



# A Feasibility Study of the Cultural Rural Tourism with Ancient Legal Salt as the Theme in Yandun Village

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**Abstract.** Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, China's development has been steadily pursued under the leadership of the Communist Party, and economic growth has achieved great results. On the other hand, however, a new situation has emerged in China's current major social contradictions, reflected in the imbalance between urban and rural development, with a large number of rural areas still in poverty. In this context, the Party Central Committee has focused its poverty eradication efforts on rural areas. This paper will take the rural revitalization strategy as the background and prove the feasibility of carrying out cultural rural tourism themed on ancient salt production in Yandun Village of Hainan Province through a questionnaire survey. The results show that the development concept of this tourist attraction is feasible.

**Keywords:** Rural tourism · cultural tourism · ancient method of salt production · rural revitalization program

## 1 Introduction

At the 19th Party Congress in 2017, Comrade Xi Jinping proposed a rural revitalisation plan, and in 2018, [1] Sun explained the objective of the Rural Revitalisation Plan, which is to make up for the shortcomings of overall prosperity by helping rural areas to develop and improve the living index of rural people [2]. In addition, in order to comply with the core objectives of the rural revitalisation programme, the tourism plan should follow the principles of economic and social aspects of sustainable tourism as explained by Epler (2017), i.e. the development of tourism should benefit the host community, have a positive impact on the standard of living of the local people and not interfere excessively with their daily lives. Based on this, Yang & Lee (2019) suggest that the key to helping poor areas escape poverty through tourism is the community participation of residents. The tourism industry should allow villagers to participate in the tourism industry and help them improve their income by providing employment opportunities [3].

By focusing on the village of Yandun in Hele Town, Wanning City, Hainan Province, where there is still a large amount of rural poverty, this paper examines the feasibility of developing a cultural rural tourism industry based on the Ye's ancient salt-making

method to help Yandun to escape poverty. To achieve this goal, this paper first examines the current situation in Yandun Village, the current status of the ancient salt-making technique and its specific processes, as well as the village's infrastructure and land resources; then the author uses questionnaires to investigate whether the public is interested in the ancient salt-making heritage tourism and rural tourism and whether they are willing to come. The paper also looks at the minimum requirements for food and accommodation, possible tourism activities and forms of tourism, as well as possible problems, in order to determine whether the village can meet these basic requirements for tourism development. This paper will serve as a pre-reference for the development of tourism in Yandun Village. By examining the feasibility of developing tourism in Yandun Village, this paper also provides help in preserving the heritage and integrity of the intangible cultural heritage of the area and promoting the economic development of the area.

## **2 Background Information**

### **2.1 The Current Situation of Yandun Village**

Yan Dun Village is a small village in Hele Town, Hele County, Hainan Province, People's Republic of China. The villagers set up a large number of salt fields in the village to collect seawater with a high salinity content, cook it and trade it with the outside world to make a living [4]. According to the 2017 report of the Geographical Names Network, Yandun Village has a population of 1147 people, and most of the villagers are surnamed Ye. Today, the village mainly focuses on aquaculture, with an annual per capita income of 3900 RMB. This figure is far below the national per capita disposable income of China (RMB 29,974) according to National Bureau of Statistics (2017) survey [5] and the quality of life of the villagers is in urgent need of improvement.

### **2.2 Ye's Old Fashioned Salt**

The Hainan Local History Office (2012) [6] suggests that Hainan had a rich ancient salt-making culture in the past. People all over the island used to use different processes to extract salt from seawater. There are two types of operation: sun-drying salt from seawater and frying salt from fire. However, the core principle is to evaporate seawater to leave salt crystals.

According to the accounts of Huang Juhua and Ye Jianren, villagers of Yandun village, we know that the ancient salt production method of the Ye's in Yandun village is more similar to the salt production by frying seawater by fire, they would use sand to spread on the ground to turn it into a sand field as a salt field, and take seawater to pour on the sand and then dry it in the sun, after repeating many times, enough salt would accumulate on the sand, and finally take seawater to pour on it, dissolve all the salt crystals on it and collect this high concentration seawater. Finally, the seawater is heated in a wood-fired pot to extract the salt. This process of repeatedly evaporating seawater to obtain a high concentration of brine is called brining [7]. Yu, Ren and Lin (2006) suggest that brining is the key to salt production from seawater, although there is salt in seawater, the concentration is not high. The salt-making process is carried out after the seawater has been turned into a higher concentration of sodium chloride.

