

# Strategy Research on Constructing Western Rural Nature Amusement Cottage Based on SWOT Analysis

Shi Ailing<sup>1,a,\*</sup>, Li Xin<sup>1,b</sup>

<sup>1</sup>College of Education, Lanzhou University of Arts and Science, Lanzhou, China

<sup>a</sup>sailing317@163.com, <sup>b</sup>1564545569@qq.com

\*Corresponding author

**Abstract:** This study focuses on constructing the “Nature-Amusement Cottage” rural tourism project in Liping Village, Xihe County, Longnan City, Gansu Province. Integrating questionnaire data and adopting the SWOT analysis method, the current situation of the village’s development is explored, highlighting the advantages, disadvantages, opportunities, and threats of establishing the “Nature-Amusement Cottage” in the village. The results show that the construction of the “Nature-Amusement Cottage” in the village has resource and cultural advantages, but also faces challenges in terms of scale and facilities. In response to the problems faced by the development of the “Nature-Amusement Cottage”, development strategies are developed from four dimensions: improvement, branding, pricing, and channels, which is expected to enhance the competitiveness of the project and achieve coordinated development between rural tourism and local economy.

**Keywords:** Development Strategies, SWOT Analysis, Tourist Experience, Rural Tourism

## 1. Introduction

Under the backdrop of the rural revitalization strategy, rural tourism has become an important driving force for promoting rural economic development and increasing farmers’ income. The introduction of policies such as the “Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Sustainable Development of Rural Tourism” has created a favorable policy environment for rural tourism projects<sup>[1]</sup>. The improvement of urban residents’ living standards has led to an increasing demand for returning to nature and experiencing rural life. As a result, integrated rural tourism projects such as “Nature-Amusement Cottage” have emerged. Conducting related research can enrich the theoretical content of rural tourism at the micro level, and in practice, it is helpful for the scientific planning and operation of the projects, promoting rural economic development, facilitating rural revitalization, and enhancing tourists’ environmental awareness<sup>[2]</sup>. This project aims to attract target customers such as nature enthusiasts, provide distinctive products and high-quality services, carry out brand building and multi-channel marketing, and achieve the sustainable development goals of ecological protection, community participation and cultural inheritance. Research on “homestay-agritainment” destinations both domestically and internationally mainly focuses on their roles in rural revitalization, enhancement of tourism experience, community participation, cultural exploration and ecological environmental protection. It also pays attention to existing problems and proposes countermeasures<sup>[3]</sup>. This study adopts the SWOT analysis method and questionnaire survey method to assess the feasibility and profit potential of the “Nature-Amusement Cottage” project, providing a basis for the development of the project.

## 2. SWOT Analysis of the Current Development Status of “Nature-Amusement Cottage”

The SWOT analysis method is often used to analyze the current development status of rural homestays and agritourism industry development<sup>[4,5]</sup>. This section conducts a SWOT analysis of the “Nature-Amusement Cottage” by examining its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats<sup>[6]</sup>. Clearly identify the problems it faces in its development, providing a foundation for the formulation of subsequent strategies.

**2.1. Strengths**

Firstly, there are the picturesque rural environments and the charming natural resources. “Nature-Amusement Cottage” is located in Liping Village, Heba town, Xihe county, Longnan city, Gansu province. It is situated in the upper reaches of the Xihanshui river, a tributary of the Yangtze river. The terrain here is characterized by both ridges, mounds, and gullies, as well as flat and wide areas. For instance, the northern river valley and the Liangmao mountainous area have “gentle surface undulations and fertile soil”, while the southeastern mountainous forest area is crisscrossed with peaks and ridges. Liping Village is located along the Yangshui River or its tributaries, belonging to a shallow hilly loess ridge and mound terrain, with relatively gentle terrain and wide river valleys, suitable for building guesthouses and leisure facilities. The average altitude of this area is 1692 meters, and it has a warm temperate semi-humid climate, with an average annual temperature of around 8.4°C. The rural environment we have chosen is beautiful and can provide tourists with a peaceful and comfortable living environment. The guesthouses are small in scale and can create a warm family atmosphere. The hosts can provide attentive services and also help tourists understand the local cultural characteristics.

