Journal of Thai-Chinese Social Science
E-ISSN：3057-157X (Online)
https://so19.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/JTCSS/AboutJournal

Investigating How Livelihood Capital Affects Farmers' Intention to Engage in Rural Tourism

Yiling Jiang[1,2*], Hankang Yang[1], and Xizhou Tian[3]
[1]School of Economics and Business Administration, Chongqing University of Education, Chongqing 400065, China.
[2]Institute For Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Zone Development, Chongqing Technology and Business University, Chongqing 400067, China.
[3*]College of Business Administration, Chongqing Technology and Business University, Chongqing 400067, China.
E-mail: Xizhou_Tian@163.com (correspondence)

Abstract: Rural tourism provides an alternative source of income for rural households; however, the limited participation of farmers presents challenges to its sustainable development. This study, guided by the Sustainable Livelihood Framework, examines five forms of livelihood capital—human, natural, physical, financial, and social—among farmers residing near the Damu Flower Valley Scenic Area in Chongqing. The objective is to assess how these types of capital influence farmers' intentions to engage in rural tourism. Utilizing data from structured questionnaires and household interviews, the study applies binary logistic regression and demonstrates that participation duration, household involvement, social capital, and life satisfaction significantly increase farmers' intention to participate. Human and financial capital also exert positive influences, whereas natural and physical capital are negatively associated with participation intention. Furthermore, life satisfaction serves as a mediating variable in the relationship between social capital and farmers' intention to participate. To enhance farmer engagement, policy interventions ought to emphasize providing vocational training and enhancing connections between farmers and tourism stakeholders.

Keywords: Rural tourism; Livelihood capital; Intention of farmers to participate; Life satisfaction

1. Introduction

In recent years, international policy frameworks have highlighted inclusive growth and sustainable development in rural areas. The United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development underscores the importance of enhancing the quality of rural employment through vocational education, industrial integration, and the green economic transition. Special emphasis is placed on promoting local job creation, supporting return migration entrepreneurship, and fostering digital inclusion, particularly in alignment with SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). In parallel, the OECD advocates for the integrated development of rural primary, secondary, and tertiary industries to strengthen local value chains and drive regional innovation. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has also initiated global programs designating rural tourism as a strategic tool for sustainable development. These initiatives focus on transforming natural and cultural assets into community resources through ecotourism, cultural participation, and inclusive development, ultimately contributing to enhanced local livelihoods and environmental responsibility. Global experience further emphasizes that improving digital infrastructure, upgrading rural human capital, and embedding tourism within territorial economies are critical to ensuring the long-term sustainability of rural tourism.

However, the indigenous people, as the local residents of rural tourism destinations, have yet to be significantly involved in the green and sustainable development of rural tourism. Furthermore, external tourism enterprises, upon entering the area, fail to deeply understand and recognize the local cultural and historical context, which hinders their ability to fully explore and release the tourism value of rural tourism destinations. As the creators, inheritors, and promoters of local culture, the inability of local residents to engage as key stakeholders in the long-term development, operation, and management of rural tourism projects will hinder the sustainable economic growth of rural tourism.

However, the livelihood capital model of rural residents exerts a significant influence on their behavior. Different combinations of livelihood capital result in different levels of enthusiasm and authenticity in residents' participation in rural tourism projects, which in turn significantly affects the sustainability of rural tourism development. However, there is a gap in the existing literature regarding the influence of livelihood capital on residents' participation in rural tourism. Research related to the link between livelihood capital and rural tourism participation predominantly centers on three areas: (1) The framework and determinants of farmers' livelihood capital. For instance, F. Su et al. (2025) studied the livelihood efficiency issues in the sustainable livelihood framework, while Zhang & Zhao (2024) explored the influencing factors of farmers' livelihoods. (2) Assessment of farmers' livelihood capital and strategic choices. For example, Pasanchay & Schott (2021), drawing on qualitative case studies, explored the trade-offs between livelihood benefits and the operational costs of homestay enterprises. Huang et al. (2022) studied the strategic choices of farmers' livelihoods and their influencing factors. (3) Determinants of farmers' participation in rural tourism. For example, Luo et al. (2022) found that market characteristics, cognition, and household income sources all

significantly influence farmers' intention to offer tourism services.

There is a notable gap in the existing literature regarding the impact of livelihood capital on farmers' participation in rural tourism. Building on this gap, the present study draws on survey data from farmers residing near the Damu Flower Valley Scenic Area in Chongqing to analyze the extent to which farmers' livelihood capital influences their participation in rural tourism, as well as the mechanisms through which this influence occurs. The objective is to offer a theoretical foundation for the formulation of policies aimed at fostering the sustainable development of the rural tourism economy.