In fact, the situation of ancient salt production in Yandun village is not optimistic. With the advancement of technology, Ye's ancient method of salt production is not comparable to modern salt production techniques in terms of efficiency, productivity and energy consumption, and there are very few people who still master this technique [8]. As mentioned by Lu (2006), the Ye's ancient method of salt production can produce eight pounds of salt out of a hundred pounds of brine, and only about twenty pounds of salt in an hour, and a pound of salt can be sold for seven yuan. The technique is in crisis and on the verge of disappearing, so if a cultural tour could be developed with this theme, it would not only help to enrich the village but also help to save the traditional culture. However, this tourism planning idea also has an obvious disadvantage, that is, the environmental damage. With this in mind, the author would like to mention the concept of tourism eco-carrying capacity proposed by Getz (1983) [9]. It refers to the maximum use of local resources for tourism development and profit activities under the premise of not causing unacceptable damage to resources and natural environment. For the specific situation of Yandun Village at present, future developers should always be aware of this concept and find a balance instead of achieving economic development at the expense of the environment.

### 3 Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Goals

To investigate the feasibility of developing cultural rural tourism industry in the village of Yandun with the theme of Ye's ancient salt-making in the context of the rural revitalisation programme, firstly, there is a need to understand public attitudes. For instance, whether the public is interested in rural and cultural tourism, whether the public is interested in this traditional craft of salt making, and whether the public is willing to visit the village in Hainan Province for tourism activities. Thus, the author can understand the public's interest and willingness to travel to this tourist destination.

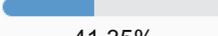
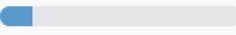
The second point is to assess whether the local infrastructure of Yandun village is well developed to meet the minimum acceptable requirements (accommodation, food, transport) for the development of cultural tourism and for tourists. Since the village is not very modern and the tourism industry has not yet started, there is a lack of adequate tourism facilities. Based on this reality, it is important to check whether the existing resources and possible future sponsorship can meet the requirements of tourists before formulating the next specific tourism plan, otherwise, there will be a risk that tourists will be reluctant to come because of the lack of hardware in the area.

Finally, the author also attempts to understand the public's tourism habits, the activities expected from rural tourism and the factors influencing tourism satisfaction in order to suggest possible concrete ideas for destination planning.

#### 3.2 Research Participants

In this survey, a total of 133 questionnaires were validly completed and collected. Of the 133 respondents, one (0.75%) was under the age of 17, 55 (41.35%) were aged 18–28,

**Table 1.** The age of the research participants.

Age	Number of participants	Proportion
Under 17	1	 0.75%
18-28	55	 41.35%
29-39	56	 42.11%
40-50	19	 14.29%
51 and above	2	 1.5%

56 (42.11%) were aged 29–39, 19 (14.29%) were aged 40–50 and two (1.5%) were aged 51 and above [10]. Zhong, Zhu, Xiao, Ma, and Zhang (2010) suggest that in today's China, rural scenery is attractive to young people and at the same time young people are the absolute mainstay of rural tourism. This questionnaire, therefore, intends to collect more opinions from people aged 18 to 39, who are more likely to become future visitors to rural tourism in Yandun village. Of the total sample, 72 were male and 61 were female, accounting for 54.14% and 45.86% of the total respectively, with a small difference in numbers between the two (Table 1).

### 3.3 Research Design

In order to give a general idea of the attitudes of tourists towards the two types of tourism, cultural tourism and rural tourism, including the destination and its theme and popularity, the following questions were asked, and all of the questions below are scored on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being not interested or not aware at all, and 5 being extremely interested and aware.

