

# Research on the Development Trend of Eco-sports Tourism in Ganzi Prefecture in the Post-epidemic Period

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**Abstract:** Ecological sports tourism is an activity in which people participate in sports activities and interact with the natural environment. It usually includes sports activities such as hiking, cycling, mountaineering, flying and outdoor adventure, as well as elements of exploring natural landscape, observing wildlife and plants, and experiencing cultural traditions, etc. It is an important way of activities for people to relax themselves, strengthen their bodies and expand their horizons in the post epidemic period. This paper uses the literature method, fieldwork method, and the specific situation of Ganzi Prefecture to analyze and conclude that ecological sports tourism has the following development trends: gradual increase in the demand for sports tourism, enhanced trend of coordination between sports and tourism, rise of sustainable tourism, acceleration of technological innovations and applications, diversified destinations and experiences, prominence of the influence of social media, and enhanced trend of ecological sports tourism branding. It provides theoretical basis for the development of ecological sports tourism in Ganzi.

**Keywords:** post-epidemic period, ecological sports tourism, development trend

## 1. Introduction

Eco-sport tourism is an emerging product oriented to ecology, with tourism as the carrier, through the situation of sports activities, to achieve the promotion of man and nature, man and society in harmony and the realization of efficient economic value for the purpose. [1] It is an emerging field that combines the natural environment, sports activities and tourism experience, and has already emerged globally. Eco-sport tourism is gradually becoming an important part of the tourism industry as people's attention to health, natural environment and cultural experience continues to increase.

Ganzi Prefecture is located in the western part of Sichuan Province, with beautiful natural resources and rich human resources. Since the opening of the Yakang Expressway in 2018, the time for tourists to enter Ganzi Prefecture has been greatly reduced, attracting a large number of tourists to visit the prefecture. However, the sudden epidemic has had a great impact on the tourism industry in Ganzi Prefecture, and after a difficult period of resistance to the epidemic, Ganzi Prefecture has ushered in new development opportunities and challenges. How to follow the trend of development in the post epidemic period and develop the ecological sports tourism market in Ganzi Prefecture, it is necessary to clarify the development trend of ecological sports tourism. This paper will take this as an entry point, analyze the development trend of ecological sports tourism in the context of Ganzi, and provide theoretical support for the development of tourism economy in Ganzi Prefecture.

## 2. Development trend of eco-sports tourism

### 2.1 Gradual increase in demand for sports tourism

The sudden outbreak of the novel coronavirus has claimed many lives, and the smallness and fragility of life is once again being felt. Studies have shown that the mortality rate of the new coronavirus is significantly higher in people with underlying diseases than in healthy people. The underlying disease is one of the reasons why people do not pay attention to their health in modern society. Therefore, in order to get rid of sub-healthy state and stay away from underlying diseases in the post epidemic period, people's attention to health and quality of life has gradually increased, they pay

more attention to their own health status, learn the basic knowledge of health, and their health consciousness has been improved to a greater extent. In the post-epidemic period, people's health needs are unprecedentedly high, and they are eager to get out of the circle of life, to satisfy their desire for natural landscape, and to improve their physical condition through physical exercise.

Eco-sport tourism will continue to grow as a healthful form of tourism. People can participate in tourism through hiking, cycling, rock climbing, skiing, rafting, gliding and other forms of sports, reduce the pressure of their work and life in sports activities, improve their mental health, and make themselves happy in sports tourism activities, and in this way gain the motivation to persist in the long term, and all these factors will attract more people to participate in it. Currently, sports activities carried out in Ganzi Prefecture are mainly based on event hosting, including marathon, horse racing, and cycling race around Gonggar. These competition sports will attract a large number of tourists to come to watch in the short term, but the sense of sports experience is not strong after the competition, the activities can only be attended by a small number of participating team members, and the participation of the majority of tourists has certain limitations, which cannot satisfy most people's demand for sports and health, and its role in fostering potential customers of the sport needs to be improved. This is also one of the aspects of ecological sports tourism in Ganzi that need to be improved and enhanced.

