

# Orienteering Events Along South China Historical Trail Promote Rural Revitalization

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## ABSTRACT

In order to serve the strategy of rural revitalization, and reveals the social value of orienteering competition. Through interviews and text analysis, this study makes a qualitative analysis of the social value of orienteering. The conclusions are as follows. The deep integration of orienteering and the tourism resources along the south china historical trail has three effects on Rural Revitalization. Firstly, it has driven the development of rural tourism, ecological agriculture, folk economy, local specialties and other industries. Secondly, it has promoted the inheritance of Chinese traditional culture and enhanced the self-confidence of national culture. Finally, it has promoted the formation of healthy living habits of national fitness and improved the infrastructure of national fitness.

**Key words:** Orienteering; historical trail; Social Value; Qualitative research

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Orienteering is a sport that combines physical fitness and map cognition[1]. It usually takes place in hilly woodland parks. With the help of map and compass navigation, athletes arrive at each control point in turn according to the task sequence preset by the map[2]. The athlete who uses less time in the process wins the game. This rule is the basic type of orienteering[3], and also the most extensive type[4].

In recent years, a new type of orienteering has appeared in Guangdong, China. Breaking the tradition of orienteering in the mountains and forests, the local government organized orienteering in villages along historical trails in southern China. This new type of orienteering can help participants get close to the local historical heritage, and understand Chinese history and culture. Compared with the previous leisure greenway[5], the interaction between orienteering and tangible and intangible cultural heritage is more active, more in-depth, and more comprehensive. Orienteering has had a far-reaching impact on the economy, culture, and society along the historical trails, and has promoted the Rural Revitalization.

As far as we know, it is the first time that orienteering undertakes government tasks in the world. This trial expands the social function of orienteering. To sum up experience and promote it, this study mainly focuses on the impact of orienteering on rural development.

## 2. METIARAL AND METHODS

South china historical trail, located in Guangdong Province, was the main roads for trade activities in

Lingnan area. It undertook the task of delivering letters, transporting materials and exchanging personnel in ancient times. The historical trail links up China's inland and Maritime Silk Road. It is a precious historical and cultural resource of China (Figure 1).



**Figure 1** distribution of historical trails in Guangdong Province (from <http://www.infonht.cn>)

In order to protect and develop the cultural resources of the historical road and serve the strategy of Rural Revitalization, The Guangdong provincial government has mobilized 17 departments to jointly organize orienteering events since 2016. Every year, about eight ancient villages are selected from the whole province to hold the orienteering events along south china historical trail. Each race lasts two days and attracts thousands of participants. At present, orienteering events have been held for four years with the theme of historical monuments activation, beautiful rural construction, accurate poverty alleviation, and Rural Revitalization respectively. Orienteering events have many effects on the host villages. This research takes

34 orienteering events held in the past 4 years as the research object.

There are two main channels for obtaining research data. On the one hand, collecting statistic data from the official website of south china historical trail. On the other hand, getting voice data through interviews with athletes, spectators and event organizers. Data accumulated up to 120,000 words. In this study, Nvivo11.0 software is used to count the word frequency of the interview results, and the statistical results are systematically sorted out through three-level coding to form a theoretical framework.

### **3. ORIENTEERING EVENTS PROMOTES RURAL REVITALIZATION**

There are many traditional villages along south china historical trail, rich in historical relics and intangible cultural heritage[6]. In the process of orienteering, participants could experience ancient villages, rural ecology, folk customs, Characteristic agriculture and other resources. So the annual session of orienteering has deep impacts on brand promotion, local economy, traditional culture and national fitness.

