

HOW CHINA'S TOURISM ASSISTING THE POOR POLICIES STRENGTHEN TOURISM-POVERTY LINK

Guo Yan
Huaihua University, Huaihua, China
Email: 18932198076@sina.cn

Received date: 22/11/2020 | Accepted date: 22/12/2020 | Published date: 21/06/2021
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51200/bimpeagajtsd.v9i1.3246>

ABSTRACT

Poverty eradication has been listed as SDG1 in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. China has fulfilled SDG1 ten years ahead of the schedule in 2020. Tourism has played a significant role in poverty alleviation in China owing to the formulation and implementation of Tourism-assisting Poverty Policies (TAPPs), which is a typical example of pro-poor tourism (PPT) initiative in developing countries. However, the international academic circles have little knowledge of how TAPPs have made tourism a major poverty alleviation means that can be perceived by identifying the match of TAPP targets and TAPP instruments since 1980's. This study is based on the Rothwell 's policy tool taxonomy that proposes a theoretical framework of TAPP targets-TAPP instruments and analyzes the evolution and distribution characteristics of policy tools in 64 Chinese national TAPP texts from 1984 to 2020. It's found that the TAPP tool mix mainly consists of environmental policies, supply-side policies besides the less proportion of demand-side policies. Legal and regulatory, financial, public service and project development are the policy tools most frequently employed to achieve TAPP targets over time. The TAPP evolution follows the path from boosting regional economic development to promoting endogenous poverty alleviation capabilities in rural areas, which is consistent with the phased goals of Chinese tourism development strategies and poverty alleviation programs. This study aims to fill in the lack of the international academic community's understanding of Chinese TAPPs' role in pushing tourism to play a major role in poverty alleviation and generate fresh insight into the dynamics of policy instrument and mix. It provides reference for China's efforts to consolidate the poverty alleviation achievements through tourism and sustain TAPPs' positive role in China's rural revitalization.

Keywords: pro-poor tourism, rural revitalization, policy target, policy instrument, policy evolution, poverty alleviation

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Since mass tourism developed in 1950's, the world has witnessed tourism's contribution to poverty alleviation in many developing countries. During the past few decades, there emerged several concepts that are related to tourism-poverty link, the most typical of which include mass tourism, alternative tourism, ecotourism, sustainable tourism, ST-EP (sustainable tourism for poverty alleviation program), community-based tourism, PPT (pro-poor tourism) etc. Among them, PPT proposed by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) in 1990s was regarded as the term that has established direct relationship between tourism growth and poverty alleviation (Turong, 2014; Yu et al., 2019). The tourism-poverty link has drawn wide attention from poverty alleviation practitioners and researchers after PPT was put forward (Harrison and Schipani, 2007; Spenceley and Meyer, 2012; Mowforth and Munt, 2015).

Zeng and Ryan (2012) translated Chinese term "fu pin lv you" for pro-poor tourism into "Tourism-Assisting the Poor" (TAP) to highlight introduction and adaptation of the concepts and principles of PPT and ST-EP to China. It is suggested that TAP in China has been generally defined as a tourism-induced poverty reduction strategy led by the government and oriented by the market. TAP aims to lift the poor out of poverty by transforming the unique and abundant tourism resources in poverty-stricken rural areas into marketable tourist products and services. It targets the creation of benefits for local communities, in particular the local poor, and contributes to local poverty reduction, while sustaining regional economic development and environmental conservation (Zeng and Ryan, 2012). In this article, TAPP (Tourism-Assisting the Poor Policy) will be used as Chinese characteristic PPT policy concept to refer to policies for any tourism poverty alleviation strategy or program initiated by the Chinese government under the market-oriented mechanism with sustainable poverty alleviation as the central task.

The persuasive statistics has indicated tourism as a vigorous economic booster for governments' poverty alleviation strategies particularly in some Asian and African countries (Scheyvens and Hughes, 2019) such as Lao PDR (Harrison and Schipani, 2007), Vietnam (Truong, 2014) and sub-Saharan African countries (Folarin and Adeniyi, 2019). However, Mahadevan and Suardi (2017), after comparing 13 tourism-dependent countries, found that tourism growth neither narrow income inequality nor reduce the poor population. The poor local farmers in Western Uganda are less involved in local tourism value chain than local intermediary suppliers, which undermines tourism as a pro-poor tool (Adiyia and Vanneste, 2018). Therefore, whether tourism benefits have gone to the poorest remains an intense debate among the international academic community. Scheyvens (2019) even doubted if tourism can be a key driver to eliminate poverty in all forms throughout the world as required by SDG1.

Despite the world's controversy on tourism's contribution to poverty alleviation, tourism in China has played an important role in the national initiative in eliminating extreme poverty (Qin et al., 2019). China National Observation Report on Rural Tourism Poverty Alleviation shows that by the first half year of 2019, the rural tourism income averaged 1.432 million yuan, an increase of 38.4% year-on-year, in the 13 poverty alleviation monitoring villages (documented poor villages) in China's deeply impoverished regions. Tourism's contribution rate to poverty alleviation in China hits 20%-30% (Li and Zhao, 2020), which is achieved under the guidance of the Chinese government. Government's pivotal role in controlling, planning and directing tourism growth (Mowforth and Munt, 2015) is an outcome of their tourism policy formulation and implementation (Hall, 1994). TAPP serves the guideline of

China's TAP endeavours and the government's powerful weapon in anti-poverty through tourism, which "ensures tourism growth contributes to poverty reduction" (Ashley et al., 2001).

Chinese TAPP represents a typical PPT policy system that has made significant achievements in reducing poverty. But the international academic community has little knowledge of how TAPPs help Chinese tourism develop into a major means to reduce poverty over time. Policy instruments, which are known as the linkage between policy formulation and implementation and made to achieve policy targets (Ali, 2013), provides a proper perspective to understand TAPP's role in strengthening tourism-poverty link in China.

