



Seeds of Change: Cultivating Prosperity in Rural China through E-Commerce

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

With the implementation and development of the rural revitalization strategy, most rural areas in China have achieved significant progress. This paper takes Shi Zhu Mountain Village in Wufeng County, Yichang City, Hubei Province in China, as an example to explore how e-commerce can help rural agricultural development and the positive impact of e-commerce assisting agriculture. By analyzing the practice of e-commerce assisting agriculture in Shi Zhu Mountain Village, this paper aims to provide references for other rural areas to promote rural revitalization.

Keywords: E-commerce; rural revitalization; case study; China.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Shi Zhu Mountain Village is located in Yuyangguan Town, Wufeng Tujia Autonomous County, Yichang City, Hubei Province. It is a village with rich natural resources and a deep historical and cultural heritage. The village is situated between mountains and rivers, with a beautiful environment and a pleasant climate, providing excellent conditions for agricultural production and rural tourism. The land is fertile and suitable for the growth of various crops, especially specialty agricultural products such as tea and medicinal herbs, which are popular in the market. Shi Zhu Mountain Village has a long history and a profound cultural heritage. According to historical records, Shi Zhu Mountain Village was originally part of Shimen County in Hunan Province and has undergone several administrative divisions, eventually falling under the jurisdiction of Yuyangguan Town, Wufeng Tujia Autonomous County. Over the long course of history, the villagers of Shi Zhu Mountain Village have passed down generations of hard work, forming a unique folk culture and rural charm [1,2].

In recent years, with the support of the government, Shi Zhu Mountain Village has ushered in new development opportunities. Especially in e-commerce assisting agriculture, Shi Zhu Mountain Village has actively explored and practiced, successfully promoting local specialty agricultural products to a broader market through measures such as building e-commerce platforms, improving logistics and distribution systems, and creating agricultural product brands [3-5].

2. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

E-commerce assisting agriculture refers to a new type of agricultural business model that promotes the development of the rural economy, enhances the market competitiveness of agricultural products, and increases farmers' income by using e-commerce platforms [6-9].

In terms of policy documents, national and local governments have introduced a series of policies and measures to support e-commerce assisting agriculture. For example, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs issued the "National Rural Industry Development Plan (2020-2025)" proposing the development of rural e-commerce, aiming for the online sales of agricultural products to reach 1 trillion yuan by the end of

2025. The Rural Work Leadership Group of the Communist Party Committee of Dianjun District issued the "2023 Policy on Consolidating Poverty Alleviation Achievements and Implementing Rural Revitalization Strategy." The People's Government of Wufeng Tujia Autonomous County of Yichang City issued the "Measures to Promote the Development of E-commerce in Wufeng Tujia Autonomous County."

In the field of academic research, literature on e-commerce assisting agriculture mainly focuses on its role in rural economic development, model innovation, challenges, and solutions. Zhang Xiaoyan [10], Zhang Yanfeng [11], and others have discussed how e-commerce can help rural agricultural development and the positive impact and challenges of e-commerce assisting agriculture through the analysis of practical cases. In addition, some scholars have focused on the relationship between e-commerce assisting agriculture and rural revitalization. Wang Ruifeng [12] believes that e-commerce assisting agriculture is one of the important driving forces for rural revitalization. Through the promotion and operation of e-commerce platforms, it can attract more tourists and investment, promoting the development of the local economy. Song Le and Ni Xiangli [13] pointed out that e-commerce assisting agriculture can also promote the adjustment and upgrading of the rural industrial structure, improve farmers' income and living standards [14,15].

In summary, e-commerce assisting agriculture, as a new type of agricultural business model, has played an important role in promoting rural economic development and increasing farmers' income. With the continuous advancement of technology and the sustained support of policies, e-commerce assisting agriculture is expected to inject more momentum into rural revitalization.

3. PRACTICE OF E-COMMERCE ASSISTING AGRICULTURE IN SHI ZHU MOUNTAIN VILLAGE

Shi Zhu Mountain Village in Wufeng County, Yichang City, has explored new paths and models for e-commerce assisting agriculture, taking multiple measures to continuously promote rural revitalization, drive the improvement and efficiency of agriculture, and increase farmers' income and wealth.

Joining E-commerce Platforms: Shi Zhu Mountain Village sells local specialties like tea,

cured meat, and fruit online via platforms including Taobao, Pinduoduo, Douyin, and WeChat. Through these platforms, farmers can directly connect with consumers, reducing intermediary links and improving the efficiency of agricultural product sales.