This study's marginal contributions primarily lie in three key aspects: (1) In terms of research themes, this study differentiates the formation and determinants of farmers' livelihood capital, exploring how livelihood capital, as a determinant, influences the potential impact of tourism; (2) In terms of research mechanisms, unlike numerous studies that focus on life satisfaction as a primary goal, this study treats life satisfaction as a mediating variable and investigates how livelihood capital influences farmers' participation in rural tourism projects; (3) In terms of research methods, unlike many studies that use the single structural equation model approach, this study combines the entropy weight method with the structural equation model to provide a more robust empirical analysis.

2. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

According to the Department for International Development (DFID, 2000), livelihood capital is classified into five core categories: human, natural, physical, financial, and social capital.

2.1 Human Capital

Human capital is defined as the level of education, skills, and health within a household (Deming, 2022). In various global contexts, human capital plays a crucial role in advancing rural diversification and improving household welfare (Leng et al., 2024). Education, in particular, is recognized as a key factor enabling households to engage in higher-return non-agricultural activities (Borku et al., 2024). Strengthened human capital not only improves livelihood outcomes but also contributes to the accumulation of social capital, which is essential for facilitating participation in rural tourism initiatives (Dakhli & De Clercq, 2004). In this study, human capital is measured using indicators such as the size of the household labor force and levels of educational attainment (Chen et al., 2025). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Human capital has a significantly positive effect on farmers' intention to participate in rural tourism.

2.2 Natural Capital

Natural capital is defined as the stock of natural resources (e.g., land, water, air) and ecosystem services (e.g., water cycling, pollution absorption) that provide essential inputs for the development of tourism. It is commonly measured by the area of cultivated, forest, and orchard land, with farmland serving as the most widely used indicator (Dardonville et al., 2022). In line with the specific conditions of the study area, this research adopts household farmland and forest area as proxies for natural capital. Previous studies suggest that natural capital positively influences participation in homestay tourism, which, in turn, enhances household income and encourages further involvement in tourism (Dwyer, 2023). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Natural capital has a positive effect on farmers' intention to participate in rural tourism.

2.3 Physical Capital

Physical capital refers to infrastructure and equipment that support livelihood activities, such as transportation networks, electricity supply, and tourist accommodations (Hussain et al., 2024). It can be measured using various indicators, including fixed household assets (e.g., housing, cables, communication networks), durable goods (e.g., vehicles, televisions, air conditioners), tourism-related infrastructure (e.g., access to tap water, sanitation facilities, healthcare), and agricultural equipment and livestock holdings (Hussain et al., 2024). Improvements in physical capital are typically achieved through housing renovation, infrastructure development, and enhanced living conditions (Ma et al., 2024). In this study, physical capital is measured using indicators such as housing type, structural quality, and the quantity of durable goods. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Physical capital has a positive effect on farmers' intention to participate in rural tourism.

2.4 Financial Capital

Financial capital is a critical enabler of livelihood strategies, encompassing household income, savings, access to credit, and the ownership of productive assets, such as land and livestock (Juma et al., 2023). It is typically measured by both tourism-related income (e.g., earnings from guesthouses, restaurants, and tour guiding) and non-tourism income (e.g., income from agriculture, remittances, and pensions) (H. Su et al., 2025). Some studies suggest that financial capital may influence conservation-related behaviors (Parker et al., 2022), while other research indicates its positive effect on entrepreneurial intentions (H. Su et al., 2025). Since rural tourism participation often reflects entrepreneurial engagement, this study measures financial capital using per capita annual income and tourism income. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Financial capital has a positive effect on farmers' intention to participate in rural tourism.

2.5 Social Capital

Social capital is defined as the ability to access resources through social networks and institutional linkages (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). It plays a crucial role in enhancing collective action, strengthening organizational capacity, and increasing community recognition, particularly within the context of rural tourism development (Wang et al., 2024). Social capital is typically categorized into three dimensions: bonding capital (e.g., support from family and neighbors), bridging capital (e.g., assistance from government actors), and linking capital (e.g., positive word-of-mouth from tourists and online promotions) (Han & Zhai, 2024). It is measured using indicators such as access to training opportunities, the strength of social networks, and participation in cooperatives or associations (Galluzzo, 2022). Previous studies have consistently shown its positive influence on farmers' behavioral intentions (Castillo et al., 2021). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Social capital has a positive effect on farmers' intention to participate in rural tourism.