Capano, Priton and Vicentini (2019) argued that an instrument-based approach can better enlighten the nature of policy dynamics and help policymakers make more effective decisions. The understanding of instrument and mix dynamics over time needs to be deepened through more empirical studies (Capano and Howlett, 2020). This study aims to fill in the lack of the international academic community's understanding of Chinese TAPP's role in guaranteeing tourism's contribution to poverty alleviation and generate fresh insight into the dynamics of policy instrument and mix.

This article is structured as follows: Section 2 overviews previous research on governments' PPT policies and policy instrument. Section 3 presents methodology including the theoretical framework, data source and coding process. Section 4 describes the coding results of TAPP documents and discuss the use of policy instruments for achieving TAPP targets. Section 5 outlines the main conclusions and recommendations for TAPP improvement for consolidation of poverty alleviation achievements and rural revitalization.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Government's PPT Policies

Government, as one of PPT's major stakeholders (Chok et al., 2007; Ph et al., 2016), plans and directs PPT by formulating and implementing tourism or PPT policies (Hall, 1994). However, under the guidance of neoliberalism which tends toward free-market capitalism and away from government spending, regulation, and public ownership, the general tourism literature has scarcely discussed the politics of tourism (Dredge and Jenkins, 2007; Hall, 1994, 2008, 2011). Government approaches and strategies to poverty reduction through tourism are not the core part of national tourism strategies in many LDCs (Folarin and Adeniyi, 2019). In the new century, the shifted focus on the role of the state (Sofield, 2003) challenged the neo-liberalism. The state's strong governance has been put on the "new poverty" agenda to tackle poverty and vulnerability more effectively (Spenceley and Meyer, 2012). Governments have begun to realize that tourism could bring more benefits if development took a form in which state governance focused on national interests (Clancy, 1999; Potter, 1993).

Thus, governments' policies to influence tourism's role in poverty alleviation have increasingly attracted scholars' interest (Spenceley and Meyer, 2012; Qin et al., 2019). By investigating the evolution of Vietnam's tourism policies with a policy-making model, Truong (2014) found that Vietnam's tourism policies, under the guidance of neo-liberalism, focus more on tourism growth than poverty alleviation. Community-based tourism approach, enterprise support, sustainable tourism are the main PPT methods that governments' policies and strategies concern about, which yield positive effects. Among different PPT forms, eco-tourism in rural areas is prioritized by the Lao government's policy thanks to the government's successful cooperation with NGOs (Harrison and Schipani, 2007). With Generalized Method of Moments

(GMM) system estimation technique, the Folarin and Adeniyi (2019) assessed the effects of the pro-poor tourism policies of Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries and found that policies targeted at increasing the attractiveness and awareness of the existing SSA tourism sites have considerable poverty reduction potential.

Quite different from most neoliberalism-oriented PPT policies (Hall, 2007), Chinese TAPP puts poverty reduction on the top agenda especially after 2015, lowering the poverty rate dramatically and creating substantial benefits for the poor population in several areas. Based on semi-structured interviews in three National Poverty Alleviation Tourism Pilot Zones in northern China, Qin et al. (2019) analyzed China's adapted PPT policies' economic, sociocultural and environmental impacts on the poor, though poor households tend to perceive more positive benefits of PPT policies than non-poor households (Xie et al., 2020). Since pro-poor tourism is both an opportunity-dependent and an opportunity-generating process (Knight, 2017), poor people's lack of capabilities and skills in participating the pro-poor tourism projects is one of the main barriers to draw the maximum benefits from tourism (Ondicho, 2017). Therefore, Chinese government acts as a leader in promoting cross group knowledge transfer to capacity-building of impoverished population to enhance their power to catch the PPT opportunities (Rao and Chen, 2018).

The literature reveals that one of the factors that influence the tourism's contribution to poverty alleviation is government's role in directing tourism growth for poverty alleviation through PPT policies. Scholars mainly discussed the goals, content and impacts of governments' PPT related policies. Governments' PPT policies in most countries follow neo-liberal approach, making poverty alleviation secondary to tourism growth. But some countries like China prioritize poverty alleviation in the PPT policies. Studies analyzed the PPT methods or forms adopted in the PPT policies, which have yielded positive effects on or have potential to poverty alleviation. There lacks literature exploring what PPT policy instruments are used to achieve PPT policy targets in China's TAP context. This study aims to fill in this gap to help the international scholars understand how Chinese TAPPs have pushed tourism to play a vital role in eliminating poverty since 1980's.

2.2 Policy Instruments

Policy instrument analysis is a fundamental and major subject throughout the history of policy sciences. The research of this subject can be dated back to the period of 1950-1980 when Lowi and other scholars developed classifications and theories on policy instruments (Capano and Howlett, 2020). Since then, extensive agreements on what policy instruments have been reached. They are defined as "a set of techniques by which governmental authorities wield their power in attempting to ensure support and affect or prevent social change" (Vedung, 1998), "an identifiable method through which collective action is structured to address a public problem" (Salamon, 2002) or the means governments use "to deliberately affect the nature, types, quantities and distribution of the goods and services provided in a society" (Howlett, 2000). These definitions agree that policy tools are governance techniques through which government pursue their policy targets (Ali, 2013; Capano and Howlett, 2020).

In most cases, both in theory and practice, policy targets are realized through a number of policy tools or a mix of policy instruments (Howlett, 2005). The attainment of policy targets is dependent on the proper choice of policy instruments (Flanagan et al., 2011). The selection of individual and mix of instruments from "toolbox" usually starts from the classification of policy tools which can help policymakers know the characteristics of instruments and their applicability to the context (Howlett, 2005; Howlett and Ramesh, 1993). There are substantial policy instrument typologies in general or specific fields. Salamon, Vedung, Schneider and

Ingram, Hood are most frequently cited policy instrument typology scholars (Acciai and Capano, 2020). Since "any given policy tool is a package that contains a number of different elements" (Salamon, 2000), Salamon (2002) proposed that policy instruments' four dimensions of coerciveness, directness, automaticity, and visibility. Classifications of Vedung (1998) and Phidd and Doern (1983) are both coercion-based, with the former including regulative instruments, economic instruments, and informational instruments and the latter identifying five instruments. Based on behavioral assumptions, Schneider and Ingram (1990) classified policy tools into authority, incentive, capacity, symbolic and hortatory and learning instruments.