### ***2.2 The coordinated development trend of sports and tourism has been enhanced***

With the deepening of economic reform, the combination of sports and tourism provides a new impetus for economic development. Lu Ying (2021) analyzed the degree of coupling between the national sports element system and tourism element system from 2010 to 2019, and concluded that there is a coupling relationship between sports and tourism in the sports tourism industry in the two major elements of development, and the degree of coupling has become a trend of gradual improvement. However, there are obvious differences in the degree of coordination of coupling in different regions, and the level of coupling in the central and western regions is significantly lower than the level of coupling in the east. This shows that the development potential of sports tourism in the central and western regions of China is huge. Comparatively speaking, the central and western regions are richer in natural tourism resources, which is an excellent place to develop sports tourism products. However, because of the concept of economic development and the uneven level of development, resulting in the late development of sports tourism in the central and western regions, which is also a powerful weapon for the economic development of the central and western regions to catch up. With the end of the epidemic, the sports tourism industry has set off a comprehensive boom, and sports tourism has become the most sought-after new fashion. The sports tourism industry began to change from a single mode to a diversified mode, through modern mobile Internet technology, to realize the combination of regional characteristics of tourism resources, humanities resources and the whole process of tourism, to develop a rich variety of tourism products to meet different kinds of people. This is an important reason why the coupling and coordination of sports and tourism is increasing year by year, and it is also an inevitable trend for the future development of the economy. [2]

### ***2.3 The rise of sustainable tourism***

Eco-sport tourism focuses on protecting the natural environment and emphasizes sustainability. With the increasing awareness of environmental protection, people will be more inclined to choose this type of tourism to reduce the damage to the ecosystem.

First, energy saving and emission reduction are increasingly emphasized by the government as a requirement for the development of sports tourism. Wang Weiping (2021) points out that low-carbon sports tourism takes energy conservation and emission reduction and pollution reduction as its main purpose, and it strictly manages and controls industries such as catering, accommodation, transportation, merchandise retailing, communication, and mass entertainment. Especially, the government regulates and manages the catering industry to reduce pollution to the environment by reducing the use of disposable tableware and hard-to-biodegrade tools by merchants. Moreover, the government formulates a low-carbon sports tourism development strategy to maximize the protection of the carrying capacity of the natural environment and promote the sustainable development of sports tourism in the form of low-carbon sports tourism. [3]

Secondly, environmental protection infrastructure has been gradually improved. Environmental protection infrastructures, such as hiking trails, cycling paths and environmentally friendly hotels, are being built and maintained in sports tourism destinations. This helps to minimize damage to the natural

environment and increase tourist satisfaction. For example, some places provide sufficient garbage cans and recycling bins so that tourists can dispose of their garbage conveniently and ensure the effectiveness of the garbage sorting and recycling system. There are also scenic spots that use renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, to supply electricity to tourist facilities and reduce dependence on fossil fuels. Some local governments have adopted water conservation measures to reduce pollution of water resources in scenic spots, mainly through the adoption of water-saving equipment and the implementation of water recycling systems.

Third, governments have gradually strengthened environmental education and publicity. Information and education on sustainable tourism are provided to tourists and local scenic spots to raise their environmental awareness. For example, the government formulates a clear environmental protection policy as the core value of the scenic spot's operation in order to clarify the scenic spot's commitment to environmental protection. When environmental protection problems arise, the government traces the problems in the operation of the scenic spot and promptly allows the scenic spot to make corrections. In addition, scenic spots disseminate environmental protection information through signs, brochures, guided tours and the Internet, so that tourists can receive environmental protection information at the first time and be guided to consciously abide by environmental protection rules and regulations. Scenic spots set up environmental protection supervisors to regulate the behavior of tourists, put an end to tourists' uncivilized behavior and create a good tourism environment.

Fourth, the government focuses on activity planning and project construction. According to the environmental characteristics of the tourist sites and considering the carrying capacity of the environment, more and more government departments are doing systematic planning of activities in advance, and integrating and coordinating ecological environmental protection and economic development. At present, tourism projects in many regions cause great damage to the environment just after construction is completed, directly affecting the ecological balance of the region. Therefore, before building tourism projects, the government attaches more and more importance to doing a good job of demonstration and analysis in advance, to ensure that the completion of the project can bring sustainable economic development and natural environmental resources can be recycled and protected.

#### ***2.4 Scientific and technological innovation and application acceleration***

The application of technological innovations such as virtual reality, augmented reality and smart devices will enrich the experience of eco-sports tourism. Visitors can explore remote destinations through virtual reality, using smart devices to monitor their health and improve safety.