- 1) *Are you interested in rural tourism?*
- 2) *Are you interested in cultural and heritage tourism (for a traditional craft)?*
- 3) *Do you know anything about the villages in the town of Hele in Wanning, Hainan Province?*
- 4) *Would you like to visit a village in Hainan Province as a tourist destination?*
- 5) *Do you know anything about the ancient method of salt production?*
- 6) *Would you like to participate in a cultural tourism activity based on the theme of ancient salt production?*

In order to understand the public's specific requirements for tourism facilities, and to help developers to assess whether the minimum requirements of most tourists can be met with the available resources, the questionnaire includes the following questions:

- 1) *Would you be comfortable with being transported by less comfortable means of transportation in rural tourism, for example, ferries or shared bicycles?* (with 1 being not at all and 5 being happy to accept.)
- 2) *What are your minimum requirements for rural tourism accommodation?* (The options are tents, box rooms, youth hostels, low star hotels, and standard business hotels such as Home and All Seasons.)

In order to help the developers improve the facilities in the area and to meet the needs of the visitors in the most influential points as much as possible a series of factors influencing tourism satisfaction (safety of the itinerary, modernisation of the area, infrastructure, quality of staff service, food and beverage offerings and food safety, affordability of the tour, variety of activities) were also mentioned and scored by the public, with a score of 1 indicating that this factor has no impact on their experience at all, and a score of 5 indicating that this factor is important to their satisfaction.

Finally, in order to identify possible forms of tourism to help the developer to plan the destination and to develop the activities that tourists prefer to experience, the visitor's preferences and travel habits are analysed by the questions below:

- 1) *What is your monthly disposable income level?*
- 2) *Who would you like to travel with? Alone, in a tour group, or with a group of family and friends?*
- 3) *If you were to visit the countryside, would you like to experience the following items?* (1 means you do not want to experience the item at all, 3 means the item is optional, and 5 means you want to experience the item very much, specifically farming, labour experience, picking, learning about non-traditional culture, and experiencing special activities such as bonfire party).

## **4 Result and Analysis**

### **4.1 Public Attitude Towards Heritage Tourism in Yandun Village**

According to the survey results shown in Table 2, the public's interest in our tourism classic is very high, with an average score of 3.77, representing over 70% of participants are interested or extremely interested in rural tourism.

According to Table 3, the public is also interested in cultural and heritage tourism based on a traditional skill. The average score for this question was 3.68, which is also at a high level, with more than 50% of participants being interested and extremely interested in cultural heritage tourism for traditional crafts, although not as many as for rural tourism.

As shown in Table 4, as for making the villages of Hainan Province the tourist destination, there is a high level of an average score of 3.68. Over 70% of participants are willing and strongly willing to visit Hainan province.

**Table 2.** The public’s interest in rural tourism.

Score	Subtotal	Proportion
1 (not interested at all)	4/133	3.01%
2 (not that interested)	11/133	8.27%
3 (a little interested)	21/133	15.79%
4 (interested)	73/133	54.89%
5 (extremely interested)	24/133	18.05%

Table 5 shows the public’s interest in a cultural tour based on the theme of ancient salt production. With a relatively high average score of 3.67, a conclusion can be drawn that most people are interested in this topic.

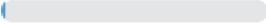
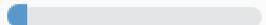
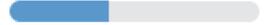
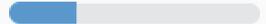
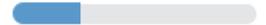
To sum up, a significant proportion of people in all the four questions above expressed interest or willingness to undertake tourism activities, representing that this tourism planning idea has the ability to gain public attention and have competitiveness in the market.

**4.2 The Infrastructure of Yandun Village**

When participants were asked whether they would be comfortable with being transported via some less comfortable means of mobility during rural tourism, 99 out of 133 participants (over 70%) said that they did not mind or did not mind at all (Table 6). This means that there is no need to worry too much about the lack of convenient, efficient, and comfortable transport since people are generally not strict about this, and Yan Dun village could meet this standard when it comes to tourism planning.