Besides these popular general typologies, Rothwell (1985) divided government policy instruments into demand-side, supply-side and environmental tools. This typology, which stresses the policy impact on the practical work (Yue et al., 2020), are widely used in some specific areas including technology and innovation (Bergek and Norrman, 2014; Lin et al, 2017), energy (Zhou et al., 2020), human resource (Zhang et al.,2019), health care (Yue et al.,2020) especially in Chinese context. It emphasizes policy tools selected to address public problems and achieve policy goals. The selection and implementation of tools are not only determined by their characteristics, but also affected by the environment and background. Chinese TAPPs evolve with the application of different policy instrument mix for the achievement of TAP goals in different stages. Therefore, this classification provides a useful framework for our research of investigating the match of policy instruments and TAP goals over time to explore how tourism develop into a major poverty alleviation means in China under the guidance of TAPPs.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Methods

Policy instruments and policy objectives are reflected in policy documents. In order to have a systematic, objective, and insightful analysis of TAPP documents, this study uses the content analysis method combined with text mining software Rost 6.0 and Nvivo 11. Content analysis with its concept first proposed by Berelson (Berelson, 1952) is an objective, quantitative and qualitative mass communication research method for analyzing information disseminated through various media including documents (Zhang et al., 2019). It's usually carried out through six steps: research issues, sampling, analysis units defining, data classifying and encoding, reliability verification, data analysis and conclusions (Liu, 2014).

Content analysis has been widely used in policy analysis including identification of historical changes of policy themes, the choice of policy tool mix and various policy research issues (He, 2018). It can help researchers perceive essential facts and development trends of policies through documents (Krippendorff, 2012). Rost 6.0 and Nvivo 11 are effective text mining software for establishing TAPP documents semantic network as shown in figure 2 and encoding for detailed analysis of policy document content. There are two most-commonly used coding methods. The first is to establish the coding layers and nodes based on an analysis framework and then detail the coding through line-by-line reading. The second are the encoding procedures that the grounded theory researchers follow: opening encoding, spindle encoding and selective encoding (Holton, 2007).

This study uses the first coding method with the specific steps as follows: (1) Establishing TAPP targets- TAPP instruments theoretical framework based on the text mining results and Rothwell 's policy instrument typology; (2) Analyzing the semantic network of selected samples with Rost 6.0 to have an overall understanding of the TAPP content and verify the

reliability of samples selected; (3) Coding the samples based on the nodes established under the analysis framework with NVivo 11; (4) Quantifying and analyzing the coding results for final conclusions.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

Scholars have reached agreement that policy instruments are methods or techniques that help government realize their policy targets. This study proposes the theoretical framework on TAPP targets and TAPP instruments which is given in figure 1.

3.2.1 TAPP Targets

The literature review shows whether PPT policies target at tourism growth or poverty alleviation is one of the focuses that PPT policy scholars are concerned about. In essence, the two different target orientations determine how large the tourism's benefits could be channelled to the poor. Though few studies investigated the Chinese TAPP goals, there are some research on the evaluation of TAPP's impacts on the poor (Qin et al., 2019; Xie et al., 2020), which aim at measuring the effects of TAPP targets. Economic, social, cultural, and environmental indicators are commonly assessed by TAPP impact researchers, reflecting the four dimensions of TAPP targets but not specifying the major specific targets in different TAP stages. Tourism's growing contribution to poverty alleviation in China is mainly guided by the national poverty alleviation strategy and the tourism development strategy. Therefore, based on the semantic network of TAPP documents in figure 3 with reference to objectives of Chinese poverty alleviation strategies (Liu, 2018) and tourism development strategies (Tang, 2016) in different stages, the targets of TAPP are identified in this study as exploring TAP model (1984-1996), promoting regional TAP (1997-2004), initiating rural TAP (2005-2012) and implementing TAP projects precisely (since 2013).

The target of exploring TAP model in the early exploration period (1984-1996) centers on reforming government and market relationship in TAP indicated by high frequency key words such as "reform", "system", "government", "market" in figure 3. This target follows the national poverty alleviation strategy's objectives of reforming institutional system for promoting socioeconomic development and poverty relief in rural areas since 1978 and tourism's economic target of earning foreign exchange in the first 15 years after reform and opening up.

Since tourism is still in its initial development stage, TAPPs in this stage targets more at casting off the shackles of planned economic system for tourism growth than poverty alleviation. TAPP's target of promoting poverty reduction in designated areas in the preliminary development period (1997-2004) can be implied by the high frequency keywords of "region", "poverty", "scenic area", "development". This target responds to the national poverty alleviation strategy's objectives of tackling food and clothing problems of the impoverished especially in those poverty-stricken areas and tapping domestic tourism's potential for boosting middle class's demands for tourism consumption especially in the TAP pilot zones.

The target of reducing poverty through rural tourism in the rapid improvement period (2005-2012) can be reflected from the high frequency words of "agriculture", "rural", "village", "tourism", "development". This target echoes the national poverty alleviation strategy's target shift from regional level to village level and the tourism's objective of expanding the power of

domestic tourism to rural areas. The target of implementing TAP projects precisely in the targeted and efficient period (since 2013) can be exhibited through high frequency words of “key issues”, “tourism”, “projects”, “promoting”, “social”, “organization” and “enterprises”. Consistent with the poverty alleviation strategy’s target of eliminating absolute poverty precisely and tourism strategy’s goal of improving people’s livelihood, this target pushes tourism to the central area of Chinese poverty alleviation program by attracting the wide participation of enterprises, organizations and other social forces to the key TAP projects planned by the government.

