

## Research on the Sustainable Development of Tourism Performance: a Case Study of Shaanxi Province

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**Abstract:** With the further integration of culture and the tourism industry, the tourism performance has gradually become a hot topic in the field of culture and tourism. Taking Shaanxi Province as an example, this study focuses on analyzing problems encountered in the process of developing tourism performance, and puts forward a feasible method to achieve the sustainable development of tourism performance in Shaanxi from the aspects of project construction, product production, industrial chain development as well as publicity and marketing.

### 1. Introduction

With the rapid development of China's economy and the continuous improvement of people's living standards, the culture and tourism needs of the people are growing. The integration of culture and tourism becomes imperative under that situation. The cultural tourism industry has become the most dynamic industry in China's social and economic development. In recent years, many culture and tourism enterprises have been exploring specific forms which can integrate culture and tourism. Among them, the tourism performance has gradually become a typical representative of culture and tourism integration.

From the perspective of economic performance, according to the latest statistics released by idaaloe in August 2019, in 2018, the number of tourism performances in China increased by 12.1% compared with 2017; the number of plays reached 306. The total box office revenue was 5.908 billion yuan, with an increase of 703 million yuan compared with 2017. The increasing rate was 13.5%.<sup>[1]</sup> In addition to the direct income of box office revenue, the tourism performance also made great contributions to promoting the employment of local residents, prolonging the stay time of tourists, and promoting the development of tourism related industries in the local area. From the perspective of cultural performance, the tourism performance plays an important role in the excavation, protection, inheritance and promotion of folk customs as well as intangible cultural heritages in the region. Tourists can have better understanding on local culture through the intuitive experience of watching tourism performances. In view of these economic and cultural benefits, the tourism performance, a form which integrates culture and tourism, is highly sought after by local governments as well as cultural and tourism enterprises.

Shaanxi, one of the birthplaces of Chinese civilization, has a profound historical and cultural heritage as well as unique cultural tourism resources. Culture and tourism personnel in Shaanxi are trying to transform the abstract history and culture to concrete cultural tourism products that can be easily accepted and loved by ordinary tourists. The form of tourism performance was also originated in Shaanxi. In September 1982, the palace named Tang Dynasty, Xi'an launched *The Tang-style Dance*, the first show in China which combined catering with performance. It is the pioneer of China's cultural tourism performance. In 2007, the landscape live performance, *Song of Regret* was officially staged in Huaqing pool, Lintong of Xi'an. After 12 years of upgrading and improvement, the play has become a benchmark product of tourism performance, and issued the first national standard for live performance.<sup>[2]</sup> At present, there are more than 30 tourism performances in Shaanxi Province, which are mainly divided into three types. The first is live performance, such as *Song of Regret* and *Yellow River Chorus*. The second is theater performance,

including *The Story of the Three Kingdoms Period* and *The Empress*. The third is scenic performance, like *Legends of the Silk Road* and *Legends of Qin and Han Dynasties*. At present, the development of Shaanxi tourism performance is in full swing; the investment volume is growing by leaps and bounds. However, the problems under the appearance of prosperity also deserve our in-depth consideration.

## **2. Problems in the Development of Tourism Performance in Shaanxi**

The author has collected a large number of data and materials in practical work, and carried out well-depth interviews with principals on the investment, production and operation of related tourism performing products. This study summarizes problems in the development of tourism performing arts in Shaanxi through the experience summary method, the interview method and the observation method.

