

Article

Review of the Integrated Development of Ecological and Cultural Forestry

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Abstract: Ecological and cultural forestry need to be integrated for successful rural revitalization. A proper rural revitalization strategy should be linked to the value of the eco-cultural forestry industry. To adjust and optimize the structure of this industry, we need to develop the primary and tertiary industries and structurally optimize the secondary industry. The sustainable development of forestry requires us to promote the unity of the ecological, social, and economic benefits of forestry. By unifying ecological forestry and the cultural industry, we can capture consumer market trends, enhance industrial development policies, and increase the training of high-level talents to better deal with the danger of industrial hollowing out and resolve the embarrassment of the low end of the value chain. By integrating and promoting the two systems of ecological forestry and the cultural industry, we can converge their respective values and allow more nuanced value cognition when exploring the development paths of industry integration. In the period of overall transfer of forestry development strategy, it is of great significance to develop a forestry economy according to the evolution law of forestry industry, give full play to the advantages of forestry ecological culture resources, and vigorously develop forestry ecological culture industry under the background of rural revitalization strategy. Based on the integration of forestry industry, the aim of this study is to summarize the forestry ecological culture industry development mechanism, summarize the value of forestry ecological culture industry development strategy, put forward building a new era forestry ecological culture industry system, capture the consumer market trend, optimize industrial development policy, increase the high-level talent training industry integration development path, improve rural ecological advantages into ecological economic advantages, provide more and better green ecological products and services, promote the ecological and economic virtuous cycle, and realize the sustainable development of the forestry economy.

Keywords: ecological cultural industry; forestry industry; mechanism analysis; path choice



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1. Introduction

China has transformed its forestry development through its natural forest protection project through the “stop cutting” policy and growth of commercial natural forests. In response to rising environmental concerns, China has shifted its policy from wood supply to improving its ecological environment. As part of the policy, it aims to generate ecological benefits through ecological products and services, creating what is now termed an “ecological civilization”. The goal of an ecological civilization is to create sustainable ecological outputs.

One of the challenges of creating an ecological civilization is that forests have thus far been unable to satisfy people’s ecological demand for a better life through simple product reproduction and services [1]. In 2017, the Communist Party of China put forth its rural revitalization strategy at its 19th National Congress. Under the national policy

guidance and market guidance, eco-cultural forestry industry aims to reflect the relationship between man and nature as the theme, with ecological culture as the creative source, reflect the ecological culture concept, provide the physical form of ecological cultural creative products through industrial integration development, and participate in optional ecological cultural services of marketization, industrialization activities, optimizing the forest industry development pattern, creating new forms of sustainable development of forestry economy, and realizing ecological benefit and economic benefit growth. This strategy is slated to be a seat of great opportunities for the development of forestry and forest areas. Yet, its implementation and realization require very specific instructions, identifying and then strengthening weaknesses, zeroing in on key areas, and revitalizing areas of talent, culture, and ecology. In this grand vision, the Chinese government, along with various stakeholders, must upgrade the agriculture industry, make concerted efforts toward rural progress, and invest in developing the farmer ecosystem. Because the rural environment exists adjacent to forestry, it has been recognized as being a driving force of revitalization. Yet, China's ecological-industrial model remains underdeveloped and small.

At present, under the guidance of the rural revitalization strategy, full play should be given to state-owned forest forestry resource endowment, into cultivating strategic emerging industries, and conforming to the evolution of the forestry economy with the help of eco-cultural forestry industry integration mutual promotion and value convergence, promoting eco-cultural forestry value cognition [2–4]. An in-depth study of the policy orientation of forestry industry integration reveals the eco-cultural forestry industry integration development mechanism, the value correlation between rural revitalization strategy, and the development of forestry ecological culture industry, and the path of industrial integration development is based on this.

2. Policy Guidance to Integrate Forestry

2.1. Integration of the Forestry Industry

Industrial integration is the inevitable trend of progress in social productivity and industrial structure. It promotes innovation in traditional industries and the optimization of the industrial structure through upgrading and change in industrial attributes brought about by new technology, products, and services in response to the changing demands of consumers [5].

