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Impact of Tibetan Household Livelihood Capital on Tourism Participation Level

A Case of Jiaju Tibetan Village in Garze

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1. ABSTRACT

As more people move from the countryside to cities and those left behind struggle to sustain livelihoods, China's 19th National Congress of the Communist Party has prioritized the implementation of rural revitalization. A number of studies have examined the drivers of livelihood transition from farming to non-farm activities, especially participation in tourism against the backdrop of rural tourism development. There are, however, few studies identifying ways to measure tourism participation level or discussing how household-level capitals influence the decision on tourism participation made by Tibetan ethnic households.

Using the household survey data, this study estimated an ordinal logistic regression model to identify the determinants of household tourism participation levels, assessing the roles of livelihood capitals in the adoption of tourism activities at household level in Jiaju Tibetan Village, a renowned ethnic tourism resort in western China.

The results revealed that the characteristics differences of livelihood capitals in terms of the proximity to traffic arteries, availability of skilled members, fixed assets, direct and indirect support from government between households may lead to different levels of tourism participation. The effects of the household labor availability and annual family income remained unclear.

4. RESULTS

Results of the Ordinal Logistic Regression Model on Tourism Participation Level

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Sig.	Odds ratio
Tourism participation level				
[Low level = 1]	3.934	2.318	0.090	-
[Medium level = 2]	6.675	2.455	0.007	-
[High level = 3]	0 ^a	-	-	-
Natural capital				
Proximity to main roads	1.041	0.460	0.024**	2.83
Water supply	-1.540	0.504	0.002***	0.21
Arable land	0.702	1.101	0.524	2.02
Forest land	1.735	1.155	0.133	5.67
Physical capital				
The number of beds	0.054	0.049	0.264	1.06
Crop yield	0.052	0.000	0.592	1.00
Livestock	0.000	0.000	0.091*	1.00
Fixed assets	4.617	2.231	0.039**	101.19
Human capital				
Family labors	-1.401	0.489	0.004***	0.25
Skill	1.068	0.347	0.002***	2.91
Financial capital				
Annual income	0.019	1.120	0.290	1.02
Social capital				
Relatives in government				
[No = 0]	1.652	0.820	0.044**	5.22
[Yes = 1]	0 ^a	-	-	-
Relatives in village committee				
[No = 0]	-0.620	0.827	0.454	0.54
[Yes = 1]	0 ^a	-	-	-
Government subsidies				
[No = 0]	2.172	1.057	0.040**	8.78
[Yes = 1]	0 ^a	-	-	-

Note: ***, **, and * show that the coefficient is significantly different from zero at the 1%, 5%, and 10% level, respectively; a parameters of reference groups were set as 0.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study constructs ordinal logistic models for household survey data from Jiaju Tibetan Village to trace the dependencies of tourism participation level back to livelihood capitals, revealing the underpinning for solving unbalanced and inadequate participation in tourism among Tibetan households.

Tourism participation level is coded as 3, 2, 1 as the dependent variable, which is defined by the proportions of family members having self-employment in tourism as their income source.

- . 3 = No less than 1/2 family members worked for tourist homestay
- . 2 = Less than 1/2 family members worked for tourist homestay
- . 1 = None of members engaged in tourism related jobs

Based on the Sustainable Livelihood Framework, a broad range of independent variables was proposed regarding five types of capital on which households draw to build their livelihoods:

- . Natural capital - proximity to traffic arteries, arable land, forest land, water supply
- . Physical capital - beds, field crops, livestock, fixed assets
- . Social capital - social networks
- . Financial capital - annual income
- . Human capital - family labors, skills

Natural Capital - the proximity to main roads has a significant influence on tourism participation level; the water supply satisfaction degree represents significant negative effect on participation level.

