From "Seaside Utopia" to "Lifestyle Brand": Aranya's Journey Beyond Boundaries - A Branding Study of A Cultural and Tourism Real Estate Project

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Abstract. Aranya is a tourist community located on the Golden Coast of Qinhuangdao, Hebei Province. Initially, its predecessor was a desolate unfinished resort. After a series of developments, it has become a highly popular seaside cultural and tourism real estate project. This study focuses on Aranya's transformation from a cultural and tourism real estate project to a lifestyle brand. Through a questionnaire survey, it is found that the community plays a core role in Aranya's brand development. 85.04% of the respondents regarded the community atmosphere as Aranya's core attraction. This data fully demonstrates Aranya's achievements in building a social environment, and the unique community atmosphere it creates has a strong appeal to tourists. Meanwhile, 75.59% (including those who are very willing and relatively willing) of the participants clearly expressed their willingness to participate in Aranya's community activities in the long term. This result strongly proves that Aranya's community activities are highly attractive and can continuously maintain and enhance people's willingness to participate. Overall, the community operation strategy has played a crucial role in Aranya's brand building and user stickiness improvement, laying a solid foundation for its successful transformation from a cultural and tourism real estate project to a lifestyle brand.

Keywords: Aranya; Cultural and Tourism Real Estate; Branding; Community Operation.

1. Introduction

With the improvement of living standards, the market scale of cultural and tourism real estate has increased from 800 billion yuan in 2019 to 1.2 trillion yuan in 2023. Consumers' demands have shifted from sightseeing and taking photos to experiencing cultural connotations and lifestyles [1]. In the early stage, the sales rate of the Hebei coastal project Aranya was less than 30%. Later, by implanting cultural symbols such as an auditorium and a library and building an art community, the concept of a seaside utopia was upgraded into a lifestyle brand. The housing price rose to 40,000 yuan per square meter, and there were more than 500,000 notes about it on Xiaohongshu. Its transformation reveals the transformation logic of the industry from resource piling-up to being driven by cultural value [2]. In the past, consumers mostly regarded cultural and tourism projects as a short-term leisure and relaxation option, and their attention mainly focused on basic entertainment facilities and natural scenery [3]. However, with the improvement of educational levels and the convenience of information access, consumers' horizons have been continuously broadened, and their pursuit of the spiritual and cultural level has become more intense [4]. They are no longer satisfied with a cursory tour but eager to deeply experience the local culture and participate in activities that can enhance themselves and bring unique feelings [5].

This study focuses on its path to break through the circle, providing theoretical and practical references for how cultural and tourism real estate can respond to cultural consumption demands [6]. Existing research shows that the integration of culture and tourism helps Aranya integrate resources, create characteristic projects, and lay the foundation for branding. Its unique positioning and operation model, by building high - quality life scenes and leveraging social media to enhance brand influence, promote the transformation into a lifestyle brand [7]. Internet-famous buildings such as the auditorium and the library have become highlights of brand communication, attracting tourists and being widely spread through social media [8]. Community operation enhances user interaction and a

sense of belonging, improves brand loyalty, and perfects the tourist experience, facilitating the brand - building transformation [9].

2. Research Methods

This study used a questionnaire survey to analyze Aranya's popularity. The survey covered a wide range of people, including college students. The self-designed questionnaire had 14 questions, divided into five categories: basic information, brand perception, user experience, brand loyalty, and suggestions and expectations. The questionnaire was distributed via social media, and 127 valid responses were collected. (See Table 1)

Table 1: Research on Aranya's Transformation from a Cultural and Tourism Real Estate Project to a Lifestyle Brand

Type	Serial Number	Question
Basic Information	1	What is your age?
	2	What is your occupation?
	3	What is your identity in Aranya?
Brand Perception	4	How did you learn about Aranya? (Multiple choices are allowed)
	5	What kind of brand do you think Aranya is?
	6	What do you think is the difference between Aranya and other cultural and tourism projects or lifestyle brands? (Multiple choices are allowed)
User Experience	7	What is your overall experience in Aranya?
	8	Which activities in Aranya have you participated in? (Multiple choices are allowed)
	9	What do you think is the most attractive thing about Aranya? (Multiple choices are allowed)
Brand Loyalty	10	Will you recommend Aranya to your friends or family?
	11	Are you willing to participate in Aranya's community activities in the long term?
	12	How loyal are you to the Aranya brand? (On a scale of 1 - 5, 1 being very low and 5 being very high)
Suggestions and Expectations	13	What do you think Aranya still needs to improve?
	14	What are your expectations for the future development of Aranya? (Open - ended question)

This questionnaire was distributed through Moments, and 127 copies were recovered, with a 100% effective rate.

3. Research Results

3.1. Population Characteristics and Participation Patterns

The research subjects were mainly young urban people, mostly short - term tourists. This indicates "check - in - style consumption" and room for improving long - term stickiness. The young customer group brings vitality, but scene optimization is needed to promote "life participation".

