

Industrial Heritage Tourism and Sustainable Development: A Case Study of Liuzhou

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Abstract: Industrial heritage serves as a vehicle for the historical and cultural inheritance of a region. The integration of industrial culture with industrial heritage tourism is conducive to the revitalization and rejuvenation of industrial heritage. To promote the sustainable development of industrial heritage tourism, this paper takes Liuzhou, the industrial hub of Guangxi Province, as the research object. Through the SWOT analysis method, it explores the current situation and existing problems of industrial heritage tourism in Liuzhou. Finally, by combining the actual situation and successful cases, it summarizes the effective suggestions for facilitating the sustainable development of industrial heritage tourism in Liuzhou.

Keywords: Industrial Heritage Tourism; Sustainable Development; Liuzhou

Introduction

Industrial heritage, as a product of the industrial civilization era, contains profound historical background and cultural heritage. In the context of continuous innovation in social production technology and continuous promotion of urban renewal, a large number of industrial heritages that have lost their production functions are gradually withdrawing from the historical stage and being forgotten with the development of the times^[1]. In this process, how to ensure the effective protection and sustainable development of industrial heritage while pursuing rapid economic development has become an important issue of concern in urban development^[2]. Industrial heritage tourism, as an emerging tourism model in recent years, can not only help revitalize industrial heritage and stimulate new economic value, but also make important contributions to the inheritance of industrial culture. However, compared to the rich international practice of industrial heritage tourism, China's industrial heritage resources are relatively limited due to the late start of modern industry. In addition, some regions have insufficient understanding of the protection and development of industrial heritage, resulting in industrial heritage tourism still in the exploratory stage, without a mature system and scale, lacking practical experience, and facing many urgent problems to be solved^[3]. Therefore, studying Liuzhou, which has achieved relatively successful development in domestic heritage tourism, analyzing its current problems in heritage tourism, and proposing targeted and actionable suggestions are of great significance for promoting the sustainable development of industrial heritage tourism in China.

1. Related concepts

In the Lower Tagil Charter adopted in July 2003, the International Federation for the Protection of Industrial Heritage defined industrial heritage as the remnants left behind by the development of industrial civilization, which have significant technological, historical, and architectural value. Among them, industrial relics include factories, workshops, industrial machinery, transportation infrastructure related to energy production and utilization, as well as some residential, educational, religious and other social activities related to industry.^[4]

2. Overview of the research area

Liuzhou, located in the central part of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, is an industrial hub in southwestern China. It has built a comprehensive industrial system covering machinery, automobiles, energy, steel, food and other industries, and has become the "heart" of Guangxi's industrial production. At the same time, Liuzhou has a superior geographical location and well-developed transportation, making it a national comprehensive transportation hub that provides favorable conditions for the rapid development of industry. In the more than a hundred years of historical process in Liuzhou, numerous industrial sites and machinery equipment carrying the cultural context and industrial memory of the city have been left behind.

3. SWOT analysis of industrial heritage tourism in Liuzhou

3.1 Advantages in Development

3.1.1 Superior geographical location

Liuzhou is located in the central region of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. As an important industrial base in the western border area and a key transit station for free trade with ASEAN countries, its unique geographical location provides a solid foundation for the development of the tourism industry. At the same time, as an important transportation hub in Guangxi, Liuzhou City, with its own transportation advantages, can closely connect with surrounding cities, jointly develop the tourism industry, continuously enrich tourism resources, form a new trend of regional tourism interaction, and expand the influence of tourism development.

3.1.2 Abundant industrial heritage resources

In the 1940s and 1950s, Liuzhou's industry gradually developed, with diversified industrial categories. After the reform and opening up, light industry, machinery manufacturing, chemical industry, and other industries developed rapidly. Especially in the Liuzhou Industrial Museum, there are more than 6000 large, medium, and small industrial heritage cultural relics used and produced in Liuzhou since 1902, which have rich industrial heritage resources and become a powerful guarantee for the development of Liuzhou's industrial heritage tourism.

3.1.3 Support from National Policies

In recent years, the Liuzhou government has attached significant importance to the development of the tourism industry and has issued a series of supportive policies. In 2005, Liuzhou City signed a number of agreements for the integration of tourism with Guilin City, leveraging Guilin's international tourism city platform to continue.

3.1.4 Strong financial support

In order to achieve the construction of a "tourist city" and complete the five-year plan for tourism development, the Liuzhou government has issued relevant policy support, clarified the specific goals, plans, and measures of Liuzhou as a tourist city, increased financial investment in the tourism industry, and allocated special funds for tourism development every year, providing solid financial support for the development of industrial heritage tourism and helping to promote the implementation of related projects.

