systems

MDPI

Article

How Does Points System Facilitate Rural Revitalization? A Case Study of Xinqi Village in Ningxia, China

Yi Zhou [1], Ke Tang [2,*] and Yue Dai [2]

[1] Faculty of Education and Social Sciences, Ningxia University, Yinchuan 750021, China; bjzy.love@163.com
[2] School of Management, Zhengzhou University, Zhengzhou 450001, China; dxy0220dy@163.com
* Correspondence: tangke0999@zzu.edu.cn

Abstract: China's rural revitalization strategy demands innovative governance tools to address persistent challenges at the grassroots level. This study investigates how the rural points system contributes to rural revitalization, focusing on Xinqi Village in Ningxia as a case study. Guided by a theoretical framework that links governance dilemmas, institutional mechanisms, and revitalization outcomes, the paper analyzes the system's formation, operation, and effects. Theoretically, the points system emerges from the interplay of interest-based competition, face-saving mediation, and social empowerment. It operates through a combination of management tools and incentive structures. Empirical findings indicate that the system improves rural revitalization by enhancing ecological livability, promoting civic behavior, and strengthening governance. However, its impact on industrial development and living standards remains limited. Key challenges include unclear institutional goals, poorly designed indicators, and a lack of material incentives. The paper concludes with policy recommendations to refine the system and argues that its application in underdeveloped rural areas offers valuable lessons for wider implementation in China and beyond.

Keywords: points system; rural revitalization; rural governance

check for updates

Academic Editor: Andrea Pitasi

Received: 20 February 2025
Revised: 27 March 2025
Accepted: 2 April 2025
Published: 3 April 2025

Citation: Zhou, Y.; Tang, K.; Dai, Y. How Does Points System Facilitate Rural Revitalization? A Case Study of Xinqi Village in Ningxia, China. *Systems* **2025**, *13*, 255. https://doi.org/10.3390/systems13040255

Copyright: © 2025 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

1. Introduction

Rapid industrialization and urbanization have profoundly transformed rural landscapes across the globe. In China, these changes have led to large-scale rural–urban migration, resulting in the outflow of labor, aging populations, and the widespread phenomenon of rural hollowing. As young laborers move to urban centers in search of better opportunities, many villages are left with weakened socio-economic foundations and fragmented governance structures. The erosion of collective action, declining public services, and the deterioration of traditional social norms have posed significant challenges to rural revitalization [1–4]. To address these issues, institutional innovations have emerged at the grassroots level. Among them, the rural points-based governance system—known as the points system—has gained attention as a mechanism to incentivize desirable behavior, strengthen village governance, and rebuild rural social capital [5]. Originating from pilot programs in eastern China, the rural points system assigns social credit scores to villagers based on their participation in collective activities, compliance with local rules, and contributions to rural development. It serves not only as a mechanism for regulating behavior but also as a flexible tool to foster self-governance and enhance community involvement.

The points system in Western countries is primarily applied in commercial sectors, immigration points systems, efforts of sports teams, effects on traffic violations, clinical

evaluation, and other related fields [6–10]. Given the unique nature of the points system, China has introduced it into rural governance to invigorate the endogenous driving forces for rural development [11]. Extensive research has been conducted on the rural governance points system. Scholars have discussed the operational mechanisms, practical logic, and governance efficacy of the points system within rural governance [12,13]. Some studies have analyzed the points system's operational efficacy from governance actors, such as grassroots government units and primary-level party organizations [14,15]. Scholars utilized the theory of Three Circles [16] and focused on the perspective that governance actors exploring the points system promote rural governance [17]. Some researchers believe that the core aim of the points system is to stimulate villagers' intrinsic motivation to participate in rural governance [18]. Some studies identify digitalization as a crucial solution to the floating problem of the points system because digital transformation optimizes its structure, expands its functions, and strengthens stakeholder relationships in traditional rural society [19]. However, most studies were based on the theoretical perspective of governance modernization [20,21], focusing on the analysis of the practical experience of the points system in consolidating and expanding poverty alleviation achievements, effectively linking rural revitalization and the operational mechanism to achieve effective rural governance; the impact of the points system on rural collective action and effective pathways for advancing rural environmental development [22,23]. In conclusion, the academic consensus underscores the points system's significant contributions to rural governance, supported by a growing body of research. However, in the context of advancing comprehensive rural revitalization, further investigation is required to elucidate the system's mechanisms for fostering holistic development. A nuanced understanding of its internal dynamics and practical ramifications offers profound theoretical insights and actionable recommendations for policy formulation. Our goal is to analyze the impact of the points system on rural revitalization and to provide a mechanism-based perspective for investigating the points system in China.

