residents had surged to 66% by 2023. This rapid urban growth has led to the emergence of several “urban diseases”, such as the threat of living environments, the adoption of fast-paced lifestyles, and significant life and work pressures, ultimately culminating in mental stress, anxiety, and other suboptimal health conditions. The emergence of COVID-19 in 2020 has exacerbated feelings of anxiety, stress,

and boredom^[1]. Given the growing prevalence of suboptimal health conditions and social psychological issues as outlined above, there is a heightened focus on the physical and mental health of individuals, particularly the happiness of tourists during their travel experiences. This has emerged as a significant area of inquiry in contemporary tourism research^[2-3].

Tourism plays a significant role in promoting the physical and mental health and happiness of individuals, with happiness industry holding a prominent status and serving a crucial social function^[4]. In recent years, traditional villages have emerged as popular tourist destinations due to their distinctive resource value. Distinguished from typical rural villages, traditional villages are defined as villages established earlier, possessing abundant traditional resources, significant historical, cultural, scientific, artistic, social, and economic worth, and warranting preservation^[5]. Typically situated in remote and less developed areas, traditional villages boast primitive natural surroundings and rich historical and cultural heritage. These characteristics offer urban dwellers a temporary escape from the complexities of modern life, allowing them to experience physical and mental rejuvenation, mental relaxation, and overall happiness during their visit^[6]. Most research on rural tourism primarily examines theories, current situation, strategies, and the mechanisms of rural tourism industry development to enhance the quality of life for

local residents. Limited attention has been given by scholars to exploring the factors contributing to tourists' happiness within the context of traditional village tourism^[3,7-8]. Hence, through a review of the current literature concerning the correlation between traditional villages and tourists' happiness, this study aims to construct a conceptual framework illustrating the factors contributing to tourists' happiness in traditional village tourism. Subsequently, it will utilize the case study of Qiangang ancient village in Conghua District, Guangzhou to investigate particular approaches for enhancing tourists' perception of happiness during traditional village tourism experiences. This research holds significant theoretical implications and practical value for the field.

1 Literature review

Alain de Botton contends that in the context of life being centered around the quest for happiness, few endeavors can encapsulate the fervor and conflicting emotions inherent in this pursuit as effectively as traveling does. Travel, regardless of its ambiguity, can convey an alternative significance to life beyond the arduous labor and efforts dedicated to earning a livelihood^[9]. Essentially, tourism is an activity through which individuals seek happiness, and the academic community generally maintains a widely accepted perspective on this matter—tourism has the potential to enhance life satisfaction^[8].

Against the backdrop of rapid economic growth and a rising urbanization rate, traditional villages offer a primitive and unspoiled living environment. The distinctive rural slow-life tourism experience they provide is increasingly sought after by travelers^[7]. "Having been trapped in a cage for a long time, people can finally return to nature with happy time." Urban dwellers seek temporary respite from their daily urban surroundings by visiting traditional village heritage sites. These sites offer visitors the opportunity to relive old memories or childhood experiences, fostering feelings of freedom, joy, happiness, and contentment^[10]. This positive emotional response enhances tourists' overall experience, making visits to traditional village heritage sites a source of happiness for tourists.

According to the definition of tourism activities, tourists typically depart from their regular place of residence to visit an unfamiliar environment. For tourists, one of the factors contributing to their enjoyment is the alteration of their usual surroundings. From a logical perspective on spatial variances, the majority of tourists opt to travel from urban areas to rural regions for leisure and relaxation, thereby facilitating a transformation of geographical space. This transition effectively alleviates pressure and promotes a relaxed mood. During rural travel, tourists have the opportunity to reconnect with nature, fostering inner peace^[7] and enhancing their sense of happiness^[3].

1.1 Rurality

The "rurality" of an unusual environment serves as the primary factor attracting tourists to rural tourism. It also functions as a space where tourists can find their nostalgia^[11]. Against the backdrop of the rapid urban economic growth, the bustling urban environment, the tangible pressures of work and daily life, and the fast-paced urban lifestyle collectively impose significant mental strain on city dwellers. Tourists typically opt for destinations that differ from the urban settings of their everyday lives, often favoring travel spots that evoke nostalgia, such as traditional villages. Traditional villages are typically situated in remote areas and maintain a primitive, leisurely lifestyle characterized by tranquility and uniqueness. These villages cater to tourists seeking a return to nature, providing an opportunity for visitors to find happiness through tourism^[12].