According to Table 7, the public also expressed a willingness to tolerate a lack of accommodation. Participants were asked about their minimum requirements for rural

**Table 3.** The public's interest in cultural and heritage tourism.

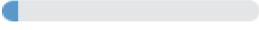
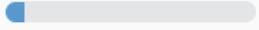
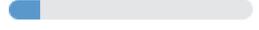
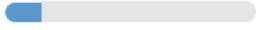
Score	Subtotal	Proportion
1 (not interested at all)	2/133	 1.5%
2 (not that interested)	10/133	 7.52%
3 (a little interested)	52/133	 39.1%
4 (interested)	34/133	 25.56%
5 (extremely interested)	35/133	 26.32%

tourism accommodation, and they were given five choices of accommodation from a level of low to high. The choices including tents, site box rooms, youth hostels, low-star hotels, and standard business hotels. As a result, 21 people (21.79%) can accept a tent as a minimum, 37 people (27.82%) can accept a box room as a minimum, and 55 people (41.35%) can accept a youth hostel as a minimum. These three types of accommodation are in a lower cost and are easy to set up. They are suitable for the current situation of Yandun village, and also represent a relatively easy-to-meet accommodation requirement of the public.

### 4.3 Questionnaire Study on the Subsequent Specific Planning Ideas

Based on the above discussion, this paper has identified the feasibility of cultural tourism in the ancient salt-making village of Yandun. In this part, the author will analyse visitor preferences and identify possible tourism activities based on the questionnaire. First of all, before proceeding with this analysis, there is a need to eliminate the answer with little reference value. Some people are less likely to become our customers because they have expressed in the questionnaire that they are not interested in our tourism theme, or that their requirements for transportation or accommodation are too high to be met. Therefore, this paper focuses on the opinions and preferences of those who are more

**Table 4.** The public's willingness to visit the villages in Hainan Province.

Score	Subtotal	Proportion
1 (not interested at all)	8/133	 6.02%
2 (not that interested)	11/133	 8.27%
3 (a little interested)	18/133	 13.53%
4 (interested)	75/133	 56.39%
5 (extremely interested)	21/133	 15.79%

likely to become our clients, thus planning the trip in a more targeted manner, providing the right activities for the right people, and making the destination more likely to be successful.

For the specific implementation, the paper sets some filters for the next data analysis, removing some of the questions, including those on the public's interest in rural tourism and cultural heritage tourism, the public's willingness to visit the villages in Hainan Province, the public's minimum requirements for rural tourism accommodation, and whether the public is comfortable with the idea of transportation via some less comfortable means of mobility. In addition to this, Sun, Wang (2017) [11] suggested a positive correlation between the intensity of willingness to travel and personal income levels, with higher personal income levels resulting in a stronger willingness to travel. With this in mind, the author also removed those who live on less than 1000 per month, considering that this group has too little disposable income to undertake travel activities. After removing the above questions, 92 questionnaires were left. Of the remaining 92 questionnaires, when asked who they would like to travel with, 52.17% (48) and 32.87% (33) chose to travel alone and with family and friends, while only eleven people chose to travel with a group. This represents a low need to consider how to receive a large number of tourists at the same time when planning a trip later on.



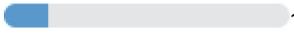
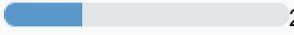
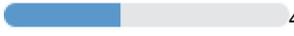
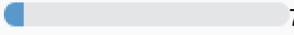
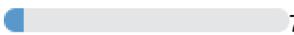
**Table 5.** The public's interest in a cultural tour based on the theme of ancient salt production.

Score	Subtotal	Proportion
1 (not interested at all)	4/133	3.01%
2 (not that interested)	12/133	9.02%
3 (a little interested)	32/133	24.06%
4 (interested)	61/133	45.86%
5 (extremely interested)	24/133	18.05%

**Table 6.** The results of whether the public minds being transported via less comfortable means of mobility during rural tourism.

