



How Rural Tourism Organizational Platformization Empowers Internal Entrepreneurship: A Case Study of Dayu Yashan from the Perspective of Resource Orchestration

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Abstract. How to overcome individual resource constraints and achieve a transition from "independent operation" to "collaborative innovation" is a critical challenge for rural tourism development. Drawing upon resource orchestration theory, this paper adopts an inductive case study approach with Dayu Yashan in Jiangxi Province as the research object to explore how rural tourism organizational platformization empowers internal entrepreneurship. The findings reveal that platformization manifests as a "back-mid-front" three-module structure, which sequentially implements resource structuring, bundling, and leveraging to form a three-tier progressive support system. The back module constructs a resource pool and institutional rules through acquisition, accumulation, and divestiture; the mid module transforms resources into reusable capabilities through stabilization, enrichment, and exploitation; and the front module aligns capabilities with market demands through mobilization, coordination, and deployment. This paper extends resource orchestration theory to the rural context and offers practical implications for platformization transformation and entrepreneurial resource allocation in rural tourism.

Keywords: Rural Tourism Organizational Platformization, Internal Entrepreneurship, Resource Orchestration.

1 Introduction

Rural entrepreneurship in China has gained strong momentum in recent years, becoming a key force in rural economic revitalization. Tourism, as a major component of this trend, has attracted growing entrepreneurial interest. Yet most rural tourism initiatives remain externally oriented and small in scale, often operating in isolation. Entrepreneurs are typically constrained by limited access to diverse resources, weak capacities for resource integration, and slow responsiveness to shifting demand—shortcomings that contribute to elevated failure rates and undermine the long-term, high-quality expansion of the rural tourism sector.

In practice, some rural tourism destinations have constructed platform-based organizations to facilitate internal entrepreneurship among villagers, enabling a transition from isolated individual efforts to collaborative innovation. Nevertheless, existing studies predominantly focus on organizational platformization in mature manufacturing and digital firms, with limited attention to the rural tourism context. Moreover, prior research tends to treat resource actions as a unified mechanism, rarely deconstructing platform modules to examine differentiated resource orchestration processes. Consequently, how platform organizations function effectively in rural settings—where resource endowments and knowledge reserves are inherently constrained—remains underexplored. Drawing upon resource orchestration theory, this paper takes Dayu Yashan as the research object to explore the mechanisms through which rural tourism organizational platformization empowers internal entrepreneurship, with particular attention to the structural features of platform organizations and the process pathways by which they overcome resource constraints through resource orchestration.

2 Theoretical Foundation

2.1 Platform Organization and Internal Entrepreneurship

Platform organizations are defined as "organizational forms capable of constructing flexible combinations of resources, routines, and structures in response to new business opportunities and challenges"^[1], characterized by de-hierarchization, decentralization, and self-organization. Following Alibaba's proposal of the "large mid-platform, small front-end" model in 2015, platform organizations have gradually evolved into a "back-mid-front" structure^[2], comprising a governance layer, resource layer, and entrepreneurial layer^[3].

Internal entrepreneurship was first proposed by Macrae in 1976 and generally refers to the process through which entrepreneurial employees within existing organizations identify and exploit opportunities to initiate and promote the growth of new businesses. This paper focuses specifically on internal entrepreneurship within tourism platform organizations—the process by which entrepreneurial employees launch and develop new ventures.

Platform organizations consist of resource support platforms and micro-units: resource support platforms undertake resource integration and service provision, while micro-units, composed of small teams, directly interface with the market. Existing research predominantly addresses mature large-scale manufacturing and digital enterprises, with limited investigation into rural tourism contexts.

2.2 Resource Orchestration Theory

The resource-based view posits that heterogeneous, immobile, and difficult-to-imitate resources constitute the source of sustained competitive advantage^[4]. However, this perspective has been criticized for neglecting the dynamic processes of resource utilization. Sirmon et al. proposed resource management theory, decomposing it into three

fundamental actions: resource structuring, resource bundling, and resource leveraging^[5]. To further explain how firms construct value through resource innovation, Sirmon et al. integrated resource management theory with asset orchestration theory to propose resource orchestration theory, emphasizing that managers continuously transform resources into competitive advantage through searching, selecting, structuring, bundling, and leveraging^[6].