Secondly, there are rich farming experiences and authentic farm cuisine. The farm stay offers a variety of farming activities, such as vegetable picking and farm work, allowing tourists to experience the fun of rural life. The farm cuisine uses fresh ingredients and has local characteristics, meeting tourists’ expectations for rural food (almost all customers feel that the taste and variety of dishes at farm stays can meet their and their family’s needs, as shown in Figure 1).

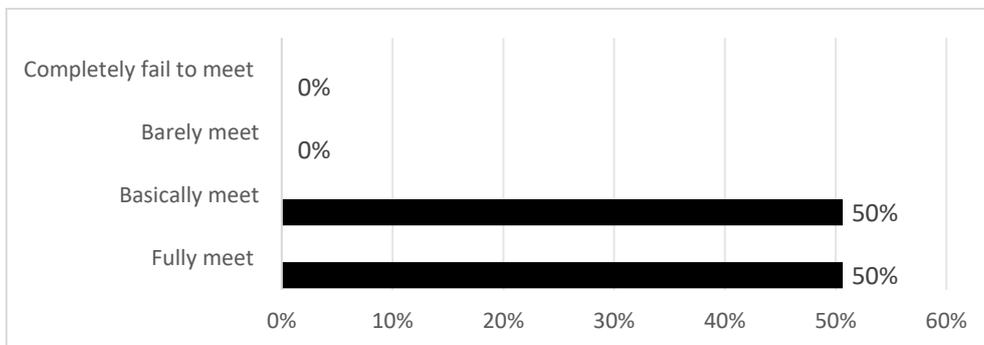


Figure 1: Tourists’ satisfaction with the dishes served at rural inns.

Thirdly, Liping Village can provide sufficient housing for guesthouse renovation. The village has a large number of rural houses, many of which are left idle due to the outflow of young migrant workers..

Fourthly, there are reasonably planned internal spaces and functional areas of the guesthouses. The existing operating guesthouse sites are two-story tile-roof buildings, with a “upper house and lower restaurant” structure. The internal areas of the guesthouses are fully equipped with living, dining, entertainment, office spaces and facilities. There are also public rest areas, book lending stations and other functional areas. Outside, there is a fruit and vegetable picking garden for tourists to visit and experience.

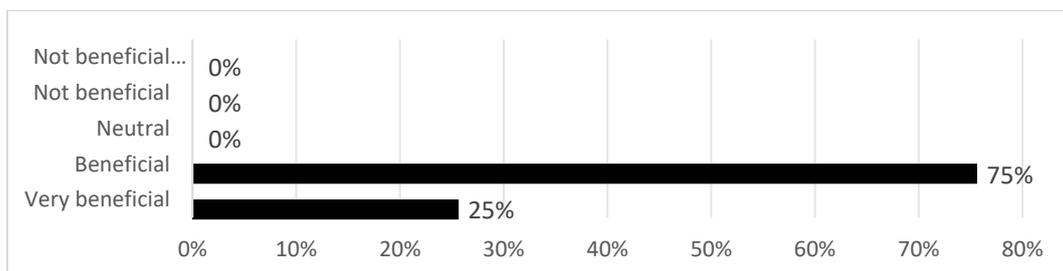


Figure 2: Tourists’ feedback on whether “Nature-Amusement Cottage” enhances understanding of local culture.

Fifthly, strong support from local culture provide a solid foundation<sup>[7]</sup>. Xihe county boasts rich local cultures such as Qiqiao Culture, Sheepskin Fan Dance, and Qin Opera. It is the birthplace of the human ancestor Fuxi and the homeland of the Qiuchi State. Tourists generally believe that visiting here is helpful for understanding the local culture (almost all customers who have visited the “Nature-Amusement Cottage” feel that coming here is beneficial for understanding the local culture, as

shown in Figure 2).

**2.2. Weaknesses**

Firstly, there are issues regarding the standardization of the scale and service quality of homestays. For instance, homestays are usually small in size and have limited reception capacity, making it difficult for them to accommodate large-scale team activities. Moreover, the service quality is influenced by the personal abilities and experience of the hosts, lacking a unified standard.

Secondly, some homestays have relatively simple facilities and are unable to provide high-end services. Additionally, the project has a low level of popularity, making marketing and promotion challenging. It is necessary to utilize various channels to enhance its visibility.