2.6 Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is defined as an individual's subjective assessment of overall life quality based on personal criteria (Xu et al., 2023). It is shaped by a combination of economic, institutional,

and ecological factors (Cheng et al., 2023). Previous research has established a positive relationship between life satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Chaulagain et al., 2024), and it plays a crucial role in shaping public responses to tourism-driven poverty alleviation initiatives (Chen & Cai, 2025). In this study, life satisfaction is assessed using a five-point Likert scale across five dimensions: policy, economy, sociocultural context, infrastructure, and the environment. Building on previous findings, life satisfaction is conceptualized as a mediating variable between social capital and livelihood transitions driven by institutional trust (Ng et al., 2022). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: Life satisfaction mediates the effect of social capital on intention to participate in rural tourism.

Building on the previous hypotheses, this study develops a theoretical framework where five forms of livelihood capital are treated as independent variables, life satisfaction is identified as the mediating variable, and farmers' intention to participate in rural tourism is defined as the dependent variable (see Fig. 1).

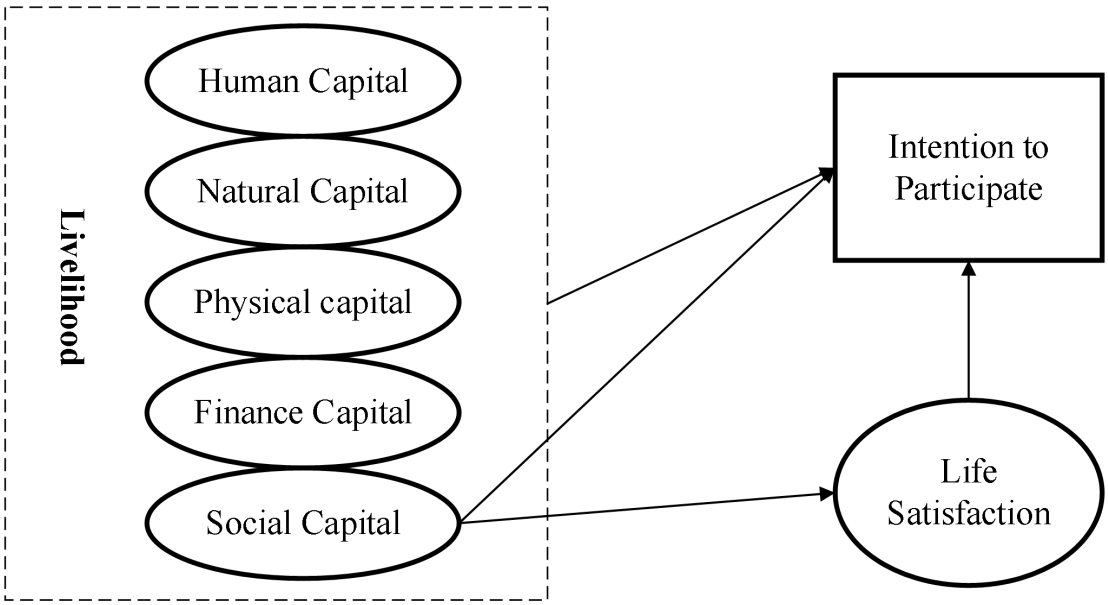

Fig.1 Research model

3. Research Design

3.1 Data Collection and Sample Overview

The Damu Flower Valley Scenic Area, recognized nationally as a 4A-level tourist destination, is located in Damu Township, Fuling District, Chongqing. It is celebrated as a national benchmark for flower-themed tourism and has emerged as a prominent site for high-quality rural tourism. Based on prior literature and aligned with the objectives of this study, measurement scales for both livelihood capital and life satisfaction were developed (see Table 2). Life satisfaction was assessed using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("very dissatisfied") to 5 ("very satisfied"). A structured questionnaire was designed to collect primary data.

A household survey was conducted in Damu Township by a research team

using a random sampling method. Each interview had an approximate duration of 30 minutes. Of the 120 questionnaires distributed, 112 were returned, and 108 were deemed valid, yielding an effective response rate of 90%. The basic demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1. The gender distribution was balanced, consistent with the expectations of random sampling. The proportion of respondents born locally slightly surpassed that of migrants. On average, households were located between 3 and 8 kilometers from the scenic area. The average number of household members employed in government or public institutions was 0.19. Households participated in rural tourism activities for an average of 2 to 4 months, with an average of 1.1 family members engaged in such activities per household. Tourism income represented an average of 30.12% of total annual household income.

