

AN INTEGRATION MODEL OF CULTURAL TOURISM AND WELLNESS HEALTHCARE INDUSTRIES BASED ON SELENIUM-ENRICHED RESOURCES IN XIANYU MOUNTAIN

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ABSTRACT

With the rapid development of China's economy, the quality of life has become a primary focus for Chinese families. The integration of cultural tourism and wellness healthcare has begun to exhibit regionalized and personalized characteristics in this new era. This paper takes Xianyu Mountain in Shitai County, Anhui Province, as its case study. Employing qualitative research methods and data collection, it utilizes PEST and SWOT analyses to examine its current development status and identify shortcomings and issues in its industrial integration process. Considering China's aging population trend, and supported by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and wellness industry development theories, this study proposes recommendations and further explores a new model for the convergence of the cultural tourism and wellness healthcare industries. The aim is to provide insights for local economic development and industrial upgrading.

Keywords: Selenium-enriched resources; Xianyu Mountain; cultural tourism and wellness healthcare; industrial integration.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the definition provided in the 2016 "National Wellness Tourism Demonstration Base" standard, wellness tourism refers to the sum of various tourism activities aimed at achieving a natural and harmonious state of body, mind, and spirit through means such as enhancing physical appearance and fitness, nutritious diets, mental cultivation, and engaging with the environment. Under the backdrop of China's new era, the cultural tourism and wellness industry is a novel industrial model that adapts to the new economic development and meets people's evolving needs (Lü & Ma, 2024). Xianyu Mountain is located in Shitai County, Anhui Province, and is renowned for its unique selenium-enriched resources and superior ecological environment. Hailed as "China's First Selenium-Rich Village," it has earned the title "Longevity Village," with over 12% of its population being over 80 years old. These distinctive natural resources provide a solid foundation for wellness tourism. This study utilizes a PEST analysis to examine the external environment of the cultural tourism and wellness industry in Xianyu Mountain from political, economic, social, and technological dimensions, exploring its development opportunities and challenges. Furthermore, a SWOT analysis is employed to understand the internal conditions of the industry's development. Based on this comprehensive analysis, the study investigates how Xianyu Mountain can leverage its selenium-enriched resources to achieve deep integration and

innovative development in the cultural tourism and wellness industry, and subsequently proposes development recommendations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Selenium-Enriched Resources

Guan (2023) indicated that selenium is an essential trace element for the human body and is closely related to human health. Subsequently, Li et al. (2024) found that understanding the geochemical properties of selenium in soil, its controlling factors, and the adsorption capacity of plants for selenium in soil is conducive to developing distinctive selenium-enriched agricultural products, boosting the local economy, and consolidating the achievements of poverty alleviation. This study is based on the selenium-enriched resources of Xianyu Mountain to research the integration of cultural tourism and wellness healthcare.

2.2 Cultural Tourism and Wellness Healthcare

With the improvement of people's living standards and the shift in tourism consumption concepts, "cultural tourism + wellness healthcare" as a new form of tourism has become a new highlight in the development of the tourism industry (Dang, 2025). This study focuses on analyzing new models for the integration of cultural tourism and wellness healthcare.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, involving the collection and synthesis of data from diverse sources to analyze problems and propose solutions. Guided by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, it recognizes that within the context of a progressively developing society, human needs are continuously evolving, thus creating significant potential for the integrated development of the cultural tourism and wellness healthcare industries. Du (2024), in the study "Wellness Industry Development Theory and Innovative Practice," established a theoretical foundation for the development of the wellness industry and provided an in-depth analysis of its statistical monitoring and evaluation systems. Consequently, the development of the wellness industry, underpinned by theoretical guidance, can better proceed with practical exploration.

4. CURRENT SITUATION ANALYSIS

With the growing demand for wellness tourism, the cultural tourism and wellness industry in Xianyu Mountain is developing rapidly.

4.1 Analysis of the External Environment of Xianyu Mountain's Cultural Tourism and Wellness Industry using the PEST Framework

Li & Zhong (2025) employed a SWOT-PEST analysis to construct a model in their research, assessing the external environment across political, economic, social, and technological dimensions. The PEST model is widely applied for analyzing the macro-environment of an industry to formulate strategies addressing changes in these external conditions (Guo, 2025). This paper applies this model to the context of Xianyu Mountain.