The extension of the integration and the penetration of the integration between industries, as shown in Figure 1, often blurs the boundaries among industries, creating an environment necessary for the formation of new industries and new business. Integration in forestry is a prerequisite of competition and the value cognition of forestry products and services [6,7]. The connection, derivative, and integration of the three industries based on forestry versatility drive the promotion of forestry comprehensive competitiveness and the value of forest products and services.

In the literature, scholars have attempted to understand the motivation of industrial integration in forestry and path selection thereof. Li states that industrial integration in forestry is a dynamic development process that creates new industries, or synthetic industries, among different industries or services under the same standard element cluster or collection [9]. In particular, Li focused on the integrated development of tourism and forestry, noting that the “aesthetics” of a forest area allows for special cultural services for leisure, recreation, and physical fitness [10].

Traditionally, the purpose of forestry was to provide raw materials; forestry operated in a vertically integrated structure. However, since the 21st century, this structure has transformed into a horizontal one that prioritizes the ecological benefits of forestry. The integration and development of forestry with other industries has brought vitality and growth to the otherwise traditional industry [11]; some of these integrations include information forestry, tourism forestry, standardized forestry, forestry processing industry, forest product logistics industry, and comprehensive forestry across industries. One effect of this phenomenon has been the “lengthening” of the forestry industry chain [12,13]. This

“deep processing” has introduced greater technical content and added value to forestry, while also solving the contradiction of regional supply concentration and scattered demand. In this manner, the original product market characteristics within forestry have changed; forestry products have new forms and functions, are responding to new market demands, and expanding the market space for further industrial integration.

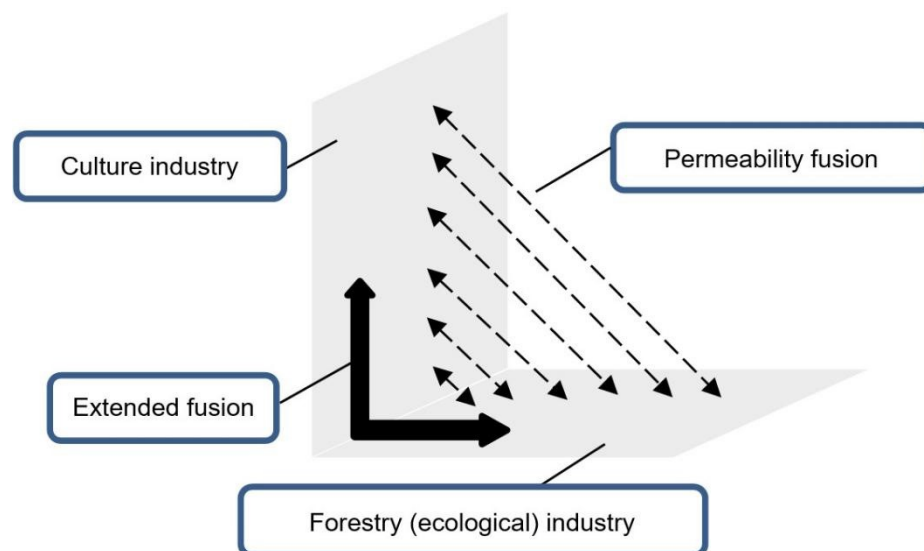


Figure 1. Conceptual relations between extended fusion and permeability fusion [8].

2.2. Policy Guidance for Industrial Integration with Forestry

Rural industrial integration policy focuses on giving full play to the advantages within the rural domain, such as material and intangible resources enrichment through the combination of tourism, ecology, and culture in a deep mining of agriculture. This new industry form can expand the agricultural industry chain value chain. In this system, give rural culture development has a passive and auxiliary role. The cultural integration brought about highlights the industrial integration of cultural autonomy and uniqueness.

The guiding role of public opinion, economic auxiliary role, and cultural service together reflect the full process of rural cultural “behind the scenes” to the “front”. The rural industry can become a new carrier through its optimized allocation of resources [14,15]. Rural revitalization stresses on creating a rural sharing economy, creative agriculture, the cultural industry, and increasing the supply of ecological products and services. An ecological economy would thus promote an ecological virtuous cycle [16].