In the authentic rural setting, visitors have the opportunity to partake in distinctive experiences that diverge significantly from urban lifestyles. This includes a sense of familiarity with a life deeply entrenched in memory or

imagination. Such imaginative connections to past experiences or historical periods serve to enhance the sense of joy derived from tourism^[12]. The sentiment elicited in tourists when exposed to the destination environment of traditional village heritage sites encompasses feelings of nostalgia, attachment, and yearning for their hometown, the place of their past residence, and the envisioned life^[13]. Scholars classify this particular emotion as nostalgia, characterized by allure and aesthetically pleasing individuals or objects, contributing to the enhancement of tourists' overall sense of joy^[14].

The "rural" environment is commonly perceived as possessing nostalgic characteristics, offering tourists a setting to alleviate feelings of nostalgia and sadness^[13]. Individuals with a stronger sense of nostalgia tend to exhibit a greater inclination towards engaging in rural tourism^[15]. Those who experience nostalgic sentiments often seek to detach themselves from the rapid pace of contemporary life, yearning to revisit the past or immerse themselves in a more leisurely environment to find solace. Visiting traditional villages offers these individuals a temporary respite and emotional sanctuary, fulfilling their intrinsic travel desires and fostering emotional well-being^[16]. Consequently, this experience is likely to evoke positive emotions such as contentment, joy, gratitude, and a sense of comfort^[13,17].

1.2 Culture characteristics

Urban residents often aspire to experience the serene rural lifestyle, appreciating not only the pristine ecological surroundings and sensory pleasures of rural areas but also showing keen interest in the unique themes and features of tourist destinations. Moreover, they exhibit a strong curiosity about the local culture^[8]. The primary motivation for urban residents to visit rural areas is the rural cultural experience^[3]. Traditional villages stand out from ordinary ones due to their long history, distinctive rural architecture, and traditional local culture^[12]. These elements collectively contribute to the creation of unique local cultural characteristics and offer an ideal setting for the emotional rejuvenation and healing associated with rural tourism. The depiction of traditional village tourism scenes is likely to evoke feelings of nostalgia among tourists. This emotional response can have a positive impact on the cultural identity of the destination, leading to potential improvements in the physical and mental health of individuals. As a result, individuals may develop a more optimistic outlook^[18], ultimately fostering positive tourism

behaviors among tourists.

In previous research, scholars have identified that the outcome variables associated with place attachment encompass positive behavioral intentions and the happiness of tourists^[8]. Based on the theory of "affective cognitive evaluation", Wang Ping et al.^[19] utilized Sanping Village in Jing'an County, Jiangxi Province, as a case study to confirm that tourists' attachment to a place could enhance their happiness. This was achieved through the collection of data from rural boarding summer vacationers. Wu Di et al.^[20] used the Palace Museum as a case study to validate that various dimensions of tourists' attachment to a place have distinct effects on their happiness. The study found that the influence of place identity on happiness is both significant and crucial. It is evident that when tourists develop an emotional attachment to a destination, whether it is a natural or cultural site, their level of happiness is enhanced. In the tourism context of traditional villages, tourists have the opportunity to enhance their emotional bond with traditional villages, develop a cultural affinity towards them, and engage actively in tourism experiences by recognizing the "rurality" and "cultural characteristics" of the perceived environment of traditional villages. This, in turn, enables them to achieve various tourism objectives, including momentarily escaping the mundane aspects of life and work, enhancing interpersonal connections, and seeking continuous meaning in life^[8]. When tourists visit traditional villages, they have the opportunity to experience nature, embrace simplicity, relax their body and mind, and gain insights into the history, culture, and heritage of these ancient villages. This experience fosters an appreciation for rural life, enriches their understanding of different cultures, and provides a sense of meaning and solace through tourism. Consequently, various indicators of individual happiness, including physical health, personal development, quality of life, and social connections, can be significantly enhanced.

Based on the review and analysis of the aforementioned literature, this study posits that when tourists visit traditional villages, the rural setting and distinctive local culture of these villages evoke feelings of nostalgia and attachment to the destination culture, thereby augmenting their overall sense of happiness. The nostalgia and cultural attachment evoked by the traditional village circumstance are significant factors that may influence the happiness of tourists visiting such locations (Fig.1).