Table1. Description of characteristics of valid samples

Variable	The meaning and value of variables	Mean	Standard deviation
Gender	1 = male, 2 = female.	1.44	0.50
Birth place	1 = local, 0 = non-local	1.09	0.29
Scenic distance	1 = within 0–1 km; 2 = 1–3 km; 3 = 3–8 km; 4 = 8–12 km; 5 = ⩾12 km.	2.81	1.04
Public officials	Number of Household Members Employed in Government or Public Institutions.	0.19	0.54
Participation time	1 = less than 2 months; 2 = 2–4 months; 3 = 4–6 months; 4 = more than 6 months.	2	1.62
The number of participants	Number of Family Members Engaged in Rural Tourism Operations	1.1	0.98
proportion of tourism income	Proportion of Tourism Income in Annual Household Income	30.12%	32.66%
Intention to participate	Intention to Continue Participating in Rural Tourism	0.53	0.50

3.2 Analytical Method

This study is based on primary data collected through structured questionnaire surveys. The entropy weight method is used to assign objective weights to each indicator and calculate composite scores for the different types of livelihood capital and life satisfaction. These scores are subsequently used to construct indices representing the overall levels of livelihood capital and life satisfaction among rural households in the Damu Scenic Area.

The entropy weight method is an objective weighting technique based on the principle that indicators with lower variability convey less information and should therefore receive smaller weights. The standard procedure for implementing this method is outlined in Equations (1) through (4) (Luo et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023). The formula for computing the composite scores for livelihood capital and life satisfaction is provided in Equation (5).

(1) Standardization of sample data:

$$z_{ij} = \frac{x_{ij}}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{n} {x_{ij}}^2}} \quad (1)$$

z_{ij} denotes the standardized value corresponding to the original data x_{ij}.

(2) The probability corresponding to the i-th sample for the j-th indicator is computed as follows:

$$p_{ij} = \frac{z_{ij}}{\sum_{i=1}^{n} z_{ij}} \quad (2)$$

(3) The information entropy e_j of the j-th indicator is calculated as follows:

$$e_j = ln\frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n} [p_{ij} \times ln\, p_{ij}] \quad (3)$$

(4) The weight w_j of the j-th indicator is calculated as follows:

$$w_j = (1 - E_j)/\sum_{j=1}^{n} (1 - E_j) \quad (4)$$

(5) Calculation of the livelihood capital and life satisfaction indices:

$$L_i = \sum_{j=1}^{m} w_j \times z_{ij} \quad (5)$$

L_i denotes the index value of the five livelihood capitals or life satisfaction for the i-th sample,while m refers to the number of measurement indicators associated with the five capitals or satisfaction items.

This study utilizes a binary logistic regression model to explore the relationships between the composite indices of livelihood capital, life satisfaction, and farmers' intention to participate in rural tourism. In the model specification, livelihood capital is considered the independent variable, life satisfaction the mediating variable, and intention to participate the dependent variable.

4. Results

4.1 Reliability and Validity Tests

Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. A value above 0.7 indicates high reliability, values between 0.35 and 0.7 indicate moderate reliability, and values below 0.35 suggest low reliability. As shown in Table 2, most latent constructs exhibited Cronbach's α values exceeding 0.7, with a few approaching this threshold. These findings suggest that the measurement items corresponding to the five dimensions of livelihood capital and life satisfaction exhibit satisfactory and stable internal consistency, confirming the reliability of the scales used in this study (Sapkota et al., 2025).

Construct validity was assessed by analyzing factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). Factor loadings are generally expected to range from 0.50 to 0.95, with 0.45 being considered the minimum acceptable threshold (Weng et al., 2025). According to established criteria, CR values exceeding 0.90 indicate very high validity; values between 0.80 and 0.90 denote high validity; values from 0.70 to 0.80 reflect moderate validity; values between 0.50 and 0.70 are considered acceptable; and values below 0.50 suggest poor validity (Weng et al., 2025). AVE represents the average proportion of variance in

observed indicators explained by the latent construct; higher AVE values indicate stronger convergent validity. A commonly accepted threshold for satisfactory convergent validity is an AVE value greater than 0.50 (Fayyaz et al., 2025).

After removing items with relatively low reliability based on factor loadings and reliability diagnostics, the remaining measurement items exhibited factor loadings exceeding 0.70, composite reliability (CR) values above 0.80, and average variance extracted (AVE) values greater than 0.55 (see Table 2). These results provide strong evidence that the measurement scale used in this study possesses robust construct validity.