Given the stark choices and grave consequences presented before us in matters of ecological preservation, forestry development makes clear the direction ahead, that is, a fusion of industries, departments, and technologies, as well as intensive factors of production at both the low and high end of development and from a single development mode to compound ones. This way, we believe we can improve and enhance forest health, the eco-cultural industry, forestry exhibition, and the forestry tertiary industry.

3. Eco-Cultural Forestry Integrated Development Mechanism

An eco-cultural forestry industry will cultivate new and more prosperous forms of forestry and eco-cultural to create “natural, green, and local” products, services, and environments. It is aimed at enhancing the consciousness of an ecological civilization, optimize the forestry industry’s structure and layout, meet higher-level diversified ecological needs, and then become an important force of rural revitalization. Figure 2 shows the integrated development mechanism of the eco-cultural forestry industry.

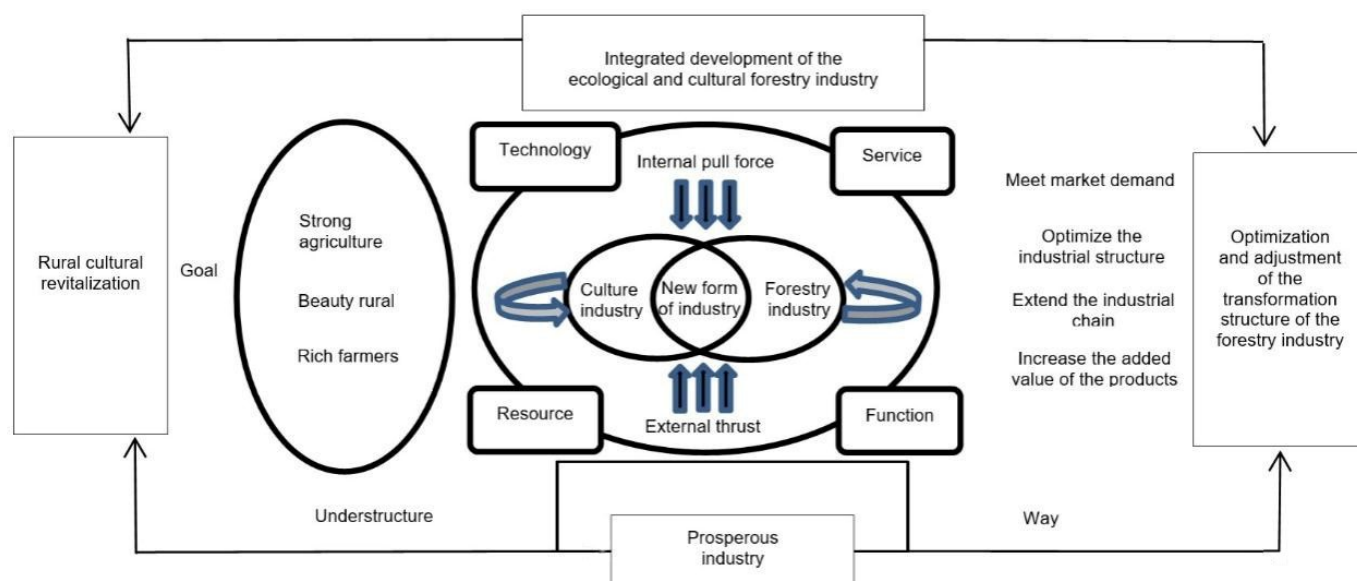


Figure 2. Mechanism of the integrated development of eco-cultural forestry.

3.1. Basing Rural Revitalization and Forestry Development in Industrial Prosperity

Rural revitalization is based on industrial revitalization and leads to industrial integration and development. Such extended industrial chains allow us to use eco-cultural resources as the basis for rural revitalization and create interactions between cultural revitalization and industrial development for a “rural cultural industry” [17].