3.2 Disadvantages in Development

3.2.1 Insufficient Awareness in Industrial Heritage Development

Despite Liuzhou possessing rich industrial heritage resources, there is a dearth of local guiding policies, which has led to the ineffective development and utilization of some industrial heritage sites. Currently, Liuzhou's industrial heritage tourism mainly focuses on the Liuzhou Industrial Museum and the Liu Kong Creative Park, featuring a monotonous form. It primarily remains at the level of visiting and sightseeing, lacking in-depth interactive experiences, and has not fully explored and reflected the true heritage cultural value of Liuzhou's industrial heritage, thereby reducing the visitors' experience of industrial heritage tourism.

3.2.2 Gradual "Disappearance" of Industrial Heritage

With the continuous advancement of high-tech and the improvement of China's infrastructure construction capabilities, traditional industries are gradually phased out of history, leaving behind abandoned industrial production workshops and industrial production machinery and equipment. Additionally, the abandoned and idle industrial production workshops are more amenable to renovation and reuse, thus being supplanted by new enterprises. Very few enterprises or investors consider these abandoned factories, equipment, and machinery as industrial heritage for tourism development. Instead, more are the resurgence of new industries. Therefore, many industrial heritage sites in Liuzhou with historical value are at risk of being developed during the process, and effective measures must be adopted to protect them.

3.3 Threats Faced

3.3.1 Intense Tourism Competition Market

Although industrial heritage tourism started relatively late in China and the related tourism system still needs to be improved, in recent years, industrial heritage tourism in China has gradually revitalized and flourished, and many old industrial cities have achieved significant results in long-term exploration and practice. However, from the perspective of industrial cities across the country, many cities have a high degree of similarity in industrial heritage tourism, and the homogenization of tourism products is relatively serious. In the limited industrial heritage tourism, a relatively fierce competitive market will be formed.

3.3.2 Continuously increasing tourism demand

Compared to traditional tourism models, contemporary tourists have become more diverse and personalized in their demands for travel experiences. They not only pursue natural scenery but also crave rich cultural knowledge and in-depth experiences during their travels. However, the current tourism market is facing a serious problem of product homogenization, with high similarities in tourism models and content among provinces, posing challenges to the uniqueness and attractiveness of tourism destinations.

4. Suggestions for sustainable development of industrial heritage tourism in Liuzhou

4.1 Improve the protection and utilization mechanism of industrial heritage, promote the rational development of industrial heritage resources

Given that the research on the protection and utilization of industrial heritage in the country is still in the exploratory stage, the Liuzhou government can actively learn from the successful practical experience of other provinces in industrial heritage tourism, closely integrate Liuzhou's unique regional cultural characteristics, improve and optimize the local mechanism for the protection and utilization of industrial heritage, formulate and promulgate a series of legal documents, clarify the specific scope of industrial heritage protection and utilization, formulate corresponding incentive and punishment measures, and promote the scientific planning and rational development of Liuzhou's industrial heritage resources.

4.2 Conduct a comprehensive survey of industrial heritage and integrate tourism resources of Liuzhou's industrial heritage

Over the course of more than a hundred years of industrial cultural history in Liuzhou, rich industrial heritage resources have been left behind. In the industrial heritage census conducted throughout the city, the government should improve the recognition and evaluation mechanism of industrial heritage, timely recognize and classify industrial heritage, fully integrate Liuzhou's industrial heritage resources, compile a list of industrial heritage in Liuzhou, and take corresponding protection measures in a timely manner according to the classification of heritage to prevent damage to industrial heritage during the development process.

4.3 Develop the development path of industrial heritage tourism and achieve sustainable development of heritage tourism

With the continuous maturity of digital and Internet technologies, tourism cultural resources are widely spread through the network media platform, breaking the regional restrictions. The immovable industrial cultural heritage of Liuzhou can be digitally preserved through digital platforms using technologies such as text, images, and 3D modeling. A dedicated industrial heritage website can be established for archiving, allowing visitors to have a deeper understanding of the charm of Liuzhou's industrial heritage. At the same time, the government should use Internet technology to build a "smart tourism" cloud platform to meet the diverse needs of tourists and effectively promote the sustainable development of Liuzhou's industrial heritage tourism.

5. Conclusion

As an industrial hub in Guangxi, Liuzhou's industrial heritage is not only a witness to technological progress, but also a concentrated reflection of the unremitting struggle and wisdom of the Liuzhou people, with irreplaceable historical, cultural, and social value. Faced with the challenges and opportunities of rapid urban renewal, the Liuzhou government and enterprises need to take active measures to systematically carry out statistics, evaluation, and protection of industrial heritage, using tourism development as a new engine for heritage protection, exploring and releasing its potential economic value, and meeting tourists' needs for diversified and in-depth cultural tourism experiences. At the same time, we will increase the promotion of industrial heritage tourism in Liuzhou, shape the unique brand image of Liuzhou's industrial heritage tourism, enhance the city's visibility and attractiveness, and promote the sustainable development of Liuzhou's industrial heritage tourism.

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