Precision Efforts to Extend the Industry: Shi Zhu Mountain Village combines its 'one main, three auxiliary' industrial development model, focusing on the tea industry as the main sector, with grain, pigs, high-quality honey, and small fruits as the auxiliary sectors, the village has continued to consolidate the achievements of poverty alleviation, driving the improvement and efficiency of agriculture, and increasing farmers' income and wealth. A processing workshop for agricultural and sideline products has been built to promote order-based production. A grain-fed pig subscription agreement has been established, along with increased efforts to publicize and develop the pig industry. There are five relatively wealthy cooperatives in the village, including Wufeng Mountain Garden Tea Professional Cooperative, which has driven 121 poor households to increase their income by 1574 yuan per household, and Pu Yu Agricultural Products Professional Cooperative, which has driven 55 poor households to increase their income by 1257 yuan per household. Chengzhou Bee Farm has driven 13 poor households to increase their income by 1600 yuan per household, and Hao Chen Red Heart Kiwi Family Farm has driven 11 households to increase their income by about 2000 yuan. The village collective shareholding cooperative is exploring a mechanism for the village collective tea factory and agricultural product processing workshop to be linked with the interests of poverty alleviation households.

Exploring Industrial Transformation and Development: Village cadres and some party members and masses went to the Da Hong Pao prickly ash base in Bai Nian Guan Village, Changle Ping Town to broaden the income channels for farmers and extend the industrial chain. They actively connected with the Wufeng Liu Yue Jiao Planting Professional Cooperative and invited technical personnel to the village to guide prickly ash seedling transplantation technology, teaching farmers high-yield and efficient cultivation techniques for prickly ash, with a pilot planting area of 20 acres.

Promoting Agricultural Product Branding: The village encourages all farmers to engage in

ecological farming and optimize the quality of agricultural products. They have registered the "Xiumei Shi Zhu" trademark and enhanced the added value and market competitiveness of agricultural products such as sausages, cured meat, and tea through packaging design and marketing promotion. They have deepened and expanded consumer assistance, organized agricultural sales, and strengthened the village collective economy. The village collective's operating income has grown from nothing to excellence, reaching 208,500 yuan in 2022, achieving a threefold increase for three consecutive years.

Using Online Platforms to Promote Tourism: Shi Zhu Mountain Village focuses on ecological environment protection and rural tourism development. Through measures such as strengthening environmental management, promoting greening and beautification, and building tourism facilities, Shi Zhu Mountain Village has gradually become a rural tourism destination integrating sightseeing, leisure, and vacation. More and more tourists are attracted by online resources to experience rural customs, taste specialty food, and experience farming culture in Shi Zhu Mountain Village.

Strengthening Infrastructure Construction: The village has a total road mileage of 40.5 kilometers, with a hard-surfaced road mileage of 19.4 kilometers, achieving full coverage of hard-surfaced roads to the village and all villager groups. There are safety measures in place for dangerous sections of the main village roads, and passing lanes have been built; the village has opened a shuttle bus, with convenient transportation and vehicles available throughout the day to the town center. The optimization of roads effectively ensures the smooth flow of traffic and e-commerce logistics.

Through the sale of agricultural products on e-commerce platforms, farmers have increased their income. At the same time, e-commerce sales can also reduce transaction costs and improve the economic efficiency of farmers. E-commerce assisting agriculture has promoted the structural adjustment and upgrading of the agricultural industry. Farmers have begun to focus on the quality and brand construction of agricultural products, promoting the development of agriculture towards a high-quality and high-efficiency direction. E-commerce assisting agriculture has provided new momentum for rural revitalization. Through the promotion and

operation of e-commerce platforms, Shi Zhu Mountain Village has attracted more tourists and investment, promoting the development of the local economy.

4. CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Despite the significant achievements of e-commerce assisting agriculture in Shi Zhu Mountain Village, there are still some challenges. First and foremost, the issue of agricultural product quality and safety needs to be taken seriously. Shi Zhu Mountain Village should strengthen the quality supervision of agricultural products to ensure they meet relevant standards and regulations. Secondly, the construction and operation of e-commerce platforms require the support of professional talent. Shi Zhu Mountain Village should increase efforts to cultivate and attract e-commerce professionals to improve the operational level of e-commerce platforms. In addition, the logistics and distribution system also needs to be continuously improved and optimized to better meet consumer demands.

5. CONCLUSION

Through e-commerce assisting agriculture, Shi Zhu Mountain Village has successfully expanded the sales channels for agricultural products, increased tourism revenue, improved farmers' income, and promoted the upgrading of the agricultural industry. However, e-commerce assisting agriculture still faces some challenges that require the joint efforts of the government, enterprises, and farmers to resolve. In the future, Shi Zhu Mountain Village should continue to deepen the practice of e-commerce assisting agriculture, explore more innovative models, and contribute more strength to rural revitalization.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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