First, commercial deforestation ranges from “limit cutting” to “no cutting.” The secondary forestry industry is currently dominated by forest processing, but manufacturing is constantly shrinking. To respond to the reduction in employment rates, the forestry industry’s structure has to be adjusted. One solution is to develop an eco-cultural industry.

Second, the eco-cultural industry is a response to people’s ecological demands for a “cleaner” life, but it can also be an important strategy to adjust the urban–rural developmental imbalance. A rural cultural revitalization strategy must be strategically directed, enable further industrial integration, deepen grassroots reforms in the cultural industry, and identify the best meeting point between rural cultural industry and the market [18,19].

3.2. Integrated Development of Eco-Culture Forestry

Forest resources, eco-cultural traditions, the modern concept of ecology, and industrial management modes must be combined to develop eco-cultural forestry. We recommend first optimizing the industry structure and upgrading, as well as combining the rural culture industry with tourism, science and technology, and characteristic agriculture to promote a shift away from a production orientation to a culture orientation that offers eco-cultural products and services that are regionally characteristic and allow the creating of new business forms. This is sure to improve innovation, competition, and modernization in agriculture, ultimately alleviating poverty through sustainability [20,21]. With the help of the important position of ecological culture in rural culture and relying on the multi-functional development concept of modern forestry and the rich ecological cultural resources of forestry, we can develop ecological cultural products and services with regional and regional characteristics [22–24] and broaden the new business forms and new industries to realize the revitalization of rural culture.

3.3. Unifying Rural Revitalization and the Eco-Cultural Forestry

Rural revitalization promises great opportunities for forestry development. The policy of ecological protection should help re-examine and expand the added value of eco-cultural production. “Culture” can be a stimulant of industrial vitality, particularly rural vitality, in its path to meeting diversified eco-cultural needs of consumers. A well-integrated eco-

cultural forestry industry can successfully expand consumption of eco-cultural products, promote eco-consciousness among consumers, guide the development of the cultural market, and further popularize eco-cultural education [25]. Forestry ecological culture industry integration, in expanding the consumption of ecological culture products, promote consumer ecological consciousness at the same time, further guide the development of cultural market, the prosperity of ecological culture in industrial integration, promote the popularization of ecological culture education, echo the social demand for forestry ecological products and enhance the realistic demand of environmental awareness. Further benefits include the restoration of versatile forestry, leisure and sightseeing, eco-conservation, and cultural heritage. Under the promotion effect of the great development and prosperity of culture, the old road of cultural subordinate economy in the forest area should be changed, and the industrial integration mode of “ecology + culture” and the new idea of “economy building and culture singing” should be built.

Ecological forestry value, especially the value of eco-cultural forestry function is repositioned to accurately grasp the value of eco-cultural forestry industry integration strategy, effectively solve the revitalization dilemma, optimize the structure of forestry industry, and explore the research basis for the development mechanism of eco-cultural forestry.

4. Rural Revitalization Strategy and the Value of Developing Eco-Cultural Forestry

4.1. The Human and Nature Harmony

Cultural revitalization requires harmony between man and nature [26,27], which is best illustrated in the relationship between ecology and culture in forest areas. Eco-cultural is thus an inevitable product of sustainable social development. It is not a simple industry superposition, but, under the guidance of national policy and market supply and demands, it reflects the relationship between man and nature. In this relationship, the “eco-cultural” component is the creative source of products and services thereof. Eco-cultural industry is, however, also subject to market rules, but unlike other industries, it singularly aims to promoting eco-consciousness, environmental protection, and a healthy ecological civilization through the economic benefit industrial model [28]. The human–nature harmony in green rural developmental paths is thus the appropriate revitalization strategy “with Chinese characteristics”.

4.2. Consistency in the Goals of Ecological Culture

Vigorously promoting eco-cultural industry is an inevitability in the path toward green and sustainable development and eco-consciousness. The “forest” is the birthplace of this industry and the basis of the link between humans and nature. The environmental resources in ecological forestry can allow us to enable eco-cultural rural revitalization [29], transforming both economy and society. Eco-cultural development is not only a “green demand” among consumers but also a feature of national eco-cultural prosperity and identity.

