

Rural Journey: A Rural Tourism Planning Platform

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Abstract: The report from the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China highlighted the comprehensive advancement of rural revitalization by maintaining the priority of agricultural and rural development, consolidating and expanding the achievements of poverty alleviation, accelerating the construction of a strong agricultural country, and solidly promoting the revitalization of rural industries, talent, culture, ecology, and organizations. Rural Journey is a rural tourism planning platform designed specifically for rural traveling that aims to better integrate the three main groups of travel planners, customers, and villagers. It provides a platform for those aspiring to become travel planners and allows local villagers to join in serving travelers, adding distinctiveness to their services. Vigorously developing rural revitalization through this platform can expand income sources for residents and contribute to local poverty alleviation and income creation. The platform emphasizes manual services to address the inaccessibility of the elderly and youth in using online software by offering more detailed, one-on-one services to better meet the diverse requirements and preferences of travelers. The platform can create personalized travel plans tailored to different requirements by understanding the users better. Travel planners conduct comprehensive planning to develop optimal solutions, reducing financial expenditure and innovating a model for travel planning in rural areas.

Keywords: Rural revitalization; Tourism planning platform; Travel planners; Rural areas; Poverty alleviation; Income creation

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1. Introduction

The comprehensive advancement of rural revitalization is in line with the development strategy proposed in the report from the 20th National Congress, which seeks to reduce the disparity between rural and urban areas by vigorously developing the tourism industry ^[1]. Rural areas must thrive first for the nation to rejuvenate. The Rural Journey is a platform for those who are eager to become travel planners but struggle to find such opportunities. For instance, university students interested in travel planning and possessing some fundamental skills could take on tasks commensurate with their abilities and work part-time on the Rural Journey platform,

thereby broadening their employment prospects.

Government policies strongly support the rural revitalization effort. In 2016, the State Council held an executive meeting to pass the 13th Five-Year Plan for employment promotion, aiming to stabilize and expand employment and build a high-quality workforce, while also increasing further efforts to ensure the basic livelihood of disadvantaged groups. By leveraging local villagers' intimate knowledge of local attractions, specialty foods, convenient transportation, and optimal pricing, these insights can be used as unique selling points to assist travel planners in creating distinctive strategies and serving as local guides for tourists^[2-3].

2. Discussion on the concept of travel planning

2.1. Consumer perspective

Travel planners meticulously arrange trips for customers, including selecting rural destinations, advising on and planning tickets, accommodations, and so on, thus providing a planning service for travelers. The service process is listed below.

The travel planners would understand customer needs by inquiring about the customer's contact information, number of travelers, travel dates, the specific itinerary of attractions, reception standards, transportation requirements, the identity of the guests, and any other requests. Additionally, the travel planners would confirm group details by explaining the methods and locations of group reception, guiding arrangements, negotiating issues related to the reception settlement, and finalizing the details of the group, which include complimentary items and shopping arrangements. The travel planning platform could also book accommodations, dining reservations, guides, and transportation for the customers. The travel planners will also provide the itinerary and guide, explain the precautions for the group, and resolve dining, housing, and settlement issues. After the consumer and the travel planner jointly finalize the travel plan and complete the order transaction, the customer service provides after-sales service by paying attention to subsequent potential issues and resolving them. Through an integrated online service approach, travelers can save planning time and avoid the troubles they encounter when planning on their own, by providing them with the best options and travel experience and making consumers feel comfortable and assured.

2.2. Travel planners perspective

The entire population can join the travel planning industry through the platform, including college graduates and social workers. The current development status of travel planners in the tourism industry, contemporary career choices regarding travel planners, as well as the prospects and talent demand for travel planners, were studied. Once travel planners pass the assessment of the Rural Journey platform, they can work and take orders on the platform to serve consumers^[4-5]. The assessment content for travel planners includes the following.

Travel planners need to grasp the development trends of the current tourism market and the needs of contemporary travelers, and understand the pros and cons of each city. Moreover, travel planners need to have strong professional abilities, including the preparation of tourism arrangements, planning, and marketing schemes. They also need to possess strong writing skills to clearly and accurately express travel plans and suggestions. Additionally, travel planners need to be involved in project planning, thematic research, and case studies to accumulate practical experience and enhance professional capabilities. Travel planners also need to have strong communication and coordination skills to interact effectively with business partners and accurately grasp their needs. They should also maintain a good service attitude to provide quality customer service. In addition, travel planners need to have some project management experience, be able to assist the project manager in planning and dividing tasks, and be responsible for communication and coordination within the

project team and between the team and the implementer.