Thirdly, homestays exhibit a distinct seasonal characteristic<sup>[8]</sup>. For example, during peak seasons there may be a shortage of supply, while in off-peak seasons there might be insufficient tourist demand, which poses a certain degree of challenge to the sustainability of the business.

**2.3. Opportunities**

Firstly, deepening of nature education and ecological study tours is in line with tourists’ demands. The data shows that approximately 90% of tourists either hope or strongly hope to have more nature education activities (as shown in Figure 3). Develop “ecological study tour packages”, combine seasonal themes to attract schools, families and environmental protection groups to experience the characteristics of the “Nature-Amusement Cottage”.

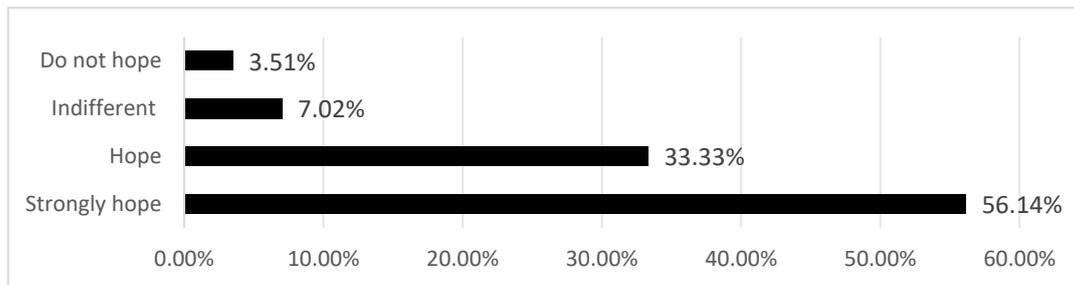


Figure 3: Tourists’ demand for nature education activities in agritainment..

Secondly, opportunities are brought by policy linkage. When the local government promotes eco-tourism or rural revitalization projects, “Nature-Amusement Cottage” can apply for special subsidies or cooperative resources, thereby reducing development costs.

Thirdly, there is great potential in family economy and family vacations<sup>[9]</sup>. For the family travel group, we design activities such as “farming experience camps” and collaborate with nearby schools and educational institutions to establish a weekend short-distance vacation brand. Based on questionnaire data, we introduce a “two-day, one-night family package” to enhance tourist spending potential (most parent-child travelers choose to come to the “Nature-Amusement Cottage” because of the rich parent-child activities, as shown in Figure 4).

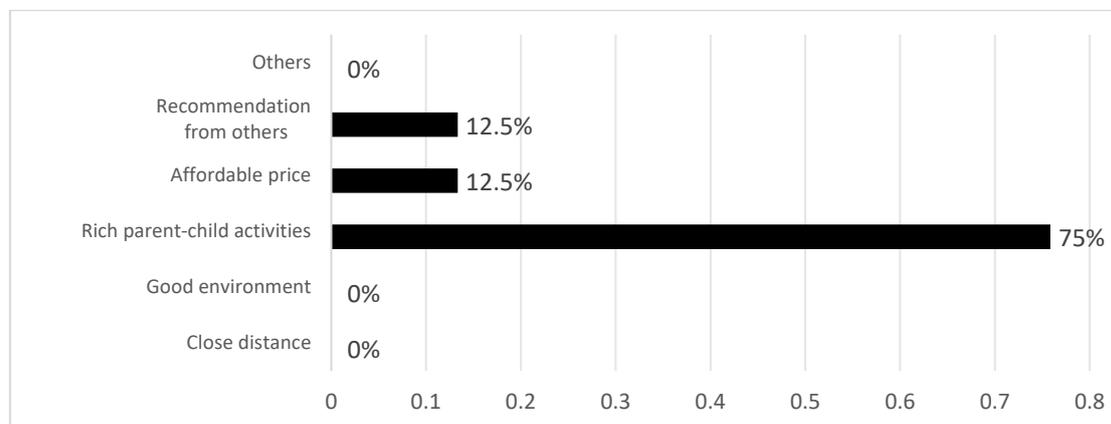


Figure 4: Reasons why parent-child travel customers choose “Nature-Amusement Cottage”

Fourthly, the role of photography and social media in attracting traffic stands out. We can leverage tourists' recognition of natural scenery to create "internet-famous check-in spots", organize photography competitions, attract photography enthusiasts and social media users for spontaneous dissemination, and add related services or collaborate with photography institutions to launch themed tours.