In the face of the sudden epidemic, people's lifestyles slowly changed, and offline activities were gradually shifted to online. With the end of the epidemic, the online lifestyle is deeply imprinted in people's habits and has become an indispensable part of people's lives. Before tourists go on a trip, they watch short videos to make travel strategies; when traveling, they shoot short videos to share their experiences and insights, and tourism can be said to be one of the industries most closely integrated with short videos. In the digital era, short videos, with its short, new, fast, interactive and other characteristics, have risen to prominence among many communication media, and have had a profound impact on tourists' travel habits and the marketing methods of the tourism industry [4]. At present, the production and consumption of sports tourism are gradually breaking the boundaries of time and space, and the development of the industry is subconsciously extended to the online scene, building into a new mode of development that integrates online and offline.

Digital technology is gradually popularizing the whole process of eco-sport tourism. With digital technology as the core driving force, technicians carry out the economic form of production, distribution, circulation and consumption through digitalization, networking and informatization. Sports tourism, as an industry with elements of both sports and tourism, has a close connection with the digital economy. The application of digital technology provides convenient and efficient services for sports tourism destinations, and at the same time brings rich and diverse experiences to tourists. [5] With the popularization of mobile Internet, Internet of Things, and 5G technology, it lays the foundation for digital ecological sports tourism. Through AI algorithms to analyze the behavioral habits and purchase intentions of customers, it provides users with sports tourism information, sports project recommendations, online sports tourism experience and other services, and accurately searches for and cultivates sports tourism customer groups. At the same time, the integration of digital technology and the whole process of sports tourism to promote sports tourism products and services towards customization and differentiation, through the continuous feedback of digital information technology, to promote the high-quality development of ecological sports tourism, the structure of the tourism

industry from the crude to the intensive transformation, pay more attention to the road of high value-added branding, and to create an ecological civilization atmosphere of the harmonious development of man and nature. [6]

### ***2.5 Diverse destinations and experiences***

Consumers are one of the core elements in the process of sports tourism, and consumers' experience and subjective feelings about sports tourism directly affect the development of regional sports tourism economy. Peng Yang (2021) pointed out that the national development of tourism has provided great opportunities for the development of Shennongjia, however, the existing tourism products of Shennongjia have a single structure, and the supporting service facilities are insufficient, so the market competitiveness is limited compared with similar scenic spots. Moreover, Peng Yang proposes to establish the eco-tourism product system of Shennongjia under the development strategies of ecological protection, product diversification, product linkage, etc., and provides targeted marketing and promotion strategies in combination with marketing principles. The main purpose of doing so is to change the status quo of tourism development in Shennongjia and promote the coordinated development of environment and economy in Shennongjia. [7]

Eco-sport tourism offers a diverse range of experiences, including different destinations such as mountains, seashores, forests and rivers. Tourists can choose suitable tourism programs according to their interests and preferences. In addition, relying on the digital intelligence platform, sports tourism is deeply integrated with the new economy, new clientele, and new demands to customize personalized sports tourism products, maximize consumer satisfaction, make consumers loyal supporters of eco-sports tourism, strengthen word-of-mouth publicity, and promote the quality and efficiency of the regional tourism economy. Nowadays, the sports tourism products developed in Ganzi Prefecture mainly include cycling, trekking, plateau horse racing, etc. The prospects for project development are huge, and the tourism products are yet to be enriched.

### ***2.6 Influence of social media***

The popularization of social media will further promote the development of ecological sports tourism. Li Yan et al. (2023) pointed out that the development of social media, online travel platforms, review software and other new media has injected new vitality into China's tourism industry, and that people pay more attention to the overall visual experience of the net red attractions, and the creation of an excellent visual landscape can help attract attractions to realize the flow; in the process of creating tourist attractions, we should focus on considering the indicators of the strong impact factor, taking into account the indicators of the medium impact factor and the indicators of the weak impact factor; focusing on the enhancement and transformation of attractions from the characteristics of positioning, cultural leadership, visual attraction, facility optimization, and comprehensive publicity to achieve sustainable development. Focus on the characteristics of the positioning, cultural leadership, visual attraction, optimization of facilities, comprehensive publicity and other aspects of the attractions to enhance the transformation, to achieve sustainable development. [8] It can be seen that the Netroots Tourism Hitting Places created by social media can realize the attribute characteristics of wide network dissemination and retaining lasting attraction, which helps to promote the sustainable development of the Netroots Tourism Hitting Places.