3.2.2 TAPP Instruments

Based on Rothwell's taxonomy of policy tools, this study classifies TAPP tools into supply-side instruments, demand-side instruments, and environmental instruments (Table1). Among them, supply-side instruments mainly refer to the government's input of tourism production factors such as capital, information, technology, talents, and public service to push the smooth development of TAP sectors.

Figure 1: The Role of TAPP Instruments in Realizing TAPP Targets

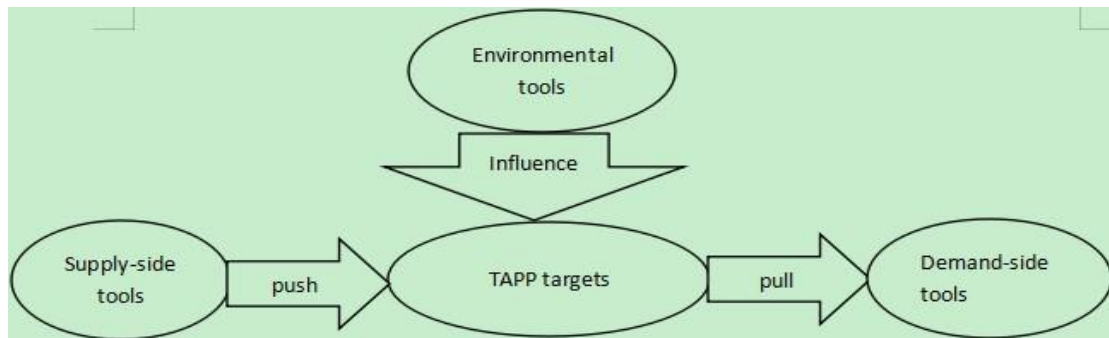


Table 1: Classification of TAPP Instruments

Supply-side	Environmental-side	Demand-side
Funding	Land	Government purchase
Information	Taxation	Project development
Talent	Planning	Partner assistance
Technical support	Reform & innovation	Subsidy
Public service	Legal & regulatory	Government purchase
	Strategic measures	
	Financial	

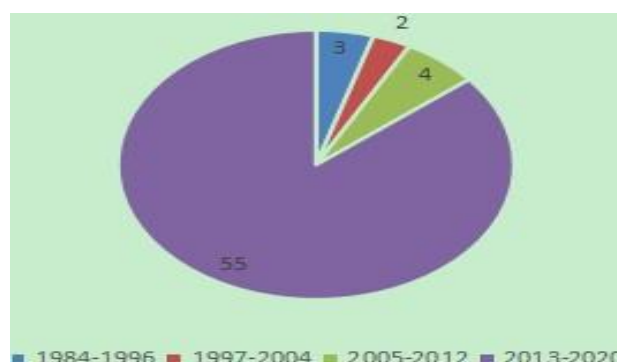
Demand-side tools rely on the government to purchase TAP products and services, develop TAP resources and projects, organize enterprises, institutions and individuals and other social forces to purchase and consume TAP products and services to provide partner assistance to poor households and provide subsidy to reduce the uncertain market risks for TAP programs. Environmental tools mean that the government creates good environment for TAP development by making scientific planning, reforming, innovating and issuing policies for tourism land use, tax reduction and exemption, financial assistance, and strategic measures. It can be seen from figure 1 that these three categories of policy tools are combined to push, pull, and influence the achievement of TAPP targets.

3.3 Data

As the Chinese central government intensified the reform and development of tourism industry from 1984, tourism's contribution to poverty alleviation began to emerge. According to the "World Tourism Development Report 2018-Global Pro-poor Tourism and Demands of the Times" released by the World Tourism Alliance and China Tourism Research Institute in 2018, China's TAP has mainly experienced four stages: the early exploration period (1984-1996), the initial development period (1997-2004), the rapid improvement period (2005-2012) and the targeted and efficient period (since 2013). Therefore, this article analyzes the TAPP documents between 1984-2020 issued by the Chinese Central Government, ministries and commissions such as the State Council, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development and other relevant ministries and commissions with TAPPs issued by the local governments excluded to ensure the reliability, typicality and authority of the samples. Policy texts are searched in the official websites of the above national authorities with the key words of "poverty alleviation", "tourism assisting poverty alleviation", "rural tourism", "leisure agriculture", "targeted poverty alleviation".

After removing policies that are not directly related to TAP, a total of 64 policy documents were selected as the samples. The distribution of these samples in different TAP development stages is shown in figure 2. Among the 64 samples, 55 policies were enacted during the TAP targeted and efficient period, achieving 86% of the total samples.

Figure 2: Distribution of TAPP documents (1984-2020)