Table 2. Reliability and validity test

Latent variables	Observed variables	The meaning and value of variables	Cronbach's α	Factor loading	CR	AVE
Human capital	Family labor force	Number of children under age 10 × 0) + (Number of working-age adults × 1.0) + (Number of elderly aged 60 and above × 0.5)	0.67	0.89	0.89	0.80
	Family education level	University and above × 1.0+senior high school or junior college ×0.75+junior high school or technical secondary school×0.5+primary school and below × 0.25.		0.89		
Natural capital	Cultivated area	Measured in actual acreage (mu)				
Physical capital	Housing type	multi-story building = 1.0; flat house = 0.5; earthen house = 0.	0.63	0.82	0.82	0.60
	Building structure	Earthen-tile = 0.25; brick-tile = 0.5; brick-concrete = 0.75; reinforced concrete = 1.0.		0.77		
	Number of durable goods	Calculated as the percentage of owned items among the following: car, motorcycle, air conditioner, refrigerator, washing machine, television, water heater, mobile phone, landline, farm vehicle.		0.73		
Financial capital	Annual household income per	Measured in yuan per person per year.				

Latent variables	Observed variables	The meaning and value of variables	Cronbach's α	Factor loading	CR	AVE
	capital					
Social capital	Skills training opportunities	1 = yes; 0 = no.	0.72	0.84	0.86	0.68
	Social network support	financial (e.g., grants, interest-free loans), policy (e.g., preferential policies), technical (e.g., knowledge or strategies), labor support. 1 type = 0.25; 2 types = 0.5; 3 types = 0.75; all 4 types = 1.0.		0.74		
	Number of cooperatives and associations joined	Actual number of household members engaged in tourism.		0.89		
Life satisfaction	Economic development	Increase in tourism income	0.89	0.95	0.95	0.90
		Growth in employment opportunities		0.95		
	Social culture	Enhanced social welfare and security	0.58	0.84	0.83	0.71
		Improved neighbor relations		0.84		
	Government support	Government-provided training	0.78	0.91	0.91	0.83
		Government financial support for tourism		0.91		
	Infrastructure	Improved scenic area facilities	0.85	0.74	0.90	0.69
		Better transportation and roads		0.91		
		Improved medical and health services		0.77		
		Enhanced utility and communication services		0.89		
	Environment	Protection and development of tourism resources	0.80	0.92	0.91	0.84
		Improved natural environment		0.92		

4.2 Results Analysis

4.2.1 Effects of Household Characteristics on Tourism Participation Intention

The duration of tourism participation and the number of household members involved in tourism operations have a significantly positive impact on the intention to continue participating in rural tourism ($\beta = 0.50$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.37$, $p < 0.01$). Households with longer histories of participation and greater family involvement are more likely to demonstrate strong intentions to sustain tourism-related activities. This can be attributed to the accumulation of operational experience over time, which reduces perceived barriers and increases farmers' confidence and motivation. Additionally, a higher level of household involvement indicates greater dependence on tourism income, which in turn strengthens the positive attitude toward continued participation.

4.2.2 Effects of Human Capital on Tourism Participation Intention

The human capital index shows a positive relationship with farmers' intention to participate in rural tourism ($\beta = 0.092$), offering empirical support for Hypothesis 1. Specifically, households with greater labor capacity and higher educational attainment are more likely to express a stronger intention to engage in tourism-related activities. This may be because households with more labor are more productive in tourism operations and expect greater economic returns. Additionally, better-educated households are more skilled at interpreting tourism policies and assessing potential benefits, which further strengthens their intention to participate.

4.2.3 Effects of Natural Capital on Tourism Participation Intention

The natural capital index is found to have a significantly negative impact on farmers' intention to participate in rural tourism ($\beta = -0.057$), thus supporting Hypothesis 2. Specifically, households with larger areas of cultivated land are generally less inclined to engage in tourism-related activities. This outcome may be due to their stronger preference for traditional agricultural practices and reluctance to reallocate natural resources for tourism purposes. Moreover, unfamiliarity with the tourism sector, combined with limited operational experience and uncertainty about expected returns, may further discourage these farmers from entering the industry.

4.2.4 Effects of Physical Capital on Tourism Participation Intention

The physical capital index shows a negative association with farmers' intention to participate in rural tourism ($\beta = -0.049$), offering empirical support for Hypothesis 3. Specifically, households with better housing conditions, more robust building structures, and a higher number of durable consumer goods are generally less inclined to transition to tourism-related activities. This may be because economically better-off households are more reluctant to change their existing livelihood strategies, preferring to maintain the status quo rather than engage in tourism operations.