On social media, people can constantly get all kinds of novel information, and social media platforms can greatly satisfy the needs of customers. In China, more and more social media platforms publish all kinds of travel pictures, videos, texts, etc. Social media users share their sports tourism experience, and this information can help people prepare and prevent in advance. Therefore, a large number of travel fans have been attracted to these social media platforms, which mainly include WeChat, Xiaohongshu, Shake, Ctrip, Flying Pig, etc., especially Shake and WeChat, which have great influence on users. At the same time, before people start a period of tourism, most of them will demand a travel guide on social media platforms, and they will check a large amount of related information through social media platforms, which also reflects the superb publicity power of social media. On the other hand, sports tourism, as a representative of special tourism, attracts a large number of potential customers to pay attention to, interact with, and comment on social media platforms, which stimulates the readers' behavioral intention of sports tourism, and cultivates a large number of consumer groups for sports tourism projects. On the contrary, for destinations with poor sports tourism experience, people mostly take active avoidance to avoid "stepping on the pit". Thus, social media is becoming an important medium for people to participate in sports tourism. In the context of fierce competition in

tourism around the world, through the social media platform, the government can establish an invisible mechanism of elimination of the fittest, continuously improve the experience and standard of the sports tourism industry, and promote the positive and healthy development of eco-sport tourism.

### **2.7 Build an ecological sports tourism brand**

Brand is the fundamental guarantee for the development and growth of any company or enterprise. Zhang Zhongju (2023) pointed out that the development of ecological sports tourism should set up a unified scientific view of development, make every effort to improve the comprehensive image of the city, explore and innovate, create a city tourism brand, formulate a strategy for the development of the city tourism brand, deeply integrate the natural resources and humanities into the whole process of sports tourism development, and form a characteristic sports tourism brand image. [9] Tingting Xie (2023) pointed out how to make good use of the excellent snow and ice resources in Shennongjia Forest Region is the foundation of its snow and ice sports tourism development, the government needs to organically combine the natural snow and ice resources and the snow and ice sports tourism development market is an important step in the high-quality development of the snow and ice sports tourism in Shennongjia Forest Region. The government needs to create Shennongjia has the market influence of ice and snow sports tourism brand culture, improve the ice and snow sports tourism related service facilities in the forest area, the establishment of a complete ice and snow sports talent system is the way to go for the development of Shennongjia ice and snow sports tourism. [10] Currently, Ganzi Prefecture is gradually strengthening the construction of tourism brand, with the "holy Ganzi" brand focusing on plateau natural scenery and plateau culture. After the "Silk Road Ganzi, Western Sichuan secret" reputation in the domestic and international tourism industry, efforts to build the "G317 Plateau Silk Road Cultural Corridor", in-depth exploration of the "G317 Plateau Silk Road Cultural Corridor" tourism resources and the Silk Road Cultural Corridor. G317 Plateau Silk Road Cultural Corridor", and deeply explore the tourism resources and cultural resources of the Silk Road. However, Ganzi Prefecture has not yet formed an ecological sports tourism brand in line with its own characteristics, and regional sports characteristics and sports styles have yet to be formed.

### **3. Conclusion**

Eco-sport tourism represents a key trend in the future of tourism. This sector will continue to grow as interest in health, sustainability and cultural experiences continues to grow. However, to achieve sustainable development, local governments need to address environmental, regional, competitive and safety challenges. Through sound management and innovation, governments can bring new space for the development of eco-sport tourism and can provide unique tourism experiences and health needs for tourists, ultimately bringing opportunities for local economic development. As the pillar industry of Ganzi Prefecture, the tourism economy, the government spares no effort to develop the tourism industry, and has achieved certain results. However, the development in ecological sports tourism is still in the process of figuring out, and theoretical and practical research still needs to be strengthened in terms of product development, brand establishment, publicity and environmental protection, social media marketing, and integration of sports and tourism. We will make continuous efforts to build a modernized ecological sports tourism road with distinctive features, deep connotation and green health.

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