2 Development status of Qiangang ancient village

2.1 Basic situation of Qiangang ancient village

Qiangang ancient village, situated in the southeastern region of Taiping Town, Conghua District, Guangzhou, China, was established during the Song Dynasty. It serves as the residence for the descendants of Lu Xiufu, a renowned minister from the Southern Song Dynasty. With a history spanning over 800 years, the village stands as a testament to ancient heritage and cultural significance. The current pattern was initially constructed during the second year of Yongle (1404) in the Ming Dynasty, with further enhancements made during the Jiajing period of the same dynasty. The ancient village as a whole exhibits a distinctive fortress city pattern that dates back to the Ming Dynasty. The village is surrounded by a river, with gate towers and suspension bridges constructed in the east, south, west, and north. Additionally, the walls in the north and west have been fortified (Fig.2).

Qiangang ancient village is considered an “ancient culture museum” on the Conghua ancient road in Southern Guangdong Province. Influenced by the Guangfu culture and Hakka culture, its traditional village layout and architectural style exhibit a distinctive and unique character, possessing significant historical, cultural, artistic, scientific, and touristic value. The ancient village spans an area exceeding 50,000 m², with dimensions of approximately 1,300 m from east to west and 1,000 m from south to north. It is home to the Guangyu Ancestral Hall, renowned for housing relics from six different dynasties in one structure, and the Jiangcheng wooden carvings from the Daoguang Period in Guangzhou, known for its depiction of the “Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival of the Pearl River Delta”. There are a significant number of Guangfu residential buildings from the Ming and Qing Dynasties, as well as the Republic of China era, showcasing a blend of northern and southern cultures arranged in a lotus-like pattern (Fig.3).

Guangyu Ancestral Hall has been designated as a cultural relic protection unit by the Guangdong Provincial government. Moreover, it achieved the top position in the “UNESCO Asia Pacific Outstanding Project for Cultural Heritage Protection Award” in 2003. The historical significance of the Guangyu Ancestral Hall is primarily evident in the five verified maintenance records on the beam spine. These records comprehensively document the reconstruction of the Guangyu Ancestral Hall during different periods,

making it the only ancestral hall in China known to have five precise reconstruction records. *Guangzhou Jiangcheng Map* measures over 8 m in length and 30 cm in width, originating in the early years of the Daoguang era in the Qing Dynasty. The eaves, designed with relief and hollow carvings, depict landmarks such as the Pearl River Fort, Zhenhai Tower on Yuexiu Mountain, and Tianzi Pier. The map illustrates the bustling cityscape of Guangzhou, a prominent foreign trade hub prior to the Opium War.

The spatial layout of Qiangang ancient village follows a lotus-style design, characterized by a more haphazard four-sided orientation, as opposed to the Guangfu comb-type layout with clear directions and pathways. The gravel pathways within the village extend in various directions without a prominent main road guiding the way, leading to multiple intersections, hence earning the village the moniker of “maze village”. Most residential buildings are constructed using green brick and yellow mud, with limited use of traditional Lingnan building materials like granite and architectural

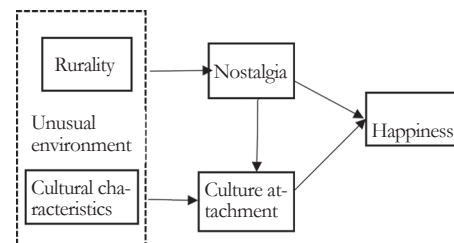


Fig.1 Mechanism of tourists' happiness in traditional villages



Note: a. Guangyu Ancestral Hall; b. Eastward people's canteen; c. Eastward watchtower; d. A corner of the ancient village.
Fig.3 Landscape of Qiangang ancient village (photo credit: <https://weibo.com/3186551413?tabtype=album>)

forms such as wok ear. This practice helps in the preservation of historical and cultural relics related to the migration of people from the north to the south.

2.2 Development status of Qiangang ancient village in the context of culture, sports, tourism, and agriculture integration

2.2.1 Status quo of rural character. Qiangang Village is located approximately 40 km from the center of Guangzhou. Similar to other traditional villages, it is characterized by its remote, simplistic, and tranquil environment. Visitors have the opportunity to experience a sense of serenity and escape from the urban hustle and bustle upon entering the village, almost as if they have traversed into a historical time capsule. Tourists visiting Qiangang ancient village can engage their senses in visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, and other



Fig.2 Layout of Qiangang ancient village (photo credit: <https://weibo.com/3186551413?tabtype=album>)

sensory experiences, allowing them to fully immerse themselves in the local ambiance. This immersion often evokes positive emotions such as relaxation, comfort, seclusion, and nostalgia. For instance, after the tour, certain tourists expressed a sentiment of nostalgia, stating that they feel as if they were returning to their hometown of memories, experiencing a sense of history and village life. Those with an affinity for nostalgia or an appreciation for historical remnants are likely to find this destination particularly appealing.