3.2.5 Effects of Financial Capital on Tourism Participation Intention

The financial capital index has a positive influence on farmers' intention to participate in rural tourism ($\beta = 0.046$), thus supporting Hypothesis 4. Households with higher per capita annual income tend to demonstrate stronger intentions to engage in tourism-related activities. This may be because greater financial resources

increase their ability to invest in tourism operations, thereby strengthening their intention to participate.

4.2.6 Effects of Social Capital on Tourism Participation Intention

Social capital has a significantly positive impact on farmers' intention to participate in rural tourism ($\beta = 0.401$, $p < 0.001$), thereby confirming Hypothesis 5. Households with greater access to skills training, stronger support from social networks, and more active participation in cooperatives or associations are more likely to demonstrate stronger intentions to engage in tourism-related activities. This may be because increased exposure to training enhances awareness of tourism policies and operational practices, thereby improving perceived behavioral control. Additionally, access to various forms of support—financial (e.g., grants, interest-free loans), policy-based (e.g., subsidies and incentives), technical (e.g., knowledge and strategic guidance), and labor-related—strengthens both confidence and perceived feasibility. Active involvement in agricultural organizations, producer cooperatives, and tourism associations also facilitates information exchange and reinforces subjective norms, ultimately enhancing participation intention.

4.2.7 Mediating Effect of Life Satisfaction in the Relationship Between Social Capital and Participation Intention

Life satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between social capital and farmers' intention to participate in rural tourism. The indirect effect constitutes 49.52% of the total effect, thus confirming Hypothesis 6. Distinct communities and development pathways require different combinations of capital, with social capital serving as the foundational element (Woldehanna et al., 2022). The mediation results indicate that higher levels of social capital contribute to greater life satisfaction, which in turn enhances farmers' participation intentions. This mechanism can be explained by the multifaceted influence of social capital: (1) economically, it improves household income and employment opportunities; (2) socially, it strengthens welfare systems and neighborhood cohesion; (3) from a policy perspective, it facilitates access to training and financial support, raising awareness of tourism-related policies; (4) infrastructurally, it improves scenic facilities, transportation, healthcare, utility services, and communications; and (5) environmentally, it supports the protection and development of tourism resources and contributes to ecological restoration. Therefore, social capital enhances life satisfaction across multiple dimensions, which in turn strengthens farmers' intention to participate in rural tourism. Notably, the indirect effect is nearly equal to the direct effect.

5. Conclusion, Discussion, and Future Directions

This study examines how household characteristics, livelihood capital, and life satisfaction influence farmers' intention to participate in rural tourism, from the perspective of livelihood transformation. The key findings and related discussions are summarized as follows:

From the perspective of household characteristics, a longer duration of engagement in rural tourism and a higher number of household members participating in tourism activities are positively associated with farmers' intention to continue their involvement. Consequently, policy efforts should prioritize retaining experienced households in tourism operations.

Households with long-standing participation can be designated as model households, not only to sustain their own involvement but also to serve as examples that encourage broader community participation. Furthermore, households with higher levels of involvement should receive financial and material support, along with targeted training in tourism service skills, to strengthen their confidence and foster long-term commitment to rural tourism development.

In terms of livelihood capital, higher levels of human, financial, and social capital, combined with lower levels of natural and physical capital, are positively associated with farmers' intention to participate in rural tourism. Based on these findings, the following policy recommendations can be made:

(1) Human capital: Local governments should actively promote the involvement of households with a strong labor force in rural tourism. Tourism enterprises are encouraged to prioritize the employment of local residents and support the return of migrant workers to engage in tourism-related activities in their home communities.

(2) Natural capital: The government should encourage households with larger areas of farmland to participate in rural tourism through promotional and educational initiatives that guide farmers in transitioning from traditional agricultural practices to tourism-related activities.

(3) Physical capital: Governments and tourism enterprises should highlight successful rural tourism cases to demonstrate both direct and spillover benefits. In particular, households with structurally sound housing should be encouraged to participate in homestay operations as a viable form of tourism involvement.

(4) Financial capital: Tourism enterprises should prioritize employing local residents, thereby increasing household income and enhancing rural households' capacity to invest in tourism-related activities.

(5) Social capital: The government should increase access to training opportunities, establish effective communication platforms, and strengthen collaborations with local cooperatives or associations to comprehensively enhance farmers' intention to participate in rural tourism.