### **2.1 In Terms of Construction, There is the Large Influx of Capital and the Lack of Overall Planning**

In recent years, with the accelerated integration of culture and tourism as well as the prosperity of the culture and tourism market, a large number of high-quality products on tourism performance have achieved good economic and social benefits. The capital market rapidly targeted at this industry; a large number of investment poured in. Tourism performances are produced like mushrooms after rain. In order to deeply impress audiences, producers need to use sound, light, digital and other special effects, the holography and other technologies, as well as great performance lineup. In the early stage of the project, there are usually hundreds of millions or even billions of investment, but there are few projects that can really recover investment and make profits. At the same time, the distribution of projects is not balanced geographically. There are few performances in the north and south of Shaanxi, but the market competition is fierce around Xi'an. Shows in this area performances include *The Empress* in of the Tang Dynasty, Xi'an, the *Dream of Chang'an* of the South Gate of Xi'an, the *Song of Regret*, *Legends of the Silk Road* and *Legends of Qin and Han Dynasties* around Xi'an, as well as the *Chinese Love through the Ages* which are under construction by the Songcheng Group. It is worth discussing that whether the investment and construction of these projects have made detailed and accurate calculation on the capacity of the market in their initial stage.

### **2.2 In Terms of Production, the Cultural Characteristics of Products and Corresponding Creative Talents Are Insufficient**

The reasons why *Song of Regret* can become a masterpiece are as follows. First, based on the deep excavation of history and culture, it is characterized by the ups and downs of story telling, which can attract the audiences. Second, a large number of performance forms with Tang culture characteristics are arranged in the performance. The whole performance fully demonstrates the prosperous Tang Dynasty, which creates unforgettable scenes for viewers. In contrast, many other tourism performances are still in the stage of the barbaric growth of capital management. The excessive commercialization and investors' short-sighted thinking have separated these products from the original cultural foundation. The performances do not have good story plots, and become a stack of scenes and technical means. The creative talents are not enough. Usually, the same group of producers are responsible for projects all over the country. The time is urgent and the duties are heavy. Creators do not go deep into the local cultural background; the design tourism performances through simply copying the contents and expression forms of good shows. The performances do not have the soul.

### **2.3 In Terms of Development, the Tourism Performance Has Not Formed the Industry Chain**

Tourism performance spreads the story, the culture and the complex. We should not simply regard the tourism performance as a "real" product; the space of tourism performance should not be limited in the stage. The tourism performance itself should become the platform. We do not only

need the success of the tourism performance, but also need the industry cluster around the tourism performance. We need to form a virtuous circle among the three centers of attraction, profit making and culture.<sup>[3]</sup> According to incomplete statistics, more than 30 tourism performances in Shaanxi are still in the primary stage. Relevant industrial chains have not yet been formed. Taking cultural and creative products as an example, at present, tourism performances cannot become real competitive products which can occupy the market.

## **2.4 In Terms of Publicity and Marketing, the Thinking Limitations Are Too Strong**

First of all, in terms of tourism destination marketing in China, the local government usually leads the group composed of relevant tourism enterprises. In traditional channels like travel fairs, tourism performances cannot deeply impress tourists in the source market. Secondly, for tourism performance products in Shaanxi Province, the most commonly used means of publicity and marketing is to cooperate with travel agencies and tour guides, so as to attract a large number of group tourists by offering agents and tour guides with preferential prices. Finally, through the cooperation with online tourism platform, they can attract individual tourists. These means of publicity and marketing all take the tourists from other places as the source of customers. It seems that local residents have never been considered. In the document issued by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, it is particularly noteworthy that excellent tourism performances are included in the scope of government procurement services, in order to provide greater market space for excellent products. This requires the investment, production and operation parties of tourism performances to re-consider the quality and pricing of products.

## **3. Basic Path for the Sustainable Development of Tourism Performances in Shaanxi**

According to the statistics of Shaanxi Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, in 2018, Shaanxi received 630.532 million domestic and foreign tourists, with a year-on-year increase of 20.54%. The total tourism revenue was 599.466 billion yuan, with a year-on-year increase of 24.54%.<sup>[4]</sup> Behind the prosperous market, some problems need to be faced directly. From the composition of the cost of receiving tourists, it can be seen that tourists spend the largest proportion of money in long-distance transportation, while the cost of entertainment and shopping is relatively low. It shows that the tourism market does not stimulate the consuming desire of tourists, and exposes the weakness of Shaanxi tourism in generating profits. In the construction of The Belt and Road, we can bring Shaanxi culture to the world. The tourism industry needs to keep innovation and manufacture ability in order to achieve sustainable and in-depth development; it also needs the typical mode of tourism and entertainment. In view of this, the author believes that the following measures should be taken in order to achieve the sustainable development of tourism performing arts in Shaanxi.