Upon visiting the ancient village, tourists may provide varying feedback despite some positive evaluations. Common comments include keywords such as vacant, dilapidated houses, incomplete repairs, ruins, abandonment, lack of inhabitants, resembling ruins, desolation, and dilapidation. The primary factor contributing to the distinctive atmosphere experienced by tourists in the ancient village is the lack of cohesion and autonomy among the villagers in terms of heritage preservation and tourism development. This is exacerbated by the unclear delineation of property rights, ownership, management rights, and profit rights related to the buildings, leading to challenges in the routine maintenance and repair of these structures. While significant efforts have been made in the meticulous restoration of cultural relics like the Guangyu Ancestral Hall and Lu Wei's former residence, other architectural remnants such as academies and residential buildings are showing signs of significant deterioration. Moreover, the rural ambiance of the ancient village lacks a "soul". The rurality that attracts tourists encompasses more than just the external appearance of residential structures and the tranquil rural living environment. Instead, they are primarily drawn to the nostalgia associated with traditional rural production and lifestyle, encompassing rural inhabitants and uncomplicated folk traditions, which constitute the essence and fundamental elements of rural characteristics. With the progression of time, the infrastructure of the ancient village, including roads, water, and electricity facilities, has become outdated, failing to adequately cater to the basic needs of the villagers. Consequently, villagers have started to relocate to neighboring villages, leading to the abandonment of the ancient village and a loss of its essence, resulting in a lack of vitality and community spirit.

2.2.2 Construction status of cultural brand. The tourism development of Qiangang ancient village relies not only on its rural resources and artistic conception but also on its intangible

cultural resources, which serve as significant attractions. Since UNESCO acknowledged the restoration and preservation efforts of Guangyu Ancestral Hall in 2003, there has been a growing recognition among different stakeholders of the historical and cultural importance and value of the ancient village. From the standpoint of the present developmental stage of ancient villages, the culture that possesses a particular allure to tourists primarily encompasses the national culture represented by the Guangyu Ancestral Hall, the defense culture of the fortress city preserved through the village's overall layout, the local folk culture exemplified by the public cultural edifices within the village, and the ancient post road culture.

(1) National culture and defensive culture of fortress cities. Qiangang predates Conghua. The Qiangang ancient village (Lu Family) was established by the descendants of the esteemed statesman Lu Xiufu in his honor, with a history that dates back over 800 years. As the descendants of the martyrs from the previous dynasty, the inhabitants of Qiangang village sought refuge here to safeguard their family. Consequently, the village features distinctive architectural elements and a defense system, such as the village river, surrounding gates, and intricate network of roads, which sets it apart from the typical structures found in the Lingnan region. During the Anti-Japanese War, Lu Rixin, the descendant of Lu Xiufu, organized numerous anti-Japanese self-defense forces at the Guangyu Ancestral Hall to engage in national defense battles and facilitate the safe evacuation of villagers. Visiting the Guangyu Ancestral Hall in Qiangang ancient village and exploring the streets and four-way gatehouses within the ancient village can evoke individuals' shared historical memory, feelings of nostalgia, and national pride. Additionally, it serves as a means of perpetuating the inheritance of traditional national culture.

(2) Characteristic folk culture. The majority of the inhabitants in the Qiangang ancient village are direct descendants of the Lu family and the Lu Xiufu family. The public meeting spaces in the ancient village encompass academies, communes, halls, and ancestral halls. Particularly noteworthy are the academies (such as Lanji Hall, Ancient Academy, and Mingjin Academy) and ancestral hall buildings (Guangyu Ancestral Hall, Shen Ancestral Hall, and Lu Ancestral Hall). These spaces serve as vital hubs in the lives of villagers, facilitating ethical education, promoting ancestral virtues in cultural ideologies, and contributing to knowledge dissemination. Furthermore, Qiangang ancient village preserves

certain cultural traditions with distinct local characteristics, including the celebration of Gaomiao King's birthday and unique marriage customs. Taking Gaomiao King's birthday as an example, the traditional "birthday" is a vibrant annual event in the Conghua area during ancient times. Both Qiangang residents and nearby villagers willingly engage in the King's birthday festivities. The event includes the customary ritual of returning the "paper for prayer" to Gaomiao, as well as unique Conghua local traditions in the evening, such as igniting a large basket of firecrackers.