Compared with other resource theories, resource orchestration theory offers greater operational specificity and highlights the proactive role of firms in dynamic environments. This paper focuses on "how rural tourism organizational platformization supports internal entrepreneurship through resource actions," and resource orchestration theory provides an appropriate analytical tool.

Accordingly, this paper constructs an analytical framework drawing upon the "back-mid-front" model. Within this framework, resource orchestration is embedded across three modular tiers: the back module achieves resource aggregation and institutional provisioning through structuring; the mid module transforms dispersed resources into reusable capabilities through bundling; and the front module aligns capabilities with market demands through leveraging. These three tiers operate in sequential progression, constituting a full-chain support system.

3 Research Design

3.1 Method and Case Selection

This paper addresses "how" and "why" questions appropriately examined through inductive case study methodology^[7]. Following the principles of typicality, theoretical sampling, and data comprehensiveness, Dayu Yashan in Jiangxi Province was selected for three reasons. First, Yashan has been designated as a "National Rural Tourism Maker Demonstration Base" and has received numerous other honors, demonstrating outstanding typicality. Second, Yashan has established an enterprise-led platform organization and successfully incubated numerous micro-entrepreneurial entities, aligning closely with the theoretical framework. Third, the research team can access multiple sources of sufficient data, ensuring reliability and validity.

3.2 Case Context

Yashan is located in Huanglong Township, Dayu County, Jiangxi Province. Prior to tourism development, the village comprised 304 households with 1,104 residents. Situated in mountainous terrain with scarce arable land and poor transportation, the village experienced substantial out-migration of young labor and was a typical impoverished remote village. In 2007, a local entrepreneur established Dayu Zhangyuan Ecotourism Company with government support. In 2015, the company established a mass entrepreneurship platform to encourage villagers and employees to pursue entrepreneurial activities. In 2019, leveraging digital rural construction, internal entrepreneurship became increasingly active. Over more than a decade, Yashan has transformed into a "National 4A-Level Tourist Attraction," "National Tourist Resort," and

"National Rural Tourism Maker Demonstration Base." To date, Yashan has nurtured over 40 crowdfunding projects, established nearly 20 maker-oriented micro-teams, and incubated a number of rural internet celebrities.

3.3 Data Collection

The research team conducted multiple field visits to Yashan between 2022 and 2026, employing in-depth interviews, on-site observation, and secondary data collection to achieve triangulation. In-depth interviews covered enterprise managers, village committee members, villagers, entrepreneurs, and tourists—totaling 17 respondents with a cumulative duration of 765 minutes. On-site observation involved experiencing tourism products and observing daily activities. Secondary data included archival texts, online reports, social media, and academic literature. Multiple data sources mutually corroborated each other, ensuring credibility.

4 Case Analysis

4.1 Back Module: Resource Structuring and Entrepreneurial Support

Zhangyuan Company, as the platform architect, established the strategic direction of "building an ecological scenic area." Its resource structuring process comprises three components: (1) Resource Acquisition. As a native of Yashan, the chairman leveraged his emotional attachment to commit to rural development. With government support, Zhangyuan Company, in joint investment with China Agricultural Development Key Construction Fund, took the lead in unified tourism development. (2) Resource Accumulation. First, land rights confirmation across three categories resolved planning issues, allowing villagers to contribute land, housing, and capital as equity. Second, local materials and artisan craftsmanship were fully utilized—farm tools, tires, and waste wood were repurposed for landscape construction, and the wood sculpture industry was developed. Intangible cultural heritage was excavated, and traditional farming activities were revived. Employee training was regularly organized, teaching music, dance, floral arrangement, and horticulture. (3) Resource Divestiture. Zhangyuan implemented dual divestiture: business model divestiture—transcending sight-seeing to build the "Yaxi Resort Lifestyle" brand; and institutional divestiture—restructuring property rights to establish a three-tier benefit mechanism, under which villagers retain ownership while receiving fixed rent and priority employment. Employee stock ownership plans were introduced.

Entrepreneurial Support. Zhangyuan built a communal resource pool centered on Yashan Scenic Area and laid the entrepreneurial foundation through the benefit mechanism and stock ownership system.