Score	Subtotal	Proportion
1 (extremely mind)	2/133	1.5%
2 (mind)	1/133	0.75%
3 (mind a little)	31/133	23.31%
4 (not mind)	70/133	52.63%
5 (not mind at all)	29/133	21.8%

**Table 7.** The public’s minimum requirements for accommodation.

Types of accommodation	Subtotal	Proportion
Tent; praetorium; tabernacle; lodge; tilt	21/13 3	 1 5.79%
Box type room	37/13 3	 2 7.82%
Youth hostel	55/13 3	 4 1.35%
Low star hotel	10/13 3	 1 .52%
Standard Business Hotels (Home, Full, etc.)	10/13 3	 1 .52%

**Table 8.** Participants’ willingness to experience different travel activities.

Title/Options	Extremely want to experience	Want to experience	Commonly	Do not want to experience	Do not want to experience it at all
Farm stay	2(2.17%)	18(19.57%)	26(28.26%)	33(35.87%)	13(14.13%)
Pluck; pick	7(7.61%)	16(17.39%)	28(30.43%)	30(32.61%)	11(11.96%)
Experience the work	5(5.43%)	12(13.04%)	33(35.87%)	27(29.35%)	15(16.3%)
Understand intangible cultural heritage	3(3.26%)	18(19.57%)	26(28.26%)	33(35.87%)	12(13.04%)
Delicate, special, and delicious food	9(9.78%)	19(20.65%)	24(26.09%)	24(26.09%)	16(17.39%)
Characteristic culture (bonfire party, etc.)	7(7.61%)	15(16.3%)	28(30.43%)	31(33.7%)	11(11.96%)
Board role-playing games	2(2.17%)	21(22.83%)	36(39.13%)	23(25%)	10(10.87%)
Leisure activities (fishing, cat, etc.)	9(9.78%)	15(16.3%)	32(34.78%)	27(29.35%)	9(9.78%)

**Table 9.** Participants' satisfaction with travel activities.

Title/Options	1 (not mind at all)	2 (not that mind)	3 (mind a little)	4 (mind)	5 (extremely mind)	Average score
Safety degree of tourist routes	2(2.17%)	1(1.09%)	11(11.96%)	55(59.78%)	23(25%)	4.04
Scenic modernization	2(2.17%)	11(11.96%)	47(51.09%)	19(20.65%)	13(14.13%)	3.33
Infrastructure improvement degree	1(1.09%)	6(6.52%)	17(18.48%)	52(56.52%)	16(17.39%)	3.83
Service quality of the scenic spot personnel	1(1.09%)	8(8.7%)	22(23.91%)	42(45.65%)	19(20.65%)	3.76
Food variety richness, food safety	1(1.09%)	6(6.52%)	14(15.22%)	38(41.3%)	33(35.87%)	4.04
Travel prices are appropriate	2(2.17%)	6(6.52%)	23(25%)	38(41.3%)	23(25%)	3.8
Tourism projects are rich	2(2.17%)	5(5.43%)	28(30.43%)	36(39.13%)	21(22.83%)	3.75

It should be noted that out of the remaining 92 questionnaires, 37 people chose a box room and 55 chose a youth hostel as the minimum requirement for accommodation. This represents the necessity of youth hostels for the tourist destination of Yandun Village, which would otherwise result in the majority of tourists' accommodation needs not being met. In order to reduce costs, a coexistence of box rooms and youth hostels could be chosen, and if there is any surplus, a small number of standard business hotels could be added to meet the needs of other travelers.

Additionally, as seen in Table 8 and Table 9, this paper also presents the factors influencing the public's satisfaction and the tourism activities they would like to experience during the trip. The results can provide tourism developers with a further specific analysis.

## 5 Conclusion

In general, the public is interested in the rural cultural tourism industry in Yandun Village with the theme of ancient salt production, and the public's demand for tourism facilities can be met, so we can conclude that it is feasible to develop rural cultural tourism in Yandun Village, and the developer needs to analyse the tourists' preferences in the subsequent specific tourism planning based on the data in the questionnaire and then consider which tourism activities to arrange and which aspects of tourism satisfaction influences should be prioritised to achieve a successful case under the rural revitalisation plan. However, this paper does not investigate whether the villagers of Yandun village are willing to participate in tourism. At present, most of the villagers in Yandun are engaged in aquaculture, and it is not clear whether they will be interested in and participate in the tourism development of their village.

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