#### ***3.1. Promoting local economy through spreading the brand of rural tourism***

##### ***3.1.1. Spreading the brand of rural tourism***

Under the background of Rural Revitalization Strategy more people are aware of the local rural tourism attractions through the orienteering race. In the design stage of the event, assess the potential of rural resources and their social value. The events are held in traditional villages with rich historical and cultural resources. Orienteering controls are placed at the rural landscapes. The rules of orienteering require participants to visit controls one by one[7]. With the spread of the influence of the events, rural tourism brand was promoted and the rural tourism resources were activated[8]. Secondly, the local government demonstrated agricultural picking, famer delicacies, characteristic residential and other tourism products during the events. The combination of orienteering and rural tourism promotes the transformation from leisure sightseeing tourism to leisure sports tourism, realizes the transition from “entertainment shopping tourism” to “sports health linguistics”, promotes the upgrading of rural tourism products. Sports events promote the sustainable development of local villages[9].

##### ***3.1.2. Activating the local agriculture***

The design of orienteering events on south china historical trail is closely combined with the local agricultural resources. Some of the races were held in ecological

farms. Xuwen County of Guangdong Province is known as the hometown of pineapple in China. The annual output accounts for 1/3 of the national total. Due to poor brand promotion, the Pineapple industry develops slowly and has been in the low-end market. During the orienteering on south china's historical trail, the local government held a Pineapple Tourism Cultural Festival. The celebration not only displayed cultural performances, folk art about pineapples but also provided a pineapple feast for tourists. This measure has attracted many tourists and dealers. The local government introduced advanced agricultural planting technology to improve the output and quality of agricultural products. During the event, the organizers held several agricultural picking activities to promote local ecological agriculture tourism. The events attracted more than 5,000 participants, including athletes and villagers and tourists. Besides, many indirect participants learned about these activities through network and TV media. On the platform of the orienteering race, various activities organized by the local government have promoted the agricultural brand and promoted the development of local ecological agriculture (Figure 2).



**Figure 2** pineapple plantation (from <http://www.infonht.cn/>)

##### ***3.1.3. Driving the economy of homestay***

The orienteering events on south china's historical trail usually lasts for two days and attracts thousands of people. However, the historical villages located in the mountains, far from the city. The food and accommodation for the participants provide chances for the farm hotels. The local government encourages villagers to develop farm homestay economy by financial support to improve the infrastructure for rural tourism. Under the guidance of the government, many villagers have turned their spare rooms into homestay. The house reflects the architectural art of south china and the food shows the local ethnic customs. The famous “Shuxiangbafang”, located in Maoming, Guangdong Province, is one of the outstanding representatives of the local homestay. The old house made of wood beams and stone bricks reflects the local architecture arts.

Orienteering events has brought passenger flow and attention to the local tourism industry. The development of tourism has led to the development of homestay economy. The prosperity of homestay not only provides local economic income, but also provides more employment opportunities. To a certain extent, it also alleviates the problem of rural labors outflow and avoids the hollowing of villages[10].

### *3.1.4. Promotion of local specialties*

Orienteering events provides a platform for the promotion of local specialties. During the events, there is exhibition area of local characteristic products in the events center. Most of the athletes and the media pay attention to local attractions. This measure not only increases the sales on the spot, but also promotes brand spreading at home and abroad.

Duihua rice wine from Renhua County, Guangdong Province, originated in the late Ming Dynasty. It was famous for delicate fragrance and pleasant taste and beloved by people for hundreds of years. Liquor-making industry is the economic pillar of Shitang Village. The products are not only supplied to many cities in northern Guangdong, but also exported to Shaoguan and Guangzhou. In 2012, Duihua rice wine brewing technology was rated as provincial intangible cultural heritage. With the help of two orienteering events, more and more people are familiar with the Duihua rice wine. The wine industry in Shitang Village is getting stronger and stronger.

Orienteering events provide new impetus for local economic. The local government has implemented a number of policies to help trademark registration and e-commerce sales. Many migrant workers began to return home to start businesses. It has promoted the reverse migration of urban and rural areas[11].