Fifthly, integration of surrounding tourism resources is great potential. Under the main transportation mode of self-driving, we can combine surrounding scenic spots, orchards, and guesthouses to form an "ecotourism loop", share tourist flows, and enhance regional attractiveness.

#### **2.4. Threats**

Firstly, the risk of homogenization in market competition and the corresponding strategies deserve attention<sup>[10]</sup>. If neighboring agritourism quickly replicates the models of natural education and parent-child activities models, "Nature-Amusement Cottage" needs to build competitive barriers through "differentiated content". At the same time, it is necessary to balance quality upgrades and pricing strategies to avoid low-price competition.

Secondly, fluctuations in customer experience and reputation exist. Problems such as low dining satisfaction and outdated facilities may lead to the spread of negative reviews, especially in an era where social media is so advanced, and negative feedback spreads rapidly. The frequency of repeat purchases for parent-child trips and photography groups is low, and it is necessary to continue developing new activities to maintain attractiveness.

Thirdly, there are challenges in balancing operational costs and revenue. This is specifically manifested as: upgrading facilities requires a large amount of funds, but tourists' willingness to pay is limited, which poses a risk of high investment and low return; the number of visitors is greatly affected by weather and holidays, which requires the development of special activities in off-peak seasons to balance business income and expenses.

Fourthly, there are uncontrollable factors in the external environment, such as excessive development, which may damage the surrounding natural environment and lead to a decrease in tourist experience; Meanwhile, there is also a risk of policy restrictions that could lead to tightening of local environmental regulations, thereby increasing compliance costs.

### **3. Analysis of the Development and Marketing Strategy of the "Nature-Amusement Cottage" Industry**

In response to the problems faced by the development of "Nature-Amusement Cottage" mentioned earlier, the following strategies will be formulated from four aspects, that is, improvement, brand, pricing, and distribution channels<sup>[11]</sup>.

#### **3.1. Enhancement Strategy**

Firstly, unify the style and layout of homestay buildings and rural tourism facilities. Based on the cultural characteristics, natural landscapes, and local customs of Liping Village in Xihe County, the unified architectural and decorative style is determined with the characteristics of Qiqiao and Sheepskin Fans as the basis, creating a rural manor style. Considering the functional requirements of homestays and rural tourism, the public leisure area, entertainment area, etc. should be established to ensure their independence and organic integration.

Secondly, unify infrastructure and supporting facilities. In terms of accommodation facilities, standardize the quality and style of bedding and furniture, and standardize the standards for bathroom fixtures and toiletries. In terms of catering facilities, kitchen equipment and tableware are configured according to unified hygiene and quality standards, while dining tables, chairs, and decorations reflect a unified style. Leisure and entertainment facilities are planned and constructed based on overall positioning and target customer groups, equipped with uniform style products. Unified procedures and standards are established for reception services, and staff members dress uniformly and use standardized language. In terms of safety and sanitation facilities, fire and monitoring equipment should be uniformly equipped, safety signs and evacuation route instructions should be set up, garbage bins and sewage treatment facilities should be set up according to standards, and regular cleaning and disinfection should be carried out.

### 3.2. Brand Strategy

The brand name is “Nature-Amusement Cottage”, and the promotional slogan is “stay in the mountains and waters, dine in the farmyard”. It highlights naturalness, comfort and distinctive experiences. The brand image is conceived from aspects such as rural style, warm atmosphere and unique activities, and is applied to the architectural appearance, promotional materials, and staff uniforms. Unified online and offline marketing channels are utilized for promotion, such as establishing an official website, social media accounts, participating in tourism exhibitions, etc., and integrating special resources for publicity.

### 3.3. Pricing Strategy

Firstly, cost-oriented pricing adopts the cost-plus pricing method. The cost-plus pricing method involves calculating all costs and adding the expected profit to determine the final price. For example, if the cost is 100 yuan and the expected profit margin is 30%, the price would be 130 yuan. The target profit pricing method calculates prices based on the total investment amount, expected sales volume, and target profit. Assuming an investment of 1 million and an expected reception of 1000 people per year, with a target profit of 200000 yuan, a profit of 200 yuan per person per visit needs to be achieved, and the price is determined based on the cost.