(3) Ancient post road culture. Qiangang ancient post road was established in 2017 as one of the eight designated demonstration sections of ancient post roads in Guangdong Province. It is the closest ancient post road with historical and cultural significance in the vicinity of Guangzhou. According to the work titled *A Study of the Government Staging-posts Network in the Ming Dynasty*, there is an ancient post road that connects Guangzhou to Conghua. This route encompasses both the Qiangang ancient post road and the Liuxi River ancient waterway. Qiangang ancient village is situated at the western terminus of the Qiangang ancient post road and serves as a significant archaeological site associated with this historical route. Visits to Qiangang ancient village facilitate a deeper understanding of the cultural significance of the ancient post road and contribute to the preservation and promotion of the rich historical and cultural heritage of the Lingnan region.

The current state of building maintenance and repair in ancient villages imposes limitations on the tourist experience. When visitors explore these villages, they are often strongly influenced by the cultural elements associated with national culture and the defensive culture of fortress cities, as exemplified by sites such as Guangyu Ancestral Hall, Jiangcheng Map, Lingxiu Square, gatehouses, and residential alleys. However, there remains a notable deficiency in the exploration of historical allusions, distinctive folk culture, and the cultural significance of ancient post roads. Consequently, the visibility and impact of these villages are constrained, leading to a pressing challenge regarding the inheritance and promotion of their cultural heritage^[21].

2.2.3 Current situation of activated utilization. In 2006, the Guangyu Ancestral Hall was designated by the State Council as part of the sixth batch of national key cultural relics protection units. In 2014, Qiangang Village was recognized as one of the third batch of Chinese traditional villages.

The Nanyue Ancient Road Orienteering Contest was held at the Conghua Station in Qiangang Village in 2018. Furthermore, in 2023, Qiangang Village (Litchi) was included in the twelfth batch of the national “One Village, One Product” model villages and towns list. Since the Guangyu Ancestral Hall was awarded the first prize for UNESCO’s Outstanding Project for Cultural Heritage Protection in the Asia-Pacific Region in 2003, the Conghua District has implemented targeted restoration and protection efforts to revitalize the ancient village. Additionally, there has been a deliberate integration of resources from both the village and its surrounding areas to foster a new paradigm of integrated development encompassing culture, sports, tourism, and agriculture.

By leveraging the historical and cultural heritage embodied in Guangyu Ancestral Hall, as well as the resources associated with Chinese National Geographic indications, such as nuomici litchi and other local products, Qiangang Ancient Village has successfully integrated public welfare hiking activities with the Nanyue Ancient Post Road orienteering contest. This integration has facilitated the convergence of culture, sports, tourism, and agriculture, tailored to local conditions. Consequently, it has fostered the development of emerging business models such as cultural tourism, landscape culture, outdoor sports, and rural homestays. This initiative has effectively revitalized the resources of ancient post roads and traditional villages, thereby promoting the tourism development of distinctive ancient villages. Despite the positive impact of increased tourist traffic on the development of Qiangang ancient village, the village continues to encounter several challenges. Notably, the absence of sustainable tourism attractions has resulted in inadequate developmental initiatives. Additionally, the varying degrees of synergy in heritage protection efforts have contributed to a stagnation in the activation and utilization of cultural resources. Furthermore, the lack of traditional customs and the persistence of an agricultural-based economic structure have direct implications for the overall travel satisfaction experienced by tourists^[21].

3 Development strategy of Qiangang ancient village to enhance the happiness of tourists

This study posits that the happiness of tourists visiting Qiangang ancient village can be enhanced through various aspects, as illustrated in conjunction with the mechanism diagram of

tourist happiness in traditional villages derived from a comprehensive literature review (Fig.1) and the current development status of Qiangang ancient village.

3.1 Preservation and construction of rural characteristics

In the context of rural tourism experiences, nostalgia plays a pivotal role in shaping tourists’ happiness^[14]. In 2013, the Central Urbanization Work Conference of China articulated the notion that “residents should be able to see mountains and water and experience homesickness”, which encapsulates the fundamental atmospheric elements of the tourism experience. In the development of Qiangang ancient village, it is essential to prioritize the enhancement of tourist happiness by first establishing an environment characterized by authentic ecological features and a nostalgic ambiance.