2.3. Rural revitalization perspective

Villagers can join the efforts to revitalize the countryside. Shifoyicun and Banlashanzicun are two villages in Shenyang's Shenbei New District and Faku County, respectively, both rich in natural and cultural resources, making them highly suitable for developing rural tourism. Local villagers can serve as tour guides, providing tourists with customized services such as itinerary planning, attraction recommendations, and specialty culinary experiences ^[6-8]. This not only offers a travel experience that is closer to the local culture and characteristics but also helps rural residents increase their income. By integrating local tourism resources and improving accommodations, dining, and leisure facilities within the village, the rural tourism industry can be gradually expanded. Establishing a rural tourism project and attracting participation from relevant entities in measures such as naming, setting up signs, and precisely positioning rural tourism spots can enhance the popularity and influence of the rural tourism industry.

2.4. User information database perspective

A tourism resource information database can also provide effective market analysis and decision-support for tourism practitioners, helping them better understand the demands and trends of the tourism market, and develop more scientifically sound tourism products and services. Moreover, the tourism resource information database can offer robust data support to government departments, assisting them in better understanding the development status and issues within the tourism industry to formulate more effective policies and measures to promote the healthy and orderly growth of tourism. In constructing the tourism resource information database, it is crucial to fully consider the accuracy, completeness, and timeliness of the data, employing scientific methods for data collection, processing, and management to ensure the reliability and practicality of the database ^[8-9]. Additionally, enhancing the security of the database is vital to ensure that the information of tourists and industry workers is not compromised or misused. Thus, a solid foundation and strong assurance for the development of the tourism industry can be achieved by establishing a high-quality tourism resource information database.

3. Summary

Figure 1 shows the workflow of the Rural Journey platform. By designing and establishing the Rural Journey platform, travelers are connected with local villagers, facilitating the exchange of travel experiences and needs. This approach addresses the issue of low employment rates among travel planners and the challenges faced by nonprofessionals seeking employment. Not only does it increase job opportunities for travel planners, but it also encourages more people to join the industry ^[3]. This model enhances interaction between travelers and locals, drives the growth of rural tourism, and increases income and employment opportunities for residents. It also enriches the travel experience, offering a deeper understanding of local culture. This is beneficial for increasing market recognition and social influence of the rural tourism industry