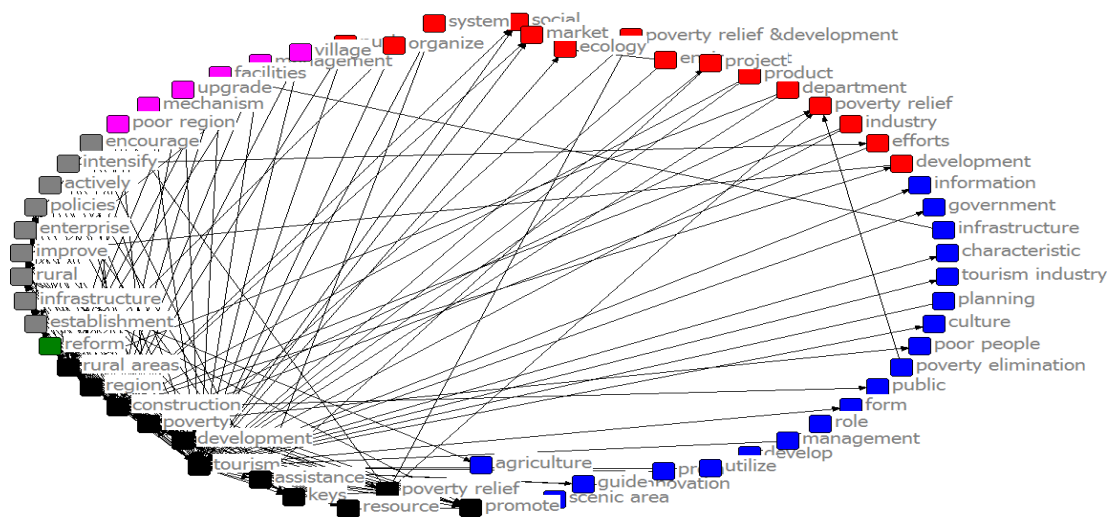


3.4 TAPP Document Semantic Network

ROST is a text mining software that can perform word segmentation, word frequency analysis, social and semantic network analysis of texts. This research mainly uses the social and semantic network generation functions of ROST to extract high-frequency words, filter meaningless words, extract line features, construct a network of co-occurring words, and finally generate semantic network TAPP documents (figure 3). It can be seen from figure 3 that "tourism" is the word with the highest frequency in the samples, and other high-frequency words are "development", "assistance construction", "poverty alleviation", "poverty", "region", and "rural". The links among "rural areas", "tourism" and "poverty relief" are relatively intense, indicating that the selected research samples are closely related to TAP. The high-frequency words "rural area", "poverty", and "region" imply that in China, rural areas and contiguous poor areas which inhabit the largest poor population, are the main focuses of TAPP.

The rapid growth of tourism industry and the deepening of poverty alleviation strategies caused the role of tourism in driving the economic and social development of poverty-stricken areas and rural areas has become increasingly prominent. It plays an important role in national strategies such as "Construction of a New Socialist Countryside", "Construction of Beautiful Countryside" and "New Urbanization Construction". Therefore, "Development" and "construction" are also located at the central area of the network. Other high-frequency words related to TAPP include "infrastructure", "improve", "resource", "key issue", "project", "mechanism", "policies", etc. These keywords show that in the existing TAPP, infrastructure construction and tourism resource development in poverty-stricken areas are key projects that Chinese government implements TAPP guaranteed by sound policies and mechanisms.

Figure 3: The Semantic Network of TAPP Documents



3.5 TAPP Texts Encoding

The semantic network analysis of TAPP texts presents a macroscopic view of Chinese TAPP since the 1980s. To further understand the distribution characteristics of policy tools at different stages, it is necessary to mine the content of TAPP with NVivo11. First, import the 64 policy texts merged in stages into NVivo. Then label supply-side tools, demand-side tools, and environmental tools as tree nodes, and specific policy tools as sub-nodes. Next, code the imported texts semantically line by line and categorize words, sentences, or paragraphs into the corresponding sub-nodes.

Finally, form a coding level of "stage-tree node-sub node-reference point" (as shown in Table 2). In NVivo, percentage agreement and kappa coefficient are usually used to test the reliability of the encoding. Therefore, in this study, another coder was invited to re-code all the policy text samples. Through the coding comparison function in NVivo, it was found that the two coders' coding agreement percentage reach 96.15%, which indicates the high credibility of the coding results.

Table 2: Encoding Process Example

Texts in different TAP Stages	Tree Node	Sub-node	Reference Point
Texts in Early Exploration Period	Environmental Tools	Legal & regulatory	Government authorities at all levels should strengthen the supervision and management of the tourism market, and resolutely stop and investigate fraud, forced sales and other actions that harm the interests of tourists
Texts in Initial Development Period	Supply-side Tools	Funding	The government increases financial investment in tourism infrastructure construction
Texts in Rapid Improvement Period	Environmental Tools	Strategic Measures	Promote the coordinated development of regional tourism. The central and western regions, the frontier and ethnic regions should make use of natural and cultural tourism resources to cultivate characteristic and advantageous TAP industries
Texts in Targeted and Efficient Period	Demand-side Tools	Partner Assistance	Encourage every tourism awards winner and top tourism enterprise to select assistance targets across the country, and help not less than 2 key TAP rural villages.

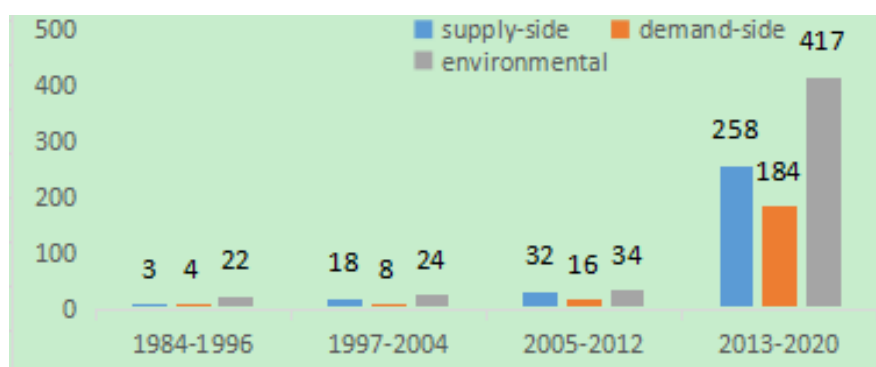
4.0 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 The Overall Distribution of Tool Categories in TAP Stages

In NVivo, 1020 codes are classified according to the framework of policy tools, and the frequency distribution of each type of tools is shown in Figure 4. It's obvious that the TAP targeted and efficient period witnesses a peak of reference points of TAPP instruments, hitting 859 of the total 1020 codes because 55 of the total 64 TAPP samples are collected in this period (Figure2). In the first three stages, the reference points of policy instruments increase

gradually though the number of TAPP issued by the Chinese central government varies slightly. The increase of TAPP documents and policy instrument reference points presents the trajectory of tourism moving from the edge to the center of China's anti-poverty strategy. The three types of tools are distributed unevenly from 1984-2020. Throughout the four stages, environmental tools reach the highest total reference points of 497, with a frequency close to 49%. Demand-side tools are the least used, with 212 reference points and a frequency of only 21%. The proportion of supply-side tools is moderate with reference points of 311 and a frequency of 30%. The government's heavy reliance on environmental policy tools shows that the development of TAP mainly follows the "market prioritized and government promoted development model" (Zeng et al.,2020). The government resorts to environmental policy tools such as land allocation, financial, taxation and strategic measures to influence the participation and investment of market entities in TAP. Other environmental tools including target planning, regulatory control, reform and innovation are used to ensure the TAP market development under the government's rational TAP goals, scientific planning and supervision.