Regarding life satisfaction, this study confirms its partial mediating role in the relationship between social capital and farmers' intention to participate in rural tourism. In the post-COVID era, domestic tourism has become the dominant mode of travel, with rural tourism increasingly favored by urban residents due to its ecological and environmental benefits. Enhancing life satisfaction among rural households has thus become a critical objective to improve tourism service quality, foster collaboration among stakeholders, and ensure the long-term sustainability of rural tourism. The following key pathways are recommended:

(1) Encourage tourism enterprises to develop local resources in an environmentally responsible manner, thereby promoting economic growth while prioritizing the employment of local residents to reduce labor outmigration.

(2) Tourism enterprises can enhance their public image and long-term sustainability by providing improved welfare and social protection for rural households. In collaboration with government agencies, they should promote harmonious community

relations through joint initiatives on skills training and cultural education.

(3) Increased governmental financial support can promote the scientific development of tourism resources, accelerate the growth of tourism-related industries, and contribute to the creation of an integrated rural tourism landscape.

(4) Scientific planning by tourism enterprises, along with government investment in infrastructure—such as roads, utilities, healthcare, and communication systems—can help rural areas meet the evolving demands of modern tourism development.

(5) Collaborative efforts among governments, enterprises, and local communities in protecting and sustainably developing tourism resources can enhance ecological sustainability and contribute to long-term environmental improvement.

Overall, based on the sustainable livelihood framework, this study examines how five types of livelihood capital shape farmers' intention to engage in rural tourism, with life satisfaction serving as a mediating variable in the relationship between social capital and participation intention. The findings contribute to the theoretical application of the sustainable livelihood framework and provide practical insights for promoting the long-term sustainability of rural tourism. Future research could benefit from incorporating perspectives from tourism economics and experience theory, expanding empirical coverage to other rural destinations, and using semi-structured interviews to uncover additional determinants of participation, thus providing more comprehensive policy insights.

Funding Acknowledgement

The General Planning Project of Humanities and Social Sciences Research of the Chongqing Municipal Education Commission in 2025, "research on the mechanism of promoting high-quality development of tourism economy through public data opening driven by new quality productivity", 25SKGH120.

References

Borku, A. W., Utallo, A. U., & Tora, T. T. (2024). Determinants of urban households in the diversification of livelihood activities: The case of Wolaita zone in southern Ethiopia. Journal of Agriculture and Food Research, 16, 101193.

Castillo, G. M. L., Engler, A., & Wollni, M. (2021). Planned behavior and social capital: Understanding farmers' behavior toward pressurized irrigation technologies. Agricultural Water Management, 243, 106524.

Chaulagain, S., Li, J., & Pizam, A. (2024). The impact of sense of community on residents' satisfaction, behavioral intentions, and life satisfaction in senior living communities. International Journal of Hospitality Management, 121, 103822.

Chen, Q., & Cai, L. A. (2025). Self-fulfilling prophecy in livelihood sustainability: Rural tourism in Pingqian Village, China. Tourism Management, 106, 104988.

Chen, Y., Chen, L., & Li, G. (2025). Human capital expansion and urban innovation. Economic Analysis and Policy, 85, 870-887.

Cheng, E. W., Chung, H., & Cheng, H. (2023). Life satisfaction and the conventionality of political participation: The moderation effect of post-materialist value orientation. International Political Science Review, 44(2), 157-177.

Dakhli, M., & De Clercq, D. (2004). Human capital, social capital, and innovation: a multi-country study. Entrepreneurship & Regional Development, 16(2), 107-128.

Dardonville, M., Legrand, B., Clivot, H., Bernardin, C., Bockstaller, C., & Therond, O. (2022). Assessment of ecosystem services and natural capital dynamics in agroecosystems. Ecosystem Services, 54, 101415.

Deming, D. J. (2022). Four facts about human capital. Journal of Economic Perspectives, 36(3), 75-102.

Dwyer, L. (2023). Resident well-being and sustainable tourism development: The 'capitals approach'. Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 31(9), 2119-2135.

Fayyaz, M. S., Abbasi, A. Z., Kumar, S., Qureshi, A., Hussain, K., & Muhammad, L. (2025). Integrating digital influencer persuasion model and theory of planned behavior: The mediating role of consumer involvement in endorsed brands. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 85, 104309.

Galluzzo, N. (2022). The relationship between agritourism and social capital in Italian regions. Journal of Rural Studies, 94, 218-226.

Han, G., & Zhai, Y. (2024). The association between food insecurity and social capital under the lockdowns in COVID-hit Shanghai. Urban Studies, 61(1), 130-147.