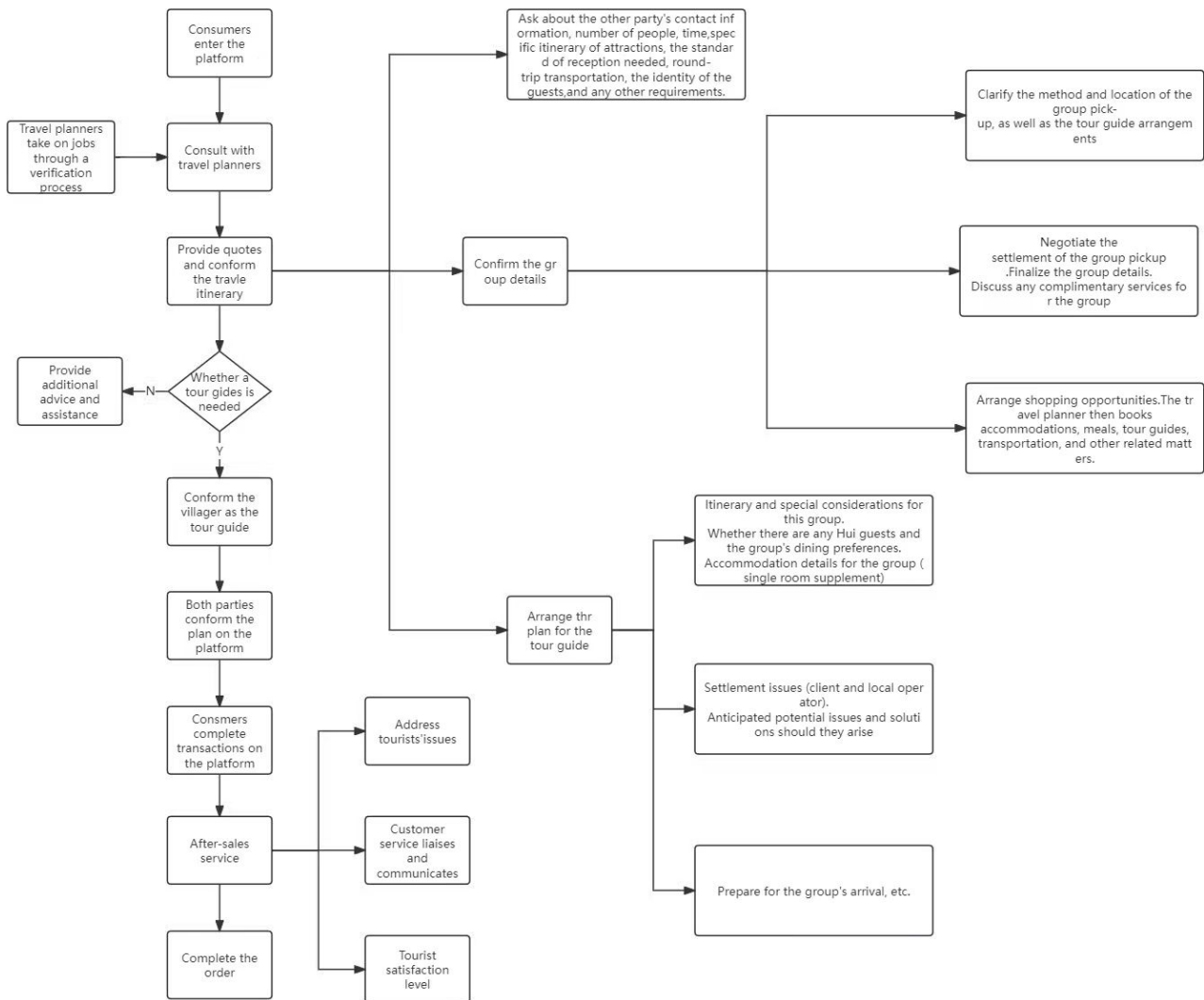


Figure 1. Platform construction path

Moreover, villagers can leverage their resources to showcase local uniqueness, thereby diversifying their income streams. By acting as guides, they can introduce history, attractions, and cuisine, enhancing visitors' appreciation of rural life. Additionally, they can develop agritourism, handicrafts, and agricultural product sales to further expand their economic activities. Through these initiatives, villagers can prosper independently, achieving the goals of rural revitalization [8]. Environmental and ecological protection must also be strengthened to enhance the overall quality and attractiveness of rural areas to draw more visitors. With the promotion and application of the Rural Journey travel planning platform, tourism can be integrated with agriculture to advance the rural revitalization strategy and achieve the goal of increasing farmers' incomes. This benefits not only rural economic development but also poverty alleviation among farmers, contributing to stable and harmonious rural societal growth.

The Rural Journey platform offers one-on-one fully manual services, where travel planners can help address the difficulties faced by certain groups when traveling. For the elderly who may not be familiar with the internet, online purchasing, and navigation, they can communicate with travel planners to express their needs and budget, allowing the planners to tailor travel plans for them, thus solving their travel challenges. Moreover, those who have decision-making difficulties or are indecisive about their choices can receive professional

advice and guidance through interaction with travel planners to help them make decisions and choose the right travel routes and activities that suit them, alleviating their concerns. The manual service provided by the travel planners on the Rural Journey platform can offer more personalized and professional travel planning to meet the diverse needs of different groups, resolve their travel difficulties, enhance their interest in tourism, and promote the development of the tourism industry.

Through data analysis and market research, the tourism platform can provide valuable market insights for tourism-related businesses, helping them devise more precise marketing strategies and product positioning. This contributes to enhancing the market competitiveness of businesses and attracting more user attention. Additionally, users can also benefit by accessing travel products and services that better meet their needs through the platform. The tourism platform can assist users in obtaining travel inspiration and suggestions, providing personalized travel planning, and promoting tourism products and destinations, while offering data analysis and market research support for tourism enterprises. Such a platform plays an important role in improving the convenience and satisfaction of traveling, as well as in promoting the development of the tourism industry^[9].

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Author contributions

Study idea conceptualization: Shiman Zhang, Yuhang Li, Yuexuan Li, Ying Li

Study research: Shiman Zhang, Yuhang Li

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