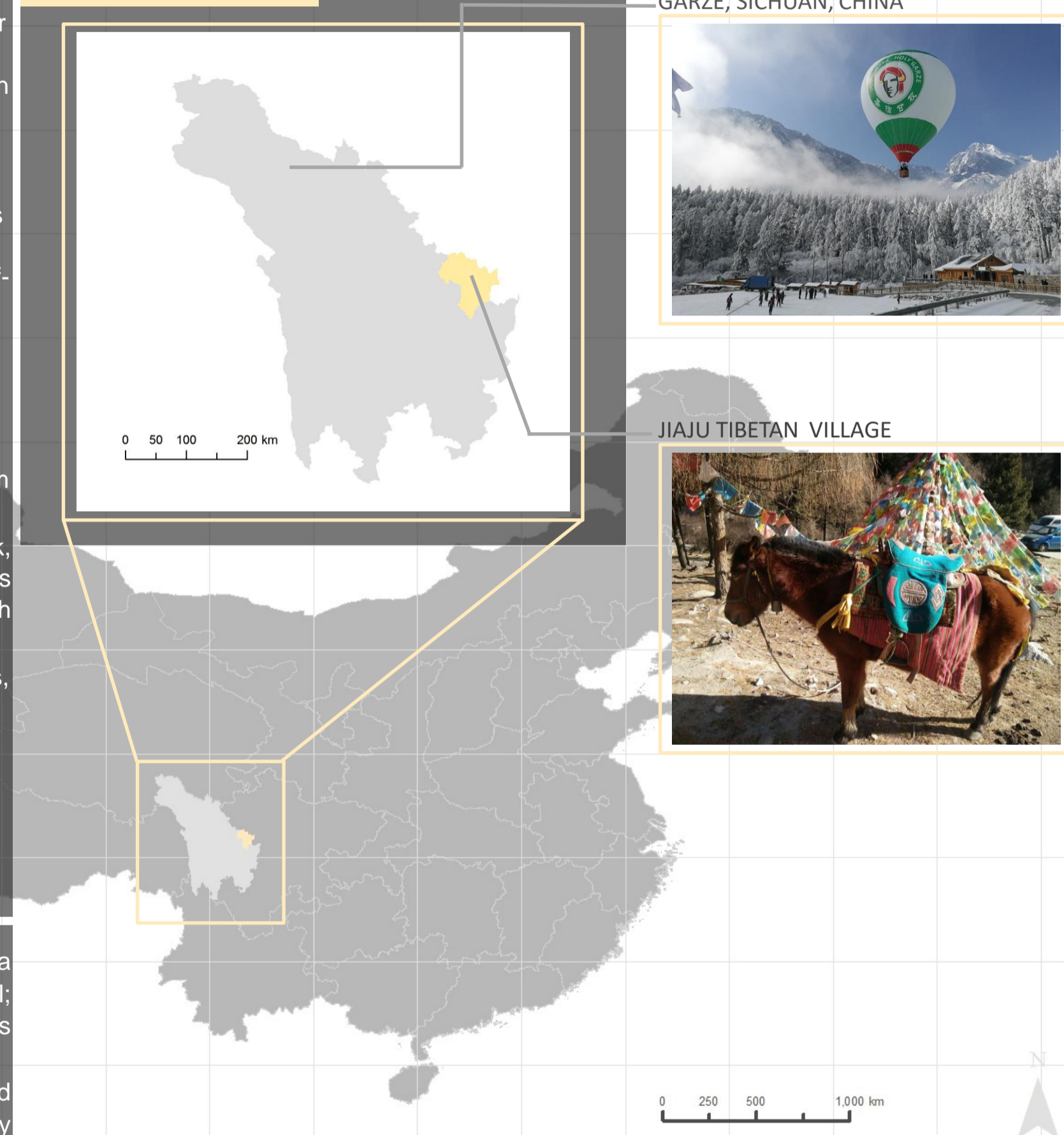
Physical Capital - households being rich in fixed assets were prone to participate in tourism in the way of providing homestay services.

Human Capital - the number of skilled members is significantly and positively linked to the tourism participation level. Interestingly but unexpectedly, the more laborers in a family, the lower tourism participation level households tend to present.

Financial Capital - the variable considered under financial capital, annual income, does not show significant impact on tourism participation level.

Social Capital - having relatives in government and having received government subsidies show significant impact on tourism participation level.

3. RESEARCH AREA



5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Results of the analysis showed statistically significant impacts of proximity to traffic arteries, the number of skilled member, fixed assets, social networks and government subsidies on household tourism participation level. The effects of the number of family labors and annual family income had yet to be determined. Findings of the study will assist the governments, tourism planners and households to remove barriers to participate in tourism and develop quality homestay products and tourism market. The implications are presented as follow.

- . Investment in infrastructure, especially that of traffic systems must continue to be a priority.
- . Skill training and vocational education in remote ethnic areas should be strengthened.
- . Government should explore new form of social governance and shift the focus to the community level.