4.3. Forestry Subject Action

China has expansive forests. Woodlands, sandy lands, and wetlands under the forestry department account for more than 55% of the total rural area. Because forestry is a wide-ranging industry, with a long industrial chain, large employment capacity, and plethora of diverse products and services, it is one of the backbones of national economic construction and livelihood. Forestry industry as the basic industry of China’s national economy construction, but also a huge potential of the people’s livelihood industry, ecological industry and enriching industry, in the regional economic growth, drive ecological construction, promote rural industrial structure adjustment, meet the diversity of society, solve mountain farmers out of poverty has made an important contribution [30]. Indeed, forestry has various primary, secondary, and tertiary industries that must be integrated within the eco-cultural domain through the adjustment of the Chinese forestry industry [31]. Among the challenges facing this approach are the industrial pressures of reduced raw materials resulting from anti-deforestation policies and the need for optimizing and upgrading the

traditional forestry industry. A rural revitalization strategy needs to keenly relieve these pressures through eco-cultural development, deeper industrial integration, grassroots industrial reforms, and finding the best rural cultural industry–market fit. One key point is to avoid industrial convergence, and instead develop industrial characteristics, and then transform and upgrade traditional forestry and competitive industries [32].

5. Path Choice of Integrated Development

5.1. Leveraging Ecological Resources to Build the Eco-Cultural Forestry

Any strategy of rural revitalization must first realize the unity of economic and ecological returns based on the rapid appreciation of rural natural capital [33,34]. We must build a multi-level eco-cultural forestry system, increase the supply of rural eco-cultural products and services, and enable ecological dividends. Further, any strategy should be based on human spiritual and cultural demands as well as the infinity elasticity of cultural resources development [35]. Natural forest resources must be used in new ways, and new technology should be implemented to allow full penetration of the integrated forestry industry.

The next important step is to extend the industrial chain. Since the formation of ecological and cultural industries with comparative advantages, derivative products and services have been continuously developed. This extended industrial chain and integrated industries have maximized the economic benefits of cultural products and services. We must also focus on the upstream and downstream eco-cultural industrial chain and thereafter promote forest product processing, improve product innovation, and expand market demand area; the industrial boundaries must be blurred or disappear altogether; we must rebuild the forestry industry structure based on a natural evolution toward tertiary, knowledge or technology-intensive, high added value, and high-level processing advanced industries [36].

Third, it is important that policymakers and stakeholders explore the development mode of the eco-cultural industry with forestry characteristics in order to address the difficulties of forestry development and income expansion. For example, combining tourism or healthcare with the eco-cultural industry allows businesses to uniquely leverage natural landscapes and traditional Chinese medicine [37], respectively, and combine it with modern lifestyles. Through these integrations, the function of the forest as a service can be expanded [38,39].

Fourth, we must increase the added value of eco-cultural forestry products. The pathway of the industrialization of cultural resources is as follows: development of cultural resources (basic) → cultural products (key link) → cultural industry (result: cultural production scale). This pathway follows the introduction of market forces, integration of tangible physical resources and intangible spiritual resources, and then scaling of eco-cultural products and services; this process is sure to drive rural development, increase income, and expand the demand and supply of eco-cultural products and services. Protection of the ecological environment of forests also must entail the protection and industrial/market integration of forest culture and local customs. The marketing and export potential of traditional technologies and forest products should be tapped for enhancing the added value of forestry.

Through this discussion, we can construct an empirical evaluation index for eco-cultural development of the forestry. There are three first-level indicators—industrial productivity, industrial influence, and industrial driving force—followed by nine secondary indices and twenty-seven tertiary indices that form the measurement variables, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Evaluation Index Measuring the Development of Eco-Culture Forestry.

