How Can Tourism Create Employment

— Research on Travel Photography Experience in Xishuangbanna, China

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1 Research Background

Fugitive princess of Xishuangbanna
Xishuangbanna is a tourism city located in Southwest of China.

There are 13 ethnic groups living in Xishuangbanna. More than 50% people are minority. Dai is the main group.

Tourism develops as the biggest business there, and tourism income per year are more than 500 million RMB.
Xishuangbanna is one of observatories of Sustainable Tourism Development of UNWTO in China held in April 2015.

Gaozhuang Xishuangjing is a famous tourist town, located in Xishuangbanna city. Its name means "nine towers and twelve villages", creating a new city inside the city".

It is rooted in the Dai culture of Xishuangbanna, integrates the essence of Dai and Thai culture in the Mekong River basin. It is characterized by night economy and consumption.
2 Case Introduction—Travel photography

- Travel photography has a long history in Xishuangbanna. Tourists dressed in modified Dai style dress stand in front of the tower for a travelling photo.
- As a kind of experiential consumption, travel photography is favored by more and more people.
- Xishuangbanna travel photography because of its exaggerated makeup and bright colors of clothing becomes popular, once set off a "go to Xishuangbanna travel photography" boom.
- It takes about three to five hours, and the prices are between 300 and 1000 RMB.
2 Case Introduction—Travel photography in Gaozhuang

- Held "Xishuangbanna Jinglan Starlight Travel Photo Contest"
- **Improved travel photography clothing**, the style has expanded from the initial single Dai clothing to the current honey baby, West region princess, Princess Jasmine, Miao girls and other series, and the Gaozhuang scenic spot has formed a complete travel photography industry chain

- The effect of the travel photography in Gaozhuang scenic spot is considerable
- **Social platforms**: Taking Tiktok as an example, related content with the topic of "Xishuangbanna travel photography" has been played **660 million times**
- **Industrial structure**: More than **180** businesses engaged in tourism photography, tourism photography from makeup, clothing to photography has formed a **complete industrial chain**, has become a pillar industry.
Research Questions

• Why does travel photography keep growing?
• How does this business develop?
• How do create employment?
Why to keep growing?

01 tropic climate
- Typical tropical monsoon climate, long sunshine time throughout the year, hot and humid climate;
- The comfortable climate is one of the main reasons that attracts tourists to Xishuangbanna.

02 multi-national region
- Strong ethnic culture atmosphere, festivals, rituals, food, clothing, architecture and so on greatly meet the psychological needs of tourists to seek the authenticity of national culture;
- In order to meet the trend, Xishuangbanna's travel photograph costumes have been modified.

03 large number of tourists
- It is the most popular tourist destination of "tens of millions of receptions" in Xishuangbanna;
- During the Spring Festival in 2023, Xishuangbanna received an average of 14,000 tourists per day, which was crowded with people at night.
4 How to develop it? Voices from tourists

- Tourists expressed anticipation and excitement for the new experience, and they became more confident as the makeup was completed.

- With the promotion of the travel photograph process, the immediate positive feedback of the photographer in the shooting process and the active travel photographing atmosphere created by the scenic spot, tourists show excitement, happiness, confidence and joy in the formal travel photographing process.

- After the photographing, most of the tourists showed satisfaction and worthwhile feelings for the experience, and some tourists were recognized by sharing interaction on social platforms.
Buildings, tropical plants, lights, street stalls, and even other tourists wearing ethnic minority costumes are all symbols in the Xishuangbanna travel photography ritual context. These symbols create a unique tourist photography environment, where visitors are immersed in an environment full of ritual symbols and experience a sense of contentment and excitement.

The authenticity of the ceremony constructed by various symbols makes tourists realize that they are traveling in Xishuangbanna, rather than traveling in other places or doing other activities in Xishuangbanna;

The feeling of immersion brought by the environment to the tourists is higher than the tourists themselves are clearly aware of the perception, so as to reduce the physical pain perception and show the pleasure emotion.
Photographers are the close partners of tourists participating in the ritual, which is not only related to the presentation of the effect of the travel photographing, but also affects the tourists' experience.

- To a certain extent, the guidance of the photographer enhanced the tourists' familiarity with the ceremony site, and then showed themselves more generously.

- The photographer gives timely feedback to the tourists to enhance their satisfaction;
- Immediate guidance helps tourists build confidence to show themselves and soothe any unease they may have.

- Tourists expect encouragement and praise from photographers;
- The photographer gives timely encouragement, giving the tourists the motivation to continue taking photos, and the tourists feel that they have been recognized.
5 How to create employment?

Tourists regard the the travel photographing as an important ceremony to travel to Xishuangbanna, and they want to enjoy the process of the the travel photographing and get a unique experience.

- Tourist’s motivation

Tourists regard the the travel photographing as an important ceremony to travel to Xishuangbanna, and they want to enjoy the process of the the travel photographing and get a unique experience.

- Tourism Town

- There are more than 250 restaurants, 258 inn hotels a total of 11,400 beds
- In the night market, 12 theater, performance, or stages
- Gaozhuang gathered nearly 5,000 merchants, provide more than 30,000 jobs, the annual income of nearly 6 billion RMB,
5 How to create employment? Industry chain

The rise of the travel photography industry may lead to the common development of upstream and downstream industries.

**Supply chain**
- Creative design
- Travel photographing competition
- Costume making

**Demand chain**
- Environmental atmosphere
- Marketing
- Service output

**Travel Photography**
- Photographing
- Makeup
- Electronic retouching
- Makeup remover
5 How to create employment? Data

Supply

➢ Since 2021, Gaozhuang Xishuangjing scenic spot has successfully held three Jinglan Starlight Travel Photography Competition and six Ethnic Costume Shows, attracting hundreds of ethnic costume design studios and ethnic costume businesses to participate, and thousands of models wearing Dai, Hani, Bulang, Wa and other ethnic minorities in the traditional elements and modern design of the integration of exquisite clothing appeared here.

Travel Photograph Itself

➢ There are more than 180 businesses engaged in the business of travel photography, and a complete industrial chain has been formed from makeup, clothing to photography, with an output value of about 200 to 300 million RMB.

Demand

➢ During the Spring Festival this year, the number of visitors to the Gaozhuang Xishaungjing has exceeded 750,000.

(Data Source: Official news by Culture and Tourism Bureau of Xishuangbanna)
6 Challenges of Data

• Limited data available
• Monitoring work to collect data
• Qualitative info to supplement
THANK YOU!

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