Secondly, demand-oriented pricing focuses on consumers’ needs. The value-based pricing method is based on consumers’ perception of the value of the experience and service. If the guesthouse is beautifully decorated, has excellent service, and has a beautiful surrounding environment, consumers may consider it to have a higher value, and thus can appropriately increase the price. As shown in Figure 5, among those who participated in the survey, 50.88% chose “very willing” to pay a higher fee for improving the natural environment and related facilities of the rural tourism farm, and 26.32% chose “willing”. The sum of these two exceeds 70% (approximately 77.2%). This indicates that the majority of the respondents have a positive attitude towards paying a higher fee for improving the natural environment and related facilities of rural homestays, showing that consumers have high expectations and recognition for the improvement of the natural environment and facilities of rural homestay, and are willing to invest more costs for it.

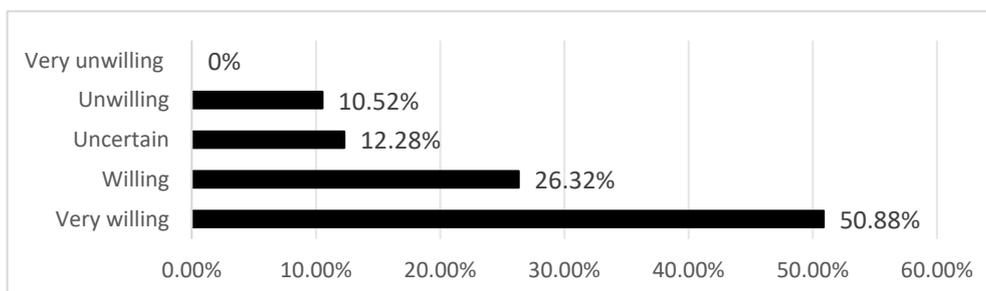


Figure 5: Tourists’ positive attitude towards improving the environment and paying for facilities in rural tourism.

Finally, competition-oriented pricing relies on a market-following method. The pricing method follows the market and refers to the prices of local homestays and farmhouses of the same type and grade, keeping them around the market average price. If most of the surrounding homestays have a standard room price of 300 yuan, they can be priced between 280-320 yuan (while also considering the consumption level of the customer group coming to consume, as shown in Figure 6). Differentiated pricing method adopts pricing higher than competitors for those with unique advantages, and pricing lower than competitors for those with relatively weaker facilities and services to attract customers.

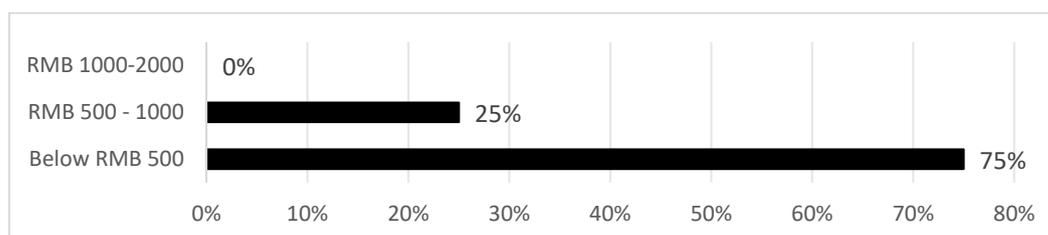


Figure 6: Tourists’ expected consumer prices.

### 3.4. Channel Strategy

On the one hand, we can improve the information of guesthouses and rural homestays on well-known online travel platforms (OTA), upload high-quality pictures, promptly respond to user reviews, and utilize the platform promotion tools to increase exposure. Create official accounts on social media such as WeChat, Weibo, and Douyin, regularly post content about special activities, beautiful scenery and delicious food, share the scenery and agricultural activities of Liping Village, and utilize the recommendation function of Little Red Book to invite travel bloggers to share their experiences. Publish listings on homestay booking platforms such as Airbnb and Tujia, highlighting features such as fruit and vegetable picking, rural experiences, and parent-child themes. Use search engines such as Baidu to advertise keywords and increase website views and bookings.

