

Spatiotemporal Evolution and Driving Mechanisms of County-Level Tourism Economy in Borderland Tourism Destinations—The Case of Xinjiang Postprint

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Abstract

Taking 74 county-level units in Xinjiang as the research object and selecting multiple indicators, this study employs analytical methods and tools including ESDA, ArcGIS, and GeoDa, along with dynamic panel data models, to analyze the evolution characteristics, regional disparities, and driving mechanisms of the spatial pattern of county-level tourism economy in Xinjiang from 2008 to 2017. The results reveal that: (1) The agglomeration characteristics of county-level tourism economy display a “decline-rise-decline-rise” pattern, with marked inter-county differences, and the agglomeration exhibits a significant north-to-south gradient enhancement. (2) The “multi-core, multi-belt” distribution of county-level tourism economy gradually emerged, yet the “hot north, cold south” distribution pattern remained unchanged. (3) Under the traction force in the northeast-southwest direction, the trajectory of the tourism economic centroid manifested as multiple overlapping V-shaped distributions, while the coverage area of the standard deviation ellipse also expanded progressively along this direction. (4) Tourism resource endowment and policy support constitute the primary driving factors influencing the evolution of the county-level tourism economic pattern. Improvements in transportation conditions and enhancements in human capital levels do not uniformly promote tourism economic development across all counties, with significant intensity variations in influencing factors observed across different regions.

Full Text

Preamble

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Spatial and Temporal Changes and Driving Mechanisms of County-Scale Tourism Economy in Frontier Tourism Destinations

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Abstract

As a western frontier region, Xinjiang has gradually emerged as a popular tourism destination in northwestern China, thanks to its rich natural and cultural resources stemming from its unique geographical location and social environment. Understanding the spatial development patterns of the tourism economy is essential for formulating effective regional tourism policies and promoting sustainable tourism development in Xinjiang. The evolution of tourism economy spatial patterns is a complex process. To achieve a more accurate and comprehensive analysis of this evolution and its underlying drivers, this study examines 74 county-level units in Xinjiang using multiple indicators. Employing Exploratory Spatial Data Analysis (ESDA), ArcGIS, GeoDa, and a dynamic panel data model, we analyze regional disparities and driving mechanisms of county-level tourism economy spatial pattern evolution from 2008 to 2017.

The results reveal that county-scale tourism economy agglomeration exhibited a “down-up-down-up” fluctuation pattern, reflecting spatial autocorrelation where regional tourism development levels correlate with neighboring areas. The spatial distribution shows significant gradational characteristics from north to south, with marked inter-county differences. Enhanced tourism spillover effects in northern regions promoted interaction among neighboring counties, forming a “multi-core and multi-strip” spatial distribution pattern that pushed emerging hotspots southward. However, this did not alter the long-standing pattern of “prosperous north and underdeveloped south” in Xinjiang’s tourism landscape. Influenced by a northeast-southwest development axis, the trajectory of the tourism economy’s center of gravity displayed multiple V-shaped fluctuations, with the standard deviational ellipse gradually expanding in this direction.

Regression analysis indicates that the intensity of influencing factors varied significantly across counties. Tourism resource endowments and policy support emerged as the primary driving factors, while improvements in transportation infrastructure and human capital levels did not necessarily promote county-scale tourism economic development in all counties. The level of economic development exerted no significant influence on the spatiotemporal evolution of county-level tourism economy.

Keywords: frontier region; county scale; tourism economy; spatiotemporal change; driving mechanism

Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

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