Primary Index	Secondary Index	Tertiary Index
Industrial productivity	Eco-cultural resources	Forest Stock (million m ³)
		Yield of ornamental seedlings (million)
	Eco-cultural capital	Total area of Forest Park (Ha)
		Forestry Tourism, Leisure and health care investment (million)
		Investment in Forestry Science and technology, education, rule of law and publicity (million)
		Annual National Investment in Forest Park (million)
	Human resources	Forest Park Social Tourism Practitioners (Number of persons)
		Total number of staff and workers employed in forest parks (Number of persons)
		Number of tour guides among Forest Park employees (Number of persons)
Industry influence	Economic impact	Relative output value of eco-cultural forestry industry accounts for the proportion of the total output value of forestry industry (Percentage)
		Per capita expenditure of forestry tourism and leisure industry (CNY)
		Per capita income of forest park tourists (million)
	Ecological impact	Increase in Forest Park area compared with the previous year (Ha)
		Number of forest parks increased from the previous year (in)
		Forest Park area of the province (region, city) proportion of land area (Percentage)
	Social impact	Forestry tourism trips accounted for the total proportion of provincial (regional, municipal) tourism (Percentage)
		Forest Park tourism reception, total number of provincial (regional, municipal), total number of tourists proportion (Percentage)
		Proportion of overseas tourists received by Forest Park in the number of international tourists in the province (region, city) (Percentage)
Industry driving force	Market demand	Per capita cultural consumption expenditure of provincial (regional and municipal) residents (CNY)
		Provincial (regional and municipal) per capita cultural consumption accounts for the proportion of per capita disposable income (Percentage),
		Per capita cultural consumption in provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities) accounts for per capita consumption expenditure (Percentage)
	Public environment	Forest social infrastructure including road construction total (million)
		Provincial (regional and municipal) cultural expenses accounted for the proportion of fiscal expenditure (Percentage)
		Per capita cultural undertaking expenses of provinces (regions and cities) (CNY)
	Innovation environment	Investment in forestry informatization (million)
		Forest Park annual self-financing, investment (million)
		Number of senior professional and technical personnel in forestry workstations and administrative personnel in prefecture (county, city) (Number of persons)

These indices allow us to evaluate the legal and industrial characteristics of eco-cultural forestry. We can scientifically quantify tangible resources; gauge economic, social, and ecological benefits; and comprehensively understand the real level of modernization in forestry development.

5.2. Grasping Market Trends and Consumer Demands

As a tertiary industry, the cultural industry plays a major role in attracting employment, meeting the cultural needs of the people, and promoting economic development and social progress. The industrialization of Chinese culture has driven the human, material, and financial resources investment of cultural products, and effectively promoted the consumption and circulation of cultural products. It is an economic growth point worthy of driving domestic demand and vigorous development [40]. The sustained and rapid development of the national economy and the gradual improvements in people's living standards have provided China with great potential for cultural consumption and momentum for growth in the development of the cultural industry.

At present, cultural consumption has a structural gap of CNY 300 billion to 400 billion, and the huge cultural demand is the driving force for further development of the cultural industry. While reshaping the eco-cultural concept of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, we should actively coordinate rural cultural revitalization and ecological revitalization, and thus enhance the sustainability of rural revitalization in the new era of socialist ecological civilization.

Market demand is the fundamental premise of industrial development. The need for consumption determines production. The market demand structure of eco-cultural products and services determines the structural layout and development scale of the overall eco-cultural industry. We should pay attention to market demand orientation, combine the development of ecological and cultural industries with a view to solving livelihood problems [41,42], form a cultural industry with Chinese characteristics, and meet people's growing ecological and cultural needs.

Second, consumption trends are changing. The change in consumer demand is the internal driving force of industrial development, and the change in total consumption and structure will lead to the rise and fall and transformation of relevant industries. Cultural economy reflects an inevitable trend of human economic and social development—a trend underpinned by people's needs to improve their own quality of life and the developmental agenda of addressing material concerns; thus, the forces of supply made to meet these new potential needs are gradually formed and industrialized [43]. Since the reform and opening up of China, the national living standards have been gradually shifting from the primary needs of food and clothing to the higher-order needs of an advanced society. Urbanization and industrialization have brought about new environmental problems, and ecological consumption has become the general trend. In China, as well, we are witnessing a shift from profit-oriented green commodities to green commodities for public welfare. Demand for ecological consumption has surpassed the initial stage of meeting basic needs and is now entering a period of diversified development—consumption itself has upgraded.