## **3.2. Promoting traditional culture and enhancing cultural self-confidence**

### *3.2.1. Promoting the protection and inheritance of historical culture*

The original intention of orienteering events on south china historical trail is to protect and activate the historical and cultural resources. The local government's strategy is that applying the value of history and culture on south china historical trail to develop modern villages. Since 2016, the local government began to excavate and protect the historical sites along the historical trail. The value of the competition lies in the further dissemination of the excavated history and culture, so that more people can understand the historical origin of traditional Chinese villages, and awaken people's awareness of the protection

of traditional villages. Finally, More and more people knew the root of Chinese traditional culture.

Up to now, the orienteering events have been held for four consecutive years, once a year. The scale of the event has developed from the initial provincial events to the international events. The fundamental purpose of upgrading the level of the event is to expand the scope of the event communication. In 2018, the local government held the orienteering world qualifying race. In 2019, the local government held the orienteering World Cup. Foreign athletes from more than 10 countries of Europe and Southeast Asia took part in the events. They were amazed by the ancient architectural art in the venue. The international orienteering events has spread Chinese traditional culture to the world.

### *3.2.2. Promoting the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage*

Farming culture is the root of Chinese traditional culture, which has accumulated a lot of life and production experience after thousands of years. Among them, intangible cultural heritage is a typical representative[12; 13]. These heritages full of human wisdom have been handed down from generation to generation. The intangible cultural heritage records the evolution of the countryside. It has great historical value[14].

During the orienteering competition, the local government set up an exhibition area of intangible cultural heritage in the race centre. Students from art colleges in Guangdong Province have developed them into creative products. These measures have promoted the protection, inheritance and development of intangible cultural heritage(Figure 3).



**Figure 3** puppet role-play(from <http://www.infonht.cn/>)

### *3.2.3. Enhancing the self-confidence of Chinese traditional culture*

There are rich historical and cultural resources along the south china historical trail. These heritages are the crystallization of the wisdom of ancestors to adapt to nature and use nature. The orienteering events fully

demonstrates the local material and intangible cultural heritage. It promotes the spread of Chinese traditional culture. More people have a deeper understanding of Chinese traditional culture, and recognition. Let Participants realized the wisdom of Chinese traditional culture. The recognition of Chinese traditional culture has endogenous national pride and enhanced the self-confidence of Chinese traditional culture[15].

### **3.3. Promoting National Fitness and Healthy China**

The strategy of rural revitalization focuses on industrial revitalization, talent revitalization, cultural revitalization and organizational revitalization. However, the modernization of the economic base and living conditions is only an outward progress. The transformation of life style is the foundation of rural modernization[16]. It is the difficulty of Rural Revitalization, because it needs a long process.

#### *3.3.1. Enhance the awareness of national fitness*

During the orienteering events, the local government invited sports celebrities to attend the opening ceremony, For example Lao lishi, Olympic diving champion; Liu Hong, Olympic Women's Race Walking Champion. Sports stars play a leading and exemplary role in promoting the awareness of national fitness. Local villagers are encouraged to participate in the race. The local government has set off the atmosphere of national fitness and raised the awareness of national fitness. These measures guide villagers to participate in daily physical exercise and gradually form a healthy lifestyle.

#### *3.3.2. Improve the sports facilities*

In order to meet the needs of villagers for daily physical exercise, The Guangdong provincial government has built a large number of sports squares and added a lot of sports equipment along the south china historical trail. Some enterprises and sports stars also donated sports equipment. Sports infrastructure has been effectively improved. After the orienteering competition, the local government organized various national fitness activities such as hiking, bicycle and so on.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

The deep integration of orienteering and the tourism resources along the south china historical trail has three effects on Rural Revitalization. Firstly, it has driven the development of rural tourism, ecological agriculture, folk economy, local specialties and other industries. Secondly, it has promoted the inheritance of Chinese traditional

culture and enhanced the self-confidence of national culture. Finally, it has promoted the formation of healthy living habits of national fitness and improved the infrastructure of national fitness.

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