To preserve and cultivate the original characteristics of rural areas, it is essential to emphasize the simplicity and natural environment that distinguishes these spaces from urban settings. The ancient village can be conceptualized as a paradise away from the chaos of the city, evoking a sense of nostalgia. Upon their arrival at the ancient village, tourists have the opportunity to either recollect their past experiences or fulfill their nostalgic sentiments. This experience facilitates a sense of relaxation and happiness that is often absent in their daily lives. The original ecological rural landscape can be developed by considering various elements such as air quality, water resources, and natural scenery, thereby fostering a profound artistic conception of rural life.

It is imperative to ensure the effective repair and maintenance of buildings with humanistic significance. In particular, attention must be given to the architectural features and facades, necessitating the use of local materials during the repair and maintenance processes. Adhering to the principle of restoring structures to their original state is essential for preserving the local characteristics and nostalgic aesthetic of these buildings. Furthermore, when designing new constructions, such as homestays, it is equally important to emphasize nostalgia and retro styles, thereby accentuating the distinctive qualities of the past.

The emphasis should be placed on healthy ingredients, particularly pure, natural green agricultural products that possess local characteristics. Notable examples include the national geographic protection indication for nuomici litchi (dried) and longan (dried), as well as rice and other similar products. The stimulation

of taste buds allows tourists to experience the authentic flavors of food ingredients, thereby evoking nostalgic memories of their childhood or the “taste of the countryside”.

Efforts must be undertaken to preserve the traditional state of rural life and the authentic atmosphere associated with it. The development of rural tourism generates increased employment opportunities for community residents, enhances local employment prospects for villagers, and encourages the return of the villagers of “hollow villages”. Consequently, it is capable of showcasing the traditional rural production and lifestyle to tourists. This includes the vibrant and heartfelt folk customs, villagers gathered under trees between settlements, curling wisps of smoke, flocks of poultry, and expansive golden rice fields. Together, these elements contribute to an authentic ecological representation of rural production and life.

It is essential to safeguard tourism infrastructure. The rustic and natural environment of rural areas relies on the establishment and maintenance of tourism infrastructure and basic reception facilities as a fundamental prerequisite. A well-developed foundation and adequate reception facilities can offer tourists a relaxed and comfortable experience environment^[3]. It is essential to uphold the cleanliness and hygiene of ancient villages. Additionally, it is important to regularly maintain and update the guidance and identification systems. To enhance the overall appearance of the village and improve the basic living conditions within the ancient village, it is recommended that buildings with potential safety hazards and the surrounding ponds should be repaired.

3.2 Preservation and dissemination of local cultural characteristics

Traditional culture constitutes the fundamental essence of traditional villages. During the process of urbanization, it is imperative to not only safeguard the ecological environment, characterized by pristine waters and verdant mountains, but also to preserve the rich traditional culture and maintain the historical continuity^[13]. The Qiangang ancient village offers a rich variety of cultural types that can attract tourists. However, there is a deficiency in the effective dissemination of these diverse cultures. It is essential to enhance the popularity and influence of these cultural elements in order to foster a sense of attachment among tourists.

First, it is essential to enable the younger generation of villagers to recognize the significance of village culture. This awareness

will encourage them to actively engage in the preservation and exploration of the village's diverse cultural heritage in their daily lives and during festival activities, thereby ensuring the sustainability of cultural transmission. Traditional customs and cultural activities associated with festivals can be perpetuated through communal gathering spaces, such as ancestral halls, public areas within villages, and historical exhibition halls. By engaging in traditional ceremonies, a greater number of young villagers and tourists can gain insight into the village's cultural heritage and customs, thereby contributing to the objective of restoring cultural confidence^[14]. Furthermore, in addition to providing tourists with memorable rural experiences, these activities can enhance the cultural connection felt by both villagers and visitors.