On the other hand, we can cooperate with local and surrounding city travel agencies to offer preferential policies and information about special products, incorporate them into tourism routes to attract group tourists. Place promotional materials at local tourist hubs, scenic ticket offices, hotels, etc. and jointly promote with local businesses. Actively participate in domestic and international tourism exhibitions, set up exquisite booths to showcase local culture and rural cuisine of Xihe County, and integrate idle residential buildings in the village and surrounding pick-up gardens, etc. to amplify the characteristics of Li Ping Village, communicate with tourism practitioners and potential customers to expand the customer base. Through providing high-quality services and unique experiences, encourage guests to spread word-of-mouth, offer small gifts or coupons, and establish a customer feedback mechanism to enhance the reputation.

## 4. Conclusion

This paper uses the SWOT analysis method to examine the advantages, disadvantages, opportunities, and challenges of building an “Nature-Amusement Cottage” in Liping Village. The survey found that tourists generally have a high level of satisfaction with the natural environment and activity arrangements of this type of homestay and rural tourism combined accommodation. The majority of the tourists are young students, with more females, and they mainly come from surrounding provinces. Their main purpose of travel is for leisure and relaxation and to get closer to nature. The rural tourism has certain appeal in terms of natural landscapes and cultural activities. However, there is still room for improvement. It is suggested to increase cultural display contents, such as historical culture explanations, exhibitions, and special cultural festivals; strengthen staff training to improve service quality; enrich entertainment programs and add activities suitable for families and children; improve transportation facilities, optimize traffic guidance and parking facilities; strengthen publicity and promotion, using channels such as social media, friend recommendations, and travel websites to attract more tourists; and continuously improve facilities and services based on tourists’ feedback to enhance tourists’ satisfaction. The “Nature-Amusement Cottage” project has certain potential in rural tourism development. By reasonably applying SWOT analysis to formulate development strategies, it is expected to maximize advantages, overcome disadvantages, address threats, seize development opportunities, and achieve sustainable development, providing useful references for rural tourism development.

## Acknowledgements

This research is supported by National College Students’ Innovation and Entrepreneurship Training Program Project (No.202411562023) and the Doctoral Special Project of Yanyuan Science and Technology Innovation Fund (No.2023BSZX05).

## References

- [1] Xie Yichi. *Research on Policy Support for Rural Tourism Development under the Context of Rural Revitalization Strategy* [D]. Zhengzhou University, 2018.
- [2] Han Shuhui. *Discussion on Strategies for Stimulating Rural Economic Growth through Developing Rural Tourism* [J]. *Journal of Liaoning Economic Management Cadre College and Liaoning Economic Vocational and Technical College*, 2017: 7-9.
- [3] Li Xueru, Mu Hongmei, Wen Yingying. *Implications of Domestic and Foreign Rural Tourism Development Models for Rural Revitalization in China* [J]. *Agriculture and Technology*, 2024, 44(05):

138-142.

[4] Peng Meizhu. *Research on Government Support for Homestay Tourism under the Background of Rural Revitalization* [D]. Nanchang University, 2020.

[5] Han Shen. *Research on the Development Strategy of Rural Tourism in Feng County* [D]. Northwest A&F University, 2014.

[6] Huang Yaya, Zhang Sunbowa. *SWOT Analysis of Development Potential of Rural Homestay Industry in Nanping City in the Context of Rural Revitalization* [J]. *China Market*, 2020(26): 14-15+30.

[7] Li Jinfeng. *The Inheritance of Folk Culture on the Waterway of the Western Han Dynasty Promotes the Splendid Transformation of Rural Tourism - Based on the Investigation of Qiqiao Folk Customs in Xihe County, Longnan* [J]. *Journal of Hanjiang Normal University*, 2018(01): 99-106.

[8] Huang Heping. *Research on Regional Differences and Development Strategies of Tourism Seasonality in China* [D]. East China Normal University, Shanghai, 2016.

[9] Cheng Haoyuan. *Research on the Measurement and Countermeasures of Homogenization in Rural Tourism - Taking Liyang City as an Example* [D]. Normal University, Nanjing, 2021.

[10] Cheng Haoyuan. *Measurement and Countermeasures for Homestay Tourism Homogeneity - Taking Liyang City as an Example* [D]. Nanjing Normal University, Jiangsu, 2021.

[11] Lu Shuzhen. *Research on Service Marketing Strategy of Yudian Rural Tourism Resort Project of DH Agricultural Company* [D]. Xi'an University of Technology, 2023.