Political: From a political perspective, the "Healthy China 2030" Plan Outline issued by the State Council in 2016 emphasizes the principle of prioritizing health development. Anhui Province attaches great importance to the cultural tourism and wellness industry, subsequently releasing documents such as the "Anhui Provincial '14th Five-Year Plan' for the Development of Aging Initiatives" and the "Anhui Provincial People's Government's Opinions on Supporting the High-

Quality Development of the Wellness Industry." This favorable policy environment has facilitated the implementation of wellness projects. However, despite strong policy support, the approval process for cultural tourism and wellness projects remains complex, involving coordination across multiple departments, which may hinder the pace of project advancement.

Economic: Regarding the economic environment, since 2023, the wellness industry has become a new economic growth driver. With the advent of an aging society, the demand for wellness tourism continues to rise. The selection of Xianyu Mountain scenic area into the second batch of "Anhui Summer Retreat and Leisure Destinations" has further enhanced its appeal as a summer tourism hotspot. In 2024, visitor numbers increased by over 20% year-on-year, and annual tourism revenue grew by 15% compared to the previous year. However, from an investment standpoint, the return on investment cycle is lengthy, and substantial capital is required to support various construction projects, presenting certain challenges.

Social: From a social perspective, China has entered a moderately aging society. The demand for wellness services among the elderly population is increasing, providing a broad market space for Xianyu Mountain's cultural tourism and wellness industry. Liu & Zhao (2025) pointed out in their article that with the growing sub-healthy population and intensifying aging, tourist demand is shifting from sightseeing to wellness and rejuvenation. Xianyu Mountain's selenium-enriched resources aptly align with this trend.

Technological: With the continuous development of technologies such as smart elderly care platforms and health monitoring equipment, the application of information technology in the wellness industry is becoming increasingly widespread, providing technical support for Xianyu Mountain's cultural tourism and wellness offerings. Concurrently, ecological restoration technologies and sustainable development practices help enhance the environmental quality of Xianyu Mountain, strengthening its appeal as a wellness destination.

4.2 Analysis of the Internal Condition of Xianyu Mountain's Cultural Tourism and Wellness Industry using the SWOT Framework

The SWOT analysis, also known as the Situation Analysis method, is a decision-making tool proposed in the 1980s by the American scholar Professor Heinz Weihrich (Chen et al., 2025). This paper applies this framework to analyze Xianyu Mountain, with its selenium-enriched resources, across the four aspects of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

Strengths: Primarily, Xianyu Mountain possesses unique selenium-enriched resources. Huo (2019) described Xianyu Mountain as a national 4A-grade tourist attraction, a mountain-forest type summer resort with an average altitude of over 600 meters and a peak reaching 1,400 meters, boasting a forest coverage rate of 84.5%; it is also a renowned selenium-rich area in China. Subsequently, scholars Fan Hui and Li (2022), in their article taking the selenium-rich soil of Dashan Village, Shitai County as an example, reported that the Se content in collected samples all exceeded 0.6 mg/kg, confirming it as typical selenium-rich soil. Secondly, regarding policy support and brand effect, Shitai County has recently vigorously promoted the development of the cultural tourism and wellness industry. Xianyu Mountain has been included in the provincial-level tourist resort creation list and has received the title "Advantageous Zone for Selenium-Enriched Industry Development." Furthermore, significant investment has been allocated in recent years to infrastructure construction in Xianyu Mountain, including road widening within the scenic area and the construction of a tourist service center, providing visitors with an enhanced tourism experience.

Weaknesses: Deficiencies currently exist in talent recruitment and cultivation. The wellness tourism products primarily remain traditional, focusing on agritainment and eco-tours, lacking innovation and differentiation. The issue of product homogenization is relatively prominent, constraining the further development of the industry.

Opportunities: Leveraging its selenium-enriched resources and ecological environment, Xianyu Mountain has a significant opportunity to attract more middle-aged and elderly tourists. The healthy development of society has led to a growing desire for travel among the elderly population (Yang & Zhang, 2024). Furthermore, proactive government policy support, evidenced by the introduction of documents such as the "Shitai County Measures to Support the Development of the Selenium Industry" and the "Shitai County List of Elderly Service Support Policies and Measures," aims to foster the development of the local cultural tourism and wellness industry.

Threats: The domestic wellness tourism market is highly competitive, posing a significant challenge to Xianyu Mountain. Additionally, increasing tourist numbers could place considerable pressure on the region's fragile ecosystem. Finally, global economic uncertainties in recent years may adversely affect tourists' disposable income and travel willingness, potentially impacting visitor numbers.