### **3.1 Reasonable Planning and Combination of Various Types of Projects in Construction**

First of all, in terms of top-level design, the government should integrate the development of tourism performances into the provincial tourism development plan, improve the policy system for tourism performances, help investors to make reasonable choices, avoid repeated construction and resource waste, and provide policy as well as financial support for high-quality tourism performance products. Secondly, tourism performance investors need to understand that not all projects need large-scale investment and construction. Low cost products can also tell good stories and attract large number of tourists through constantly enriching the unique charm, and play a great role in promoting the development of tourism related industries. Finally, in terms of product pricing, due to the high investment in the early stage as well as the high equipment maintenance and operation costs, the price of tourism performance tickets remains high. The product system combining high, medium and low investment can give more preference to tourists, so as to further expand the source of customers.

### **3.2 Adhering to the Combination of Cultural Authenticity and Innovation in Production**

Tourism performance belongs to the category of Constructivism authenticity. That is to say, what tourists look for in the process of watching the performance is not the real and objective authenticity, but the stage symbol. The authenticity of Constructivism does not completely exclude the commercialization, but constructs the authenticity with an inclusive and open attitude, and even innovates appropriately to meet the expectations of tourists.<sup>[5]</sup> In-depth digging of local culture is the only way to adhere to the authenticity and carry out artistic processing. In addition to the profound historical and cultural accumulation, folk culture in Shaanxi also provides a large number of materials for creation. The folk music, folk literature, folk arts, folk dances, traditional drama, traditional folk arts and the folk custom have long history of development. Therefore, the team of creators must take root in the grass-roots level to collect materials, sort out historical and cultural contexts, understand the local folk customs, and strive to tell unique historical and cultural stories and impress audiences with the plot. At the same time, in the form of expression, we can use singing, dancing, opera, acrobatics, Chinese folk art and other forms, supplemented by lighting, sound, smoke and digital special effects, as well as naked eye 3D, holography and other technical means. However, everything must be subject to the needs of the plot, so as to ensure the excellent quality of shows.

### **3.3 Improving Relevant Industrial Chain and Realizing the Cluster Advantages in Development**

Producers can use the platform thinking to improve the tourism performances. The deep-seated cultural value of tourist attractions or tourist destinations can be promoted to improve the experience of tourists and prolong their stay time. Through that method, the tourism consumption can be increased to realize the cluster development of cultural and creative products as well as the accommodation and catering services, enrich the business forms of tourist destinations, extend the industrial chain, and get rid of the ticket-dominated economy. The transformation and upgrading of the profit model can be realized in the tourism destination.

### **3.4 Broaden the Mind and Creating Superior Brands in Publicity and Marketing**

On one hand, tourism destination should rethink the positioning of tourism performances in the publicity of tourism destinations. Tourism performances should not only be regard as one tourism activity. They can be used to enhance the attraction of tourism destinations. It is hoped that potential tourists can come to the destination because of the tourism performances and become real tourists; performing arts can “capture” new market demands for the destination in the environment of market competition. Therefore, for tourism destinations, it is necessary to create high-quality tourism performances and incorporate them into the overall image publicity system of the local area.<sup>[6]</sup> On the other hand, to make up for the operating cost of tourism performance in the off-season, we can continuously explore the local tourist market and attract local residents through reducing the ticket price or provide off-season preferential ticket price. These measures can also expand the popularity of performances and enrich the cultural life of local residents.

## **4. Conclusion**

Although there are still many problems in the development of tourism performing arts in Shaanxi, through the efforts of all parties, scientific and reasonable planning can be made. The industry can adhere to the combination of cultural authenticity and innovation in creation, constantly improve relevant industrial chain, and focus on building superior brands. As a typical model of cultural and tourism integration, we have reasons to believe that tourism performing arts can make greater progress in Shaanxi, a fertile land of culture and tourism.

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