Huang, L., Yang, L., Tuyến, N. T., Colmekcioglu, N., & Liu, J. (2022). Factors influencing the livelihood strategy choices of rural households in tourist destinations. Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 30(4), 875-896.

Hussain, A., Mandić, A., & Fusté-Forné, F. (2024). Transforming communities: Analyzing the effects of infrastructure and tourism development on social capital, livelihoods, and resilience in Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 59, 276-295.

Juma, N., Olabisi, J., & Griffin EL, E. (2023). External enablers and entrepreneurial ecosystems: The brokering role of the anchor tenant in capacitating grassroots ecopreneurs. Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal, 17(2), 372-407.

Leng, X., Zhang, Y., & Cheng, R. (2024). Digital technology, labor allocation, and nutrition intake: Evidence from China. Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 201, 123228.

Luo, W., Timothy, D. J., Zhong, C., & Zhang, X. (2022). Influential factors in agrarian households' engagement in rural tourism development. Tourism Management Perspectives, 44, 101009.

Luo, Y., Yuan, H., Hu, Z., Yang, D., & Zhang, H. (2023). Optimal Scheduling of Micro-energy Grid Based on Pareto Frontier under Uncertainty and Pollutant Emissions. Ieee Transactions On Smart Grid

Ma, L., Zhang, Y., Li, T., Zhao, S., & Yi, J. (2024). Livelihood capitals and livelihood resilience: Understanding the linkages in China's government-led poverty alleviation resettlement. Habitat International, 147, 103057.

Nahapiet, J., & Ghoshal, S. (1998). Social capital, intellectual capital, and the organizational advantage. Academy of Management Review, 23(2), 242-266.

Ng, J. W. J., Vaithilingam, S., Lee, G. H., & Rangel, G. J. (2022). Life satisfaction and incumbent voting: Examining the mediating effect of trust in Government. Journal of Happiness Studies, 23(6), 2947-2967.

Parker, B. G., Jacobsen, K. S., Vucetich, J. A., Dickman, A. J., Loveridge, A. J., & Macdonald, D. W. (2022). Towards equitable conservation: Social capital, fear and livestock loss shape perceived benefit from a protected area. Journal of Environmental Management, 319, 115676.

Pasanchay, K., & Schott, C. (2021). Community-based tourism homestays' capacity to advance the Sustainable Development Goals: A holistic sustainable livelihood perspective. Tourism Management Perspectives, 37, 100784.

Sapkota, U., Adhikari, S., & Bhandari, G. (2025). Farmers' behavioral intention towards pesticide safety

in Nepal: An assessment of the extended theory of planned behavior. Journal of Environmental Management, 389, 126185.

Su, F., Fan, B., Song, N., & Fahad, S. (2025). Quantifying farmers' Livelihood Efficiency, Regional Indicators and Its Influencing Factors: Implementing an Improved Sustainable Livelihood Framework. Land Degradation & Development, 36(2), 490-506.

Su, H., Zhao, X., Mu, F., & Yang, H. (2025). How the Labor Mobility Impact Farmers' Sustainable Livelihoods in Mountainous Regions: Evidence from Qinling-Daba Mountains, China. Chinese Geographical Science, 35(3), 647-664.

Wang, X., Huang, Y., & Huang, K. (2024). How does social entrepreneurship achieve sustainable development goals in rural tourism destinations? The role of legitimacy and social capital. Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 1-19.

Weng, H., Shi, M., Wang, C. C., Chen, J., & Li, Z. (2025). Urban–rural differences in residents' low-carbon behavioral drive: An empirical study based on an extended theory of planned behavior. Cities, 163, 106012.

Woldehanna, T., Tafere, Y., & Yonis, M. B. (2022). Social capital as a double-edged sword for sustained poverty escapes in Ethiopia. World Development, 158, 105969.

Xu, H., Zhang, C., & Huang, Y. (2023). Social trust, social capital, and subjective well-being of rural residents: Micro-empirical evidence based on the Chinese General Social Survey (CGSS). Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 10(1), 1-13.

Zhang, D., Zhang, R., Zhang, B., Zheng, Y., & An, Z. (2023). Environment dominated evaluation modeling and collocation optimization of a distributed energy system based on solar and biomass energy. Renewable Energy, 202, 1226-1240.

Zhang, Y., & Zhao, W. (2024). Social capital's role in mitigating economic vulnerability: Understanding the impact of income disparities on farmers' livelihoods. World Development, 177, 106515.