Third, the household consumption structure must be improved. People's consumption mode has gradually changed from survival to development and enjoyment types; and the consumption structure has been continuously optimized and upgraded. New, complex demands are now a driving force for economic growth. Engel's theorem shows that, as per capita income increases, corresponding changes in consumption structures will stimulate the development of consumer durables and service industries, such as tourism and entertainment. To simplify, when people's basic material needs are met, they will pursue higher-level consumption that meets their spiritual, self-improvement, and identity needs [44]. Consumers' higher ecological knowledge and positive attitudes toward conservation also strengthen ecological purchasing behaviors.

5.3. Optimizing the Environment for Industrial Development through Supportive Policy

Industrial policy, as an economic policy initiative of the government to target the development of different industries, aims to influence the development of certain industries to achieve specific economic and social goals. Cultural industry policy is the sum of policies that governments at all levels use to intervene in the formation and development of the cultural industry to make up for the defects of the market mechanism and achieve

certain economic and social goals. As an emerging industry aimed at promoting rural cultural revitalization and the concept of an ecological civilization, eco-cultural forestry is an important means of national (cultural) soft power; thus, it has to be subject to policy support and government guidance, planning, adjustment, promotion, support, protection, and restriction [45]. The public nature of cultural products determines that the supply of cultural products also depends on the government; its externality determines that the supply of cultural products needs the dual supply of the government and market. It is important that development should not only follow the policy orientation of top-level design but also highlight the localization characteristics of grassroots practice. This is necessary to grasp the core connotation and strategic objectives of the rural revitalization strategy and the integrated development of the forestry industry and then optimize the policy environment of industrial development. The government should create policy instruments such as financial subsidies, tax incentives, financial assistance, and special credits to promote the generation of positive external effects; for cultural products with negative external nature, the government must control, restrict, or fully eliminate the production of negative external effects and ensure the unity, sustainability, and stability of its eco-cultural policies.

5.4. Training of High-Level Talents as Industrial Human Capital

Workers, as active elements of productivity, are expected to greatly influence industrial development through their cultural quality, knowledge structure, and production skills. The key to transforming advantages in resources into economic and industrial advantages lies in human capital [46,47]. Cultural industry is a knowledge-intensive industry, and the leading factors of production are undoubtedly high-level human capital. High-quality cultural industry talents, especially creative talents, management talents, and compound talents, play an important role in the development of the cultural industry. At present, the overall quality of China's forestry industry practitioners is generally low; therefore, we should specifically strengthen the cultivation of high-level forestry talents to strengthen the comparative advantages of the eco-cultural industry.

6. Conclusions

Within agriculture, forestry has the characteristics of primary, secondary, and tertiary industries, and the integration between the three industries has a congenital foundation. The forestry industry includes forest trees and forest land resources as the processing and utilization object. To obtain economic benefits for the purpose of the industry, it has a wide range of coverage, long industrial chain, and many types of products. It also has two functions of commodity and non-commodity outputs. The particularity of the joint production characteristics, external economy, and public product characteristics of forestry indicates that industrial integration is the inevitable choice to transform Chinese traditional forestry and realize modern forestry. Industrial integration is a major change in the development process of China's forestry industry and is expected to trigger fundamental changes in forestry industry development, industrial association, industrial structure evolution, industrial organization form, and industrial regional layout. We ultimately expect this industry to have penetrating and widespread effects on the whole economy and all of society.

Forestry should be based on its inherent advantages as a cultural and ecological resource to realize its added value, promote new cultural business forms, and upgrade traditional ecological products and services. Furthermore, we should explore the paid use of state-owned resources, optimize the management system of forest resources, promote the informatization development of the forestry industry, launch high-end ecological culture products, expand green credit financing, and strengthen the construction of forestry public cultural infrastructure, so as to enhance the competitiveness of the eco-cultural forestry industry.

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