4.2 Mid Module: Resource Bundling and Entrepreneurial Support

Zhangyuan adopted an operational model of "modularized management." Its resource bundling process comprises three components: (1) Resource Stabilization. Zhangyuan standardized capabilities such as brand building and market research, subcontracting specialized segments to villagers and makers, transforming each step into a supply-purchase relationship. (2) Resource Enrichment. Zhangyuan adopted an "anchor+" approach, cooperating with leading business schools and venture capital institutions to build an entrepreneurial social network and training system. (3) Resource Exploitation. In 2019, the company collaborated with Tencent Cloud to develop the "One System Manages Yashan" smart tourism platform and a digital trading platform. In 2022, it established the Yashan New Media Base and 5G Live Commerce Academy for internet celebrity incubation and talent training.

Entrepreneurial Support. Zhangyuan established an internal incubation platform, strengthening business integration and helping entrepreneurs access incubation resources and investors.

4.3 Front Module: Resource Leveraging and Entrepreneurial Support

Zhangyuan directly interfaces with the market by activating maker-oriented micro-units: (1) Resource Mobilization. Through policy support, the company stimulated entrepreneurial potential, transforming villagers from laborers into resource integrators and market developers. (2) Resource Coordination. Villagers could pursue individual entrepreneurship or collaborate through teams. Yashan villagers established nearly 20 micro-teams, including performance troupes and sports teams. Each team operates autonomously while the platform provides guidance and coordinates collaboration. (3) Resource Deployment. Individual makers developed personal internet celebrity brands and expanded partnerships, introducing 16 investment enterprises.

Entrepreneurial Support. Resources were allocated to the front-end, supporting micro-organizations through crowdfunding models, forming an entrepreneurial network linked by "individual + collective + other social equity."

5 Mechanisms and Theoretical Findings

This paper distills a "three-tier progressive support mechanism" through which rural tourism organizational platformization empowers internal entrepreneurship. First, the back module constructs a foundational support layer. Platform architects, through resource structuring, form an internal entrepreneurial resource pool and institutional rules. Architects define the entrepreneurial vision, identify required resources, and select acquisition pathways. Through regional brand building, the platform divests stereotypical rural images. Through benefit-sharing mechanisms, entrepreneurial risks are contained, and incentive systems centered on equity and partnerships are established. Second, the mid module constructs an incubation empowerment layer. Rural tourism entrepreneurs are predominantly villagers who lack strength in resource allo-

cation and market development. As the critical structure connecting back and front modules, the mid module abstracts common services to enable repeated invocation of capabilities. Its functioning is achieved through stabilization (organizing capabilities into a reusable repository), enrichment (transforming from all-purpose manager to professional operator), and exploitation (introducing digital tools for decision support). Third, the front module constructs a value co-creation layer. Front-end micro-units are the most dynamic component. Their functioning is achieved through mobilization (encouraging creative ideas), coordination (forming maker organizations through teams and cooperatives), and deployment (leveraging brands for promotion, attracting external entrepreneurs to spawn more teams).

The back addresses "what resources are available," the mid addresses "how resources become capabilities," and the front addresses "how capabilities capture opportunities." The three tiers operate in progression, constituting a full-chain support system.

6 Conclusions and Implications

Based on resource orchestration theory, this paper draws three main conclusions through the case study of Dayu Yashan. First, rural tourism organizational platformization manifests as a "back-mid-front" three-module structure that effectively facilitates heterogeneous and scalable entrepreneurial activities. This structure breaks through the resource segmentation of traditional organizations, achieving integration of resource aggregation, capability transformation, and market responsiveness. Second, resource orchestration activities—structuring, bundling, and leveraging—constitute the core mechanism through which platform organizations empower internal entrepreneurship. The three types correspond to the three tiers, each undertaking distinct roles and collectively forming a comprehensive support system. Third, the three modules differ in their support mechanisms: the back establishes the resource pool and rules through structuring, constituting the foundational layer; the mid establishes the incubation platform through bundling, constituting the empowerment layer; and the front forms maker organizations and relational networks through leveraging, constituting the value co-creation layer. The three tiers follow the logic of "foundational support—incubation empowerment—value co-creation."

Practical implications: Rural tourism organizations should attend to synergistic construction of all three tiers—consolidating the back module's resource foundation, strengthening the mid module's capability integration, and activating the front module's market responsiveness. Governments should improve policy support and establish regional resource-sharing platforms. The empowering role of digital technology should be emphasized.

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