Figure 4: Distribution of three tool categories in TAP stages



4.2 Use of Policy Instruments for Policy Targets in TAP Stages

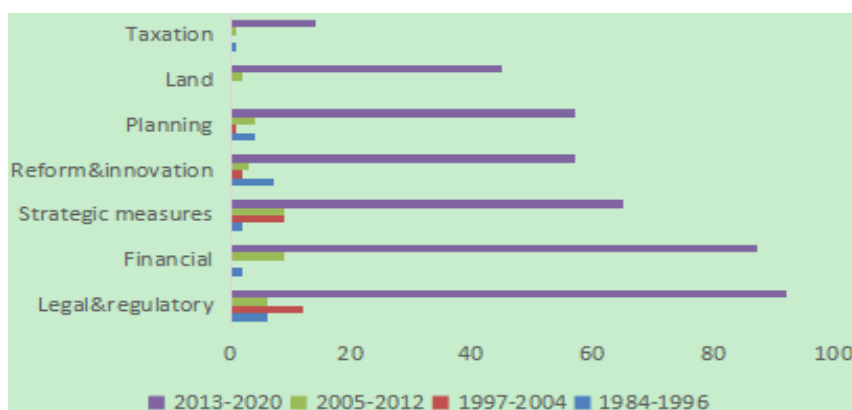
4.2.1 More Environmental Tools for New TAP Model in 1984-1996

In the TAP early exploration period (1984-1996), the Chinese Central Government started to explore the new TAP model by innovating the self-closed system of tourism under the original planned economic system. The "Notice on Strengthening Domestic Tourism Management" and the "Report on Several Issues in Current Tourism System Reform" issued by the National Tourism Administration in 1984 and 1985 initiated the domestic tourism market reform. The tourism industry was incorporated into the National Economic and Social Development Plan in 1986, stimulating the enthusiasm of tourism development in poor areas but rich in tourism resources such as Western China's Guizhou Province. Since then, the contribution of tourism to poverty reduction emerged in China. The TAP initiative in economically underdeveloped areas was further promoted by the National Tourism Administration's "Notice on Actively Developing Domestic Tourism Opinions" in 1993 and the "Ninth Five-Year Plan and 2010 Vision Goal Outline of China's Tourism Development" in 1995.

TAPP of this stage mainly depended on environmental tools to adjust the relationship between the market and the government in TAP model. It can be seen from figure 4 that among the 29 reference points for policy tools in the exploration period, there are 22 reference points for environmental tools, and only 3 and 4 reference points for supply and demand tools respectively. Figure 5 shows that reform & innovation and legal & regulatory are the most frequently used environmental tools, focusing on gradually breaking the boundaries of tourism market factors such as tourism transportation, scenic spot construction, tourism product

development, tourist source export and reception between departments and regions. Tourism industry service standards, management and supervision systems, and legal regulations are initially established to change the self-closed service system of the tourism industry. Owing the use of these environmental tools, the original government-sponsored TAP model is transformed into a "market + government" dual-track TAP model. Under the dual-track model, by 1996, China had reduced poverty through tourism to approximately 6 million people, involving 12,000 villages.

Figure 5: Structure and Distribution of Environmental Tools in TAP Stages



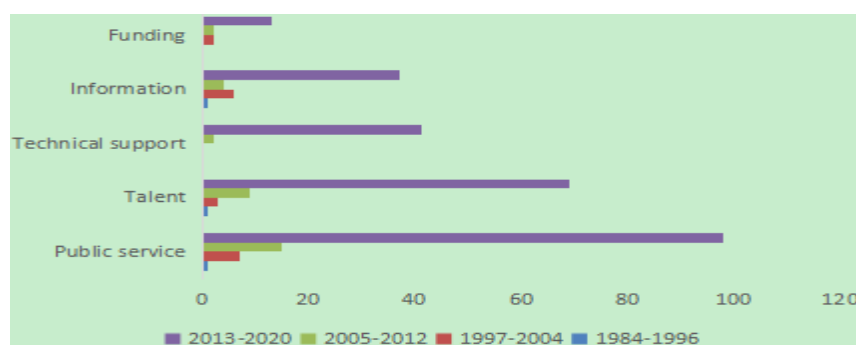
4.2.2 Supply-side Tools Increased for Regional TAP in 1997-2004

As TAP was included in the "China National Tourism Development Plan of the Ninth Five-Year Plan" and the national western development strategy was implemented, TAP entered its initial development period (1997-2004). In this period, tourism's role in promoting employment and economic development was fully recognized by the government. Tourism began to be taken as a method to boost under-developed regions' economy in central and western China. In order to stimulate people's tourism demands, the State Council, in 1999, issued "Measures on National Lunar New Year and Memorial Holidays" where "Spring Festival", "May Day" and "National Day" were set as national week-long holidays. This policy successfully made these three holidays the "tourism golden weeks". To satisfy the demands of holiday tourists, the National Tourism Administration and other nine departments jointly issued "Several Opinions on Further Development of Holiday Tourism" to increase the input of tourism factors. Thanks to the holiday tourism's contribution to income increase of local people especially the poor and economic development in lag-behind central and western regions, the "Notice on Further Accelerating the Development of the Tourism Industry" issued by the State Council in 2001, clearly set out the task of constructing TAP pilot zones.