Furthermore, we can utilize the existing ancestral halls, academies, gatehouses, as well as the newly constructed village history hall, literature and history hall, and cultural activity center to perpetuate the village's national culture and promote the cultural heritage associated with the village's fortress city defense. The existing structures should strive to preserve their authenticity in order to sustain the cultural elements of the village that reflect its agrarian and literary heritage. This dual emphasis on agriculture and education should be celebrated and disseminated through various channels, including the village history hall, informational displays, social media, and cultural and creative products. By leveraging historical allusions and local legends, these efforts aim to enhance the core cultural influence of the village and revitalize its cultural dynamism. The cultural transmission mechanisms within ancient villages can be enhanced through the implementation of advanced interpretive systems. By utilizing intelligent explanations and technologies such as augmented reality (AR)^[13], information regarding residential characteristics, customary practices, and historical trade routes can be effectively conveyed. This approach fosters a deeper cultural connection for tourists to the site, thereby enhancing their overall sense of well-being and satisfaction.

In the context of the enduring legacy of ancient post road culture, the integration of sports events can effectively underscore the thematic attributes of traditional villages, specifically the concept of "ancient post road + sports health". Through sports events, the unique culture and characteristics of Qiangang ancient village can be prominently showcased, thereby enriching the immersive experience of

tourists and participants and fostering a stronger sense of identity associated with the ancient village.

3.3 Integrated development of culture, sports, tourism, and agriculture to mobilize the proactive engagement of key stakeholders

The integration of culture, sports, tourism, and agriculture not only addresses the increasing demands of individuals for an improved quality of life but also facilitates the exploration and implementation of creative transformation and innovative development of esteemed traditional culture. To attain sustainable development in Qiangang ancient village and establish it as a destination for physical and mental rejuvenation for visitors, the integrated advancement of culture, sports, tourism, and agriculture is essential. Culture, sports, tourism, and agriculture serve as foundational elements that can drive the growth of the tourism industry, thereby offering tourists enhanced emotional benefits, particularly in terms of happiness.

The experience of visiting traditional villages, characterized by a combination of cultural experience and ancient village sightseeing tour, effectively communicates the historical and cultural significance of Qiangang ancient village to visitors. This approach allows visitors to engage with the folk customs of the Qiangang village—Inheriting family and culture through reading and loyalty and filial piety. The integration of rural health, characteristic agricultural experiences such as picking, and agricultural-themed activities not only enables tourists to connect with nature and appreciate a return to simplicity, but also allows them to engage more profoundly with the lifestyle of rural residents. This engagement enhances their overall experience and sense of fulfillment. The integration strategy of ancient post road and outdoor sports can leverage outdoor sports events, hiking, cultural festivals, and various other activities. This approach not only enables tourists to engage in physical activities that promote their health but also offers them a unique opportunity to gain a profound understanding of the historical and cultural significance of the ancient post road and the surrounding ancient villages. In this process, tourists experience various benefits, including improved physical health, enhanced personal learning, increased life satisfaction, and better interpersonal relationships. These benefits contribute to varying degrees of enhancement in indicators of happiness.

In addition to the government serving as the primary entity facilitating the integration

of various departments and industries, the collaborative advancement of culture, sports, tourism, and agriculture necessitates the collective involvement of society as a whole, particularly the proactive engagement of key stakeholders. First, tourists should prioritize active engagement in the industrial linkage with traditional villages as a central focus. Amid the pressures of daily life and work, it is essential for tourists to explore and comprehend ancient villages and historic post roads, such as Qiangang village, which are rich in historical and cultural heritage. By visiting these ancient villages, participating in sports activities, and engaging in unique agricultural projects, tourists can gain a profound appreciation for the intrinsic value of preserving traditional ancient structures. This engagement fosters a sense of regional and cultural identity, thereby enhancing individual well-being and promoting subsequent positive behavioral intentions, including environmental responsibility and word-of-mouth advocacy. Second, it is essential to emphasize community participation, co-construction, and sharing. An effective endogenous development model is crucial for achieving long-term sustainable development. Relying solely on government-led financial support or short-term investments from developers will not ensure the sustainability of ancient village development. Community residents, particularly the younger generation, should engage actively in the development of tourism and contribute suggestions regarding various aspects such as service reception, homestay management, culinary development, the deep processing of agricultural and ancillary products, as well as the interpretation and promotion of ancient village culture. This involvement not only has the potential to enhance economic income but, more significantly, fosters active and amicable interactions between hosts and tourists throughout the service process. Such interactions can enhance tourists' perceptions of emotional and social value, thereby cultivating a sense of happiness, affinity, integration, and identity among visitors^[13]. When tourists' perceptions of positive emotions are heightened, their attachment to the tourist destination is likely to increase. This strengthened attachment, in turn, enhances their overall sense of happiness and contributes to the sustainable development of the tourist destination.

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