3.2. Current Situation and Challenges of Brand Perception

Users' brand perception leans towards "cultural and tourism real estate" and "cultural community", with insufficient recognition of the "lifestyle brand". The "real estate" label needs to be weakened, and the "ideal life solutions" concept should be strengthened.

3.3. Experience Advantages and Core Pain Points

The community atmosphere is Aranya's greatest attraction, along with cultural activities and architectural designs. However, service quality, consumption costs, and traffic convenience are major pain points. Hardware and cost - performance do not meet "ideal life" expectations, and a balance between commercial and experiential aspects is needed.

3.4. Drivers and Limitations of Loyalty

Users show high loyalty due to community and cultural experiences, but it mainly stays at the "activity participation" level. Transforming short - term interests into long - term lifestyle integration can increase user value.

3.5. Transformation Directions and Action Priorities

Users expect Aranya to become a long - term - participatory life community. Improvements should focus on optimizing services, costs, traffic, and diversifying scenes. Weakening the real - estate attribute and strengthening the "seaside ideal life" brand image can promote the transformation to a lifestyle ecosystem.

In summary, the survey shows Aranya's potential in attracting young consumers and the importance of the community and cultural activities. But there are areas for improvement, especially in service quality. Aranya has a good foundation but needs to enhance service quality to boost brand loyalty.
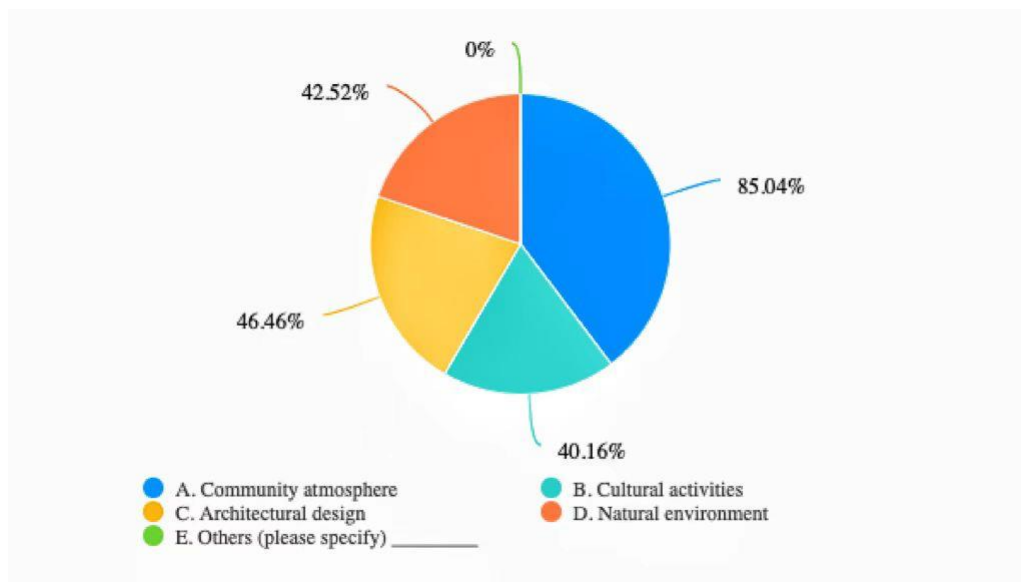
Figure 1. What do you think is the most attractive aspect of Aranya to you? (Multiple choices are allowed.)
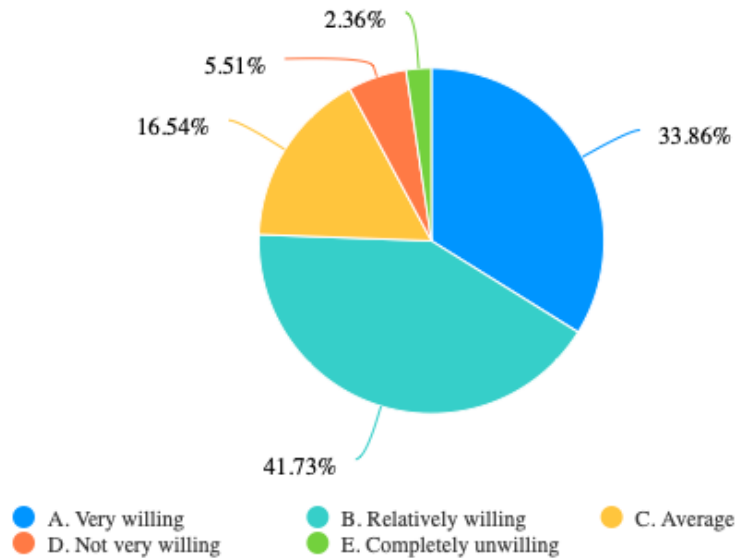
Figure 2. Are you willing to participate in the community activities of Aranya for a long time?