To advance TAP development in pilot zones, it's urgent to improve the tourism supply in these areas. Therefore, TAPP for this stage increased the use of supply-side policy instruments. The reference points of supply-side tools in figure 3 rose from 3 in the early exploration period to 18 in the initial development period, an increase of 500%. It can be seen from figure 6 that during the initial development period, the funding tool emerged from scratch. Through the issuance of tourism treasury bonds, the government spurred foreign capital and social funds to tourism development projects, tourism infrastructure and market development in the western and impoverished areas. The reference points of other supply-side tools including information, public service and talent also increased. These three tools focused on ensuring the carrying capacity of the tourism industry in the central and western regions as tourism demands grew. In order to avoid problems caused by insufficient supply during the "tourism

golden weeks”, the government provided tourism information statistics, tourism product information and forecast services for tourists to arrange their routes and schedules properly. Besides, the supplies of public services such as transportation, post and telecommunications, medical treatment were strengthened and tourism service and management teams were established to ensure the quality of tourism services in poor areas. The implementation of these TAPP instruments greatly expanded TAP effects. From 1978 to 2004, the total number of poor people directly benefited from tourism development was 60 to 80 million, accounting for one quarter to one third of the total number of poor people.

Figure 6: Structure and Distribution of Supply-side Tools in TAP Stages



4.2.3 Supply and Environmental Balanced for Rural TAP in 2005-2012

During the rapid improvement period (2005-2012), TAP target shifted from regional areas to rural areas to carry out the important historical task of building a new socialist countryside proposed by the Chinese Central Government. In 2006, the National Tourism Administration issued "Guiding Opinions on Promoting Rural Tourism Development" and other special policy documents on rural tourism and signed a cooperation agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture on promoting the construction of a new socialist countryside and the development of rural tourism. 2006 was also designated by the National Tourism Administration as the "China Rural Tourism Year". After six years of rapid development, TAP was listed as one of the main poverty alleviation methods in the national poverty alleviation program document in 2012. Based on the significant TAP effects produced by increasing supply-type tools during the initial development period, rural tourism development policies continue to strengthen the role of supply-type tools in promoting TAP. The frequency of supply-side tools became close to that of environmental tools with reference points of 32 and 34 respectively (Figure 3).

The balanced use of supply-side and environmental TAPP tools aimed to improve weak foundation of rural tourism. The figure 6 shows that among the supply-side tools for rural TAP, reference points of talent and public service increased significantly. This result reflects rural residents' poor ability to participate TAP and inferior infrastructure in rural areas caused by the Chinese urban-rural dual economic structure. Therefore, the supply-side talent tool emphasized the cooperation of various rural TAP involved parties, especially tourism departments, rural leaders and village-level officials in cultivating villagers' tourism service and management capabilities. Besides, TAPPs intensified investment in the construction of tourism infrastructure and public service systems in rural tourism villages and towns to make up for the lack of rural public services. In addition to the shortage of talents and public service, land and funds were also key issues that needed to be resolved in rural TAP. Therefore, among the environmental tools shown in figure 5, land and financial tools rose largely. The government encouraged demolition and land reclamation to ensure the land use for rural

tourism. The special fund for rural tourism was established to strengthen credit and guarantee support for rural TAP. Under the guidance of national TAPP in rapid improvement period, Guizhou Province took the lead in formulating the "Guizhou Province Rural Tourism Plan", which set rural tourism as the main poverty alleviation means. During the Eleventh Five-Year Plan period (2006-2010), 420,000 poor people in Guizhou Province were lifted out of poverty. This successful experience has been gradually promoted throughout the country since then.

4.2.4 Project Development Pulling TAP Precise Effect in 2013-2020

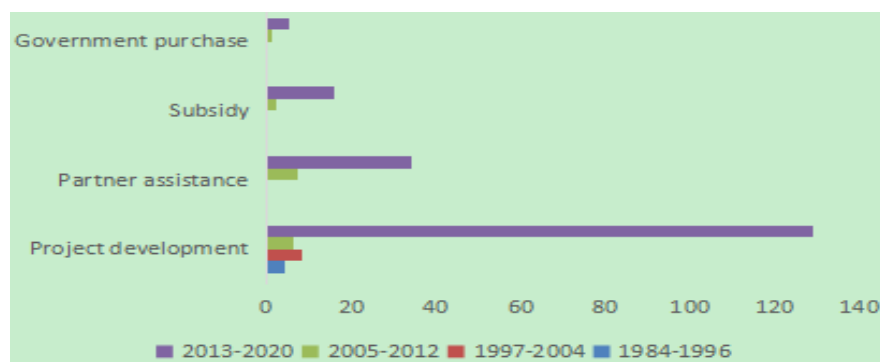
Following the Chinese target poverty alleviation strategy proposed in 2013, TAP moved to the target and efficient development period. In this stage, according to the "China Rural Poverty Alleviation and Development Program (2011-2020)", rural TAP was listed as one of the ten key tasks for poverty alleviation and development in the new period. The central government issued more than ten special TAPP documents such as the "Rural TAP Project Action Plan", listing rural TAP projects as the core pulling force of the TAPP mix with three major types of tools working together to further promote poverty alleviation through rural tourism. It can be seen from figure 7 that among the demand-side tools, the frequency of project development approximates 140, which is nearly 7 times the sum of the reference points in the previous three periods, making it a specific tool with the most reference points among the three types of tools. In 2019, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT, the former National Tourism Administration) deepened the implementation of the rural TAP projects. It jointly launched the first batch of 320 national rural tourism key villages with the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC). MCT and NDRC also approved the construction of tourism infrastructure in deeply impoverished areas through 329 investment projects within the central government's budget.

The smooth implementation of the project requires a standardized, orderly and innovative institutional environment as a strong guarantee. Therefore, supply and environmental tools in the third stage was broken. The proportion of environmental tools increased, which was twice and four times that of supply-side tools and demand-side tools respectively (figure 4). Among environmental tools, legal & regulatory and financial tools are specific tools with the most reference points (Figure 5). This fully illustrates that in the targeted and efficient stage, TAP projects are carried out under the regulatory control. The source of project funds is not limited to fiscal funds. Various financing methods such as direct financing, indirect financing, project financing and non-project financing have also been comprehensively adopted, and financing channels have been continuously expanded.