5. ANALYSIS OF THE INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT MODELS FOR CULTURAL TOURISM AND WELLNESS IN XIANYU MOUNTAIN

Firstly, the Resource-Driven Integration Model. Leveraging its selenium-enriched resources, Xianyu Mountain has established an industrial integration model of "Selenium + Tourism + Wellness." By developing a series of selenium-enriched products and creating wellness experience programs such as "Selenium Meals" and "Selenium Tea," alongside projects like the Selenium Oxygen Bar Town and the Selenium Agricultural Technology Industrial Park, it has attracted a large number of tourists and enhanced value-added benefits. Secondly, the Policy-Guided Integration Model. The government's strategy of "Building the County through Ecology, Revitalizing the County through Tourism, and Strengthening the County through Industry" has provided strong support from environmental, policy, and technological perspectives. This has improved the quality of local selenium-enriched products and yielded greater economic benefits. Thirdly, the Market-Oriented Integration Model. Xianyu Mountain has developed diversified wellness tourism products. It has introduced programs such as specialized tours and customized tours, integrating demands for recuperation, leisure, and elderly care. This has led to the creation of new formats like "Tourism + Recuperation" and "Tourism + Elderly Care."

6. INNOVATIVE PATHWAYS FOR THE INTEGRATION OF THE CULTURAL TOURISM AND WELLNESS INDUSTRY IN XIANYU MOUNTAIN

Product Innovation: Establishing a Selenium-Enriched Wellness Brand Xianyu Mountain has developed a unique wellness brand through the strategic creation of specialty products including selenium-infused tea, selenium-rich water, and selenium-enhanced rice. This product innovation strategy effectively transforms local natural resources into distinctive consumer goods with strong market appeal. **Service Innovation:** Enhancing Visitor Experience Through comprehensive improvements in tourism infrastructure and service quality, the destination has significantly elevated the overall visitor experience. These enhancements in facilities and hospitality services have successfully increased tourist satisfaction and engagement. **Model Innovation:** Promoting Multi-Sector Integration The implementation of the "Tourism + Industry + Employment" model

has facilitated deep integration between cultural tourism, wellness industries, and sectors such as agriculture and local culture. This innovative approach has created synergistic development across multiple economic domains.

7. CHALLENGES AND COUNTERMEASURES FOR THE INTEGRATION OF THE CULTURAL TOURISM AND WELLNESS INDUSTRY IN XIANYU MOUNTAIN

Wang (2025) identified in their research that the wellness product and service system remains underdeveloped. This study corroborates this finding, observing that while developing its selenium-enriched resources, Xianyu Mountain must further address the imperative of ecological environmental protection. Secondly, with intensifying market competition, Xianyu Mountain faces significant pressure from rival destinations. Concurrently, the development of the cultural tourism and wellness industry demands a substantial number of professionals, yet Xianyu Mountain currently suffers from a shortage of talent reserves. As Zhou and Zhang (2024) noted, wellness tourism cultural services can not only meet the cultural demands of the elderly and improve their quality of life but also contribute to regional economic development and cultural exchange. Drawing on the conclusions of this study, the following countermeasures are proposed: First, strengthen ecological protection. Integrate scientific management and policy support to ensure the sustainable utilization and healthy development of natural resources. Second, enhance brand influence. Further explore the cultural heritage of Xianyu Mountain to create a unique brand narrative. Utilize various social media and short-form video platforms for integrated online and offline promotion, employing targeted marketing to boost Xianyu Mountain's market competitiveness. Third, introduce and cultivate talent. Build professional service teams and leverage digitalization and technology to enhance the professional skills of wellness service personnel. Fourth, integrate resources to solidly develop new formats in cultural tourism and wellness. Establish collaborations with relevant medical institutions, health management centers, and others to increase attractiveness through professional expertise.

8. CONCLUSION

This study has provided a comprehensive analysis of the cultural tourism and wellness industry in Xianyu Mountain by employing a combined PEST and SWOT framework to examine both its external environment and internal conditions. Based on this analysis, the study investigated integrated development models, highlighting approaches that leverage selenium-enriched resources through innovation in products, services, and business formats. The findings indicate that Xianyu Mountain's cultural tourism and wellness sector possesses significant potential for future growth. To realize this potential, Xianyu Mountain should prioritize strengthening ecological conservation, enhancing brand influence, attracting and cultivating professional talent, and integrating various resources. These efforts will be crucial for driving the high-quality development of the industry, thereby injecting new vitality into rural revitalization and the regional economy.

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