The survey results of Figure 1 and Figure 2 jointly prove the advantages of Aranya's community-related aspects, reflecting the success of Aranya's community operation strategy and the important role of this strategy in its brand building and user stickiness improvement.

4. Discussion on Research Results

4.1. Views on Brand Positioning

Aranya is in a transition period. Brand communication should focus more on lifestyle scenes and less on real - estate promotion to strengthen the "lifestyle" label.

4.2. Judgment on Core Advantages

Community operation can create user circles and content co - creation, but its activity threshold is high for new users. Cultural activities should combine art and local culture while avoiding over-commercialization.

4.3. Solutions to Experience Pain Points

Regarding the contradiction between service quality and consumption costs, my suggestion is to launch a "basic service universalization + characteristic service high - endization" hierarchical model (such as the co-existence of affordable canteens and high-end restaurants). For the improvement of traffic convenience, it can be combined with regional tourism cooperation to open "urban commuting-type" weekend special lines (such as direct buses from Beijing to Aranya), while avoiding the destruction of the original coastal landscape by building large-scale parking lots.

4.4. Thoughts on User Structure

The high proportion of young tourists helps brand spread but may lead to "one-time check-in" consumption. Increasing the proportion of property owners requires showing "realizable ideal life" scenes through the community.

4.5. Summary of Core Views

Aranya's transformation requires turning the "lifestyle" concept into daily experiences, optimizing basic services, and strengthening emotional value to become an "ecological platform for users' life ideals".

5. Conclusions

This study focuses on Aranya's transformation from a cultural and tourism real estate project to a lifestyle brand. Through multi - aspect research and analysis, the following conclusions are drawn, At the brand perception level, users' current perception of Aranya mainly focuses on "cultural and tourism projects" and "cultural communities", and the recognition of it as a "lifestyle brand" still needs to be improved. This is mainly due to the strong inertial influence of the real-estate attribute in the brand communication process, and the insufficient concrete presentation of life scenes, so that users have not fully formed a deep - seated perception of Aranya as a lifestyle brand.

From the perspective of brand advantages, Aranya has successfully formed a strong emotional connection among users through an active community atmosphere. Abundant cultural activities and unique architectural designs have also constructed distinctive experience scenes for users, achieving a relatively high user satisfaction and recommendation intention. However, Aranya still has short-comings in basic experiences. Problems such as uneven service quality, high consumption costs, and insufficient traffic convenience are relatively prominent. Moreover, Aranya's user group is mainly composed of young tourists, and the proportion of in-depth users such as property owners is relatively small. User stickiness mainly stays at the level of activity participation, and a comprehensive and in -depth lifestyle dependence has not been formed.

Based on the above situation, Aranya's future development requires a multi - pronged approach. In terms of optimizing basic experiences, efforts should be prioritized to improve service quality, conduct refined management of catering, accommodation and other services, and at the same time, reduce consumption thresholds through hierarchical pricing, cost control and other strategies, and improve traffic conditions by increasing public transportation trips and integrating traffic information. In terms of brand building, content marketing should be centered around users' real-life scenes, brand communication should be strengthened, various brand activities should be innovatively held, and the cultural connotation and influence of the brand should be enhanced. In terms of community building, community operations should be further deepened, more low-threshold and diversified community activities should be designed, users should be encouraged to initiate activities independently, and the community interaction platform should be optimized to enhance users' sense of participation and belonging, transforming users' short - term cultural experiences into long - term lifestyle dependencies, thus achieving the leap from project operation to a lifestyle ecosystem and successfully completing the transformation into a lifestyle brand.

In addition, this study has certain limitations in sample selection, data collection, and research time. In terms of sample selection, the scale is limited and the regional coverage is narrow, mostly concentrated in areas closely related to Aranya, making it difficult to comprehensively reflect the views and needs of consumers with different backgrounds. When collecting data, the questionnaire design is not comprehensive and in - depth enough, making it difficult to explore consumers' potential needs and deep - seated views. In terms of research time, it is only concentrated in a specific period, without long - term tracking, making it difficult to grasp the dynamic changes of consumers' needs and the long - term effects of brand strategies. Follow-up research can be improved by expanding the sample size, optimizing the questionnaire design, and establishing a long-term tracking mechanism, so as to explore Aranya's brand development path and user experience more comprehensively and deeply. Aranya can solve current problems in services, costs, traffic, perception, and community depth by optimizing service details (such as improving the quality of catering and accommodation, providing personalized recommendations), implementing hierarchical pricing and launching preferential activities to reduce consumption thresholds, increasing direct transportation trips from

surrounding cities and integrating travel information, creating and disseminating content centered around users' life scenes, collaborating with KOLs and brands to expand influence, designing low-threshold and diverse community activities, and encouraging users to initiate activities independently, so as to promote the transformation into a lifestyle brand.

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