Among the supply-side tools, government's funding increased dramatically compared with the previous stages (figure 4), and the scope and scale of government fund in TAP has been further expanded. The information tool has been updated with dynamic monitoring and release of TAP project data added. The implementation of target TAPP mix generated the most obvious TAP effects. The "National Rural Tourism Poverty Alleviation Observation Report" shows that in 2015, the per capita income of farmers from rural tourism accounted for 39.4% of the annual per capita income of farmers, and 2.64 million people were lifted out of poverty through rural tourism in poor villages, accounting for 18.3% of the total number of people alleviated from poverty in the country. By the first half of 2019, the rural tourism income of 13 poverty alleviation monitoring points in documented poor villages in most impoverished regions averaged 1.432 million yuan, a year-on-year increase of 38.4%. Despite the deep recession of global tourism caused by the outbreak of Covid-19 in 2020, Chinese rural tourism has become one of the major rural sectors that recovered rapidly from the pandemic. According to the China Ministry of Culture and tourism, the number of tourists and

total income of rural tourism in July and August, 2020 recovered to more than 90 percent of that of the same period in previous years.

Figure 7: Structure and Distribution of Demand-side Tools in TAP Stages



5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study, based on Rothwell's policy tool taxonomy and the theoretical framework of TAPP targets- TAPP instruments, investigates how TAPPs have made tourism a major means for poverty alleviation by identifying the match of the use of policy instruments and TAPP targets in the national TAPP documents during 1984-2020 through text mining and content analysis with Rost and NVivo. It is found that the overall distribution of the three types of policy tools: supply-side, demand-side, and environmental is uneven. The policy mix mainly consists of environmental and supply-side instruments, which fully reflects that Chinese TAP follows the "market priority and government promoted development model". Under this model, financial, legal and regulatory, public service, and project development are the most used policy sub-tools. Under the regulatory control, the government uses financial tool to influence the flow of market resources to the TAP field and improve the public services in poor areas. TAP projects are implemented to cultivate and expand the TAP market and promote the formation of the tourism poverty alleviation industry chain. TAPP instrument mix varies to meet TAPP targets in different TAP stages. In the early exploration period, environmental tools are relied on to build a "government + market" dual-track TAP model. In the initial development period, supply tools are increased to expand the TAP areas and effectiveness. Supply and environmental tools are balanced in the rapid improvement period to initiate rural TAP. In the target and efficient period, the demand-side sub-tool project development is taken as the core pulling force of the TAPP mix, which promotes the precise effects rural TAP in deeply impoverished regions.

The evolution of major TAPP targets from promoting regional economic development to promoting rural endogenous poverty alleviation is consistent with the phased goals of tourism development strategies and poverty alleviation strategies. For more than 40 years of reform and opening up, the strategic goal of tourism development has been transformed from a "national economic growth impetus" to a "strategic pillar industry of the national economy" and "the leader of the happiness industry". The change in the strategic goal of tourism development indicates the tourism role has shifted economic booster to people's livelihood promote. Eliminating poverty is an important part of ensuring and improving people's livelihood. Since the mid-1980s, the goal of China's poverty alleviation has shifted from solving the food and clothing problems of the poor, improving the overall economic and social development and the people's production and living conditions in poverty-stricken areas to building a comprehensively well-off society. The evolution of poverty alleviation goals reflects the transformation of Chinese poverty alleviation governance concept from economic poverty

alleviation to endogenous poverty alleviation. The match of TAPP targets and the use of policy instruments echo the overlap of the goals of tourism development and poverty alleviation by giving full play to tourism's major role in stimulating the endogenous motivation of the poor. After Chinese government has fulfilled its 2020 absolute poverty elimination goal, the country's poverty governance focuses on solving relative poverty, and achieving the convergence of poverty alleviation and rural revitalization in the post-poverty era while consolidating the achievements of absolute poverty alleviation (Sun et al, 2019). In order to play a better role in achieving the nation's new poverty alleviation goal, TAPP mix can be improved from the following three aspects based on the overall balance of the three policy instrument types.

Firstly, supply-side tools should attach importance to the integration of TAP related industries, which could be an effective way to realize the convergence of TAP and rural revitalization. The number of talent and technical support policy tools should be increased to meet the needs of the deep integration of rural tourism and related industries. Talent tool should further strengthen the training of tourism service abilities of relatively poor people in rural areas, and chiefs of TAP projects, folk culture and intangible cultural heritage practitioners etc. Technical support should focus on the construction of a smart tourism service system and promote the application and integration of information technology, Internet technology, agricultural technology, and cultural creativity in various fields of TAP. Funding tool should channel more investments in the integration of TAP related industries than the tourism resource development.

Secondly, based on the experience of China's combats against tourism-threatening pandemics especially Covid-19 in 2020, demand-side tools should stress the construction of defense system against uncertain risks to consolidate TAP's contribution to the absolute poverty alleviation. The tourism industry in former poverty-stricken areas is sensitive to changes of natural, economic, social environment and emergencies, and its ability to withstand risks is relatively weak. The government should increase and innovate the use of government purchase, partner assistance and subsidy mechanisms to guide TAP to establish an external uncertainty risk prevention and control mechanism.

Thirdly, environmental tools should emphasize the optimization of multi-participation mechanism for TAP. It will be a good prospect for TAP if efforts are made to develop tourism into an industry that can participated by the most of the population and plays an active role in promoting the regional industrial integration (WT0, 2019). Therefore, it is necessary to increase the frequency of taxation and strategic measures policy tools to attract more social forces to TAP multi- participation mechanism. The existing tax reduction and exemption policies are mostly for tourism enterprises. In the future, more attention should be paid to tax reduction for tourism entrepreneurs such as returning migrant workers, college students, relatively poor households, rural tourism leaders, and intangible cultural heritage practitioners. Strategic measures such inter-regional exchange of tourists, joint promotion and other regional cooperation measures should be combined to help TAP projects upgrade their international and domestic influence and brand effects.

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