The points system demonstrates substantial potential and intrinsic value in the domain of rural governance; however, existing scholarships have yet to systematically examine the mechanisms through which the points system facilitates sustainable rural development. In the context of rural governance practices, stakeholders—comprising local governments, grassroots organizations, and villagers—pose significant challenges to the system's design and implementation due to their heterogeneity in resource endowments, normative frameworks, and vested interests. Practitioners responsible for managing the points system are required to undertake comprehensive analyses of multifaceted governance contexts and formulate evidence-based responses. Furthermore, they must reconcile divergent stakeholder priorities, foster intersectoral collaboration, and empower grassroots actors to enhance their participatory rights and decision-making autonomy. A critical aspect of these responsibilities is the establishment of a trust-oriented governance framework that encourages active and meaningful stakeholder engagement in both decision-making processes and governance implementation. This trust-based mechanism enables the points system to serve not only as a tool for incentivizing behavioral change but also as a pivotal driver of collaborative governance structures, thereby augmenting the efficiency and inclusivity of rural governance. Additionally, the role of points system practitioners in resource coordination and strategic goal attainment exhibits substantial parallels with the functions of public administrators. By adopting a public administration perspective, this study seeks to conceptualize the points system as a managerial instrument and to further explore its applications in advancing sustainable rural development.

This study establishes a three-dimensional analytical framework anchored in the "problem-mechanism-outcome" model to describe how the points system promotes rural

revitalization in China and selects typical cases for empirical analysis. This paper aims to answer three key questions: (1) Why does the rural governance points system appear? (2) How does the points system impact rural revitalization? (3) What is the impact of the points system on rural revitalization? We summarize the points system practical model of China's underdeveloped regions based on the results of the case study and provide suggestions for rural development. We also discuss the potential drawbacks in the implementation of the points system in rural revitalization and policy recommendations and present the limitations of this study and future research directions. This paper provides theoretical and empirical contributions. The first theoretical contribution is our innovation in the research perspective, focusing on the organizational management perspective to examine the integration and operational dynamics of the points system within rural contexts. Second, we expand the research on the points system and reveal the impact of the points system on rural revitalization. Empirically, our case study is strategically well chosen because it is the first batch of typical cases for China's top-level design for promoting the application of the points system in rural governance. Thus, it may be informative for the points system's rational application in addressing the multifaceted challenges of sustainable rural development.

2. Analytical Framework for Points System for Rural Revitalization

2.1. The Formation of the Points System

With industrialization and urbanization, rural areas have experienced a significant population decline, leading to hollowed-out villages and shifts in the labor force structure [24]. This demographic change has resulted in a lack of key actors in environmental governance and public affairs management, creating major governance challenges. At the same time, environmental issues have intensified, with increasing difficulties in waste disposal, sanitation maintenance, and infrastructure management. Moreover, rural governance struggles with low public participation, limited autonomy, and weak grassroots party organizations, further exacerbating governance inefficiencies. To address these challenges, innovating grassroots governance systems has become imperative. Establishing targeted incentive mechanisms to complement traditional moral education and administrative directives has proven to be a key strategy. Both international and domestic rural governance innovations have increasingly adopted incentive-based policy tools, points-based management systems and community mutual aid models. For instance, Japan's eco-points system [25,26], Europe's rural cooperative mechanisms [27], and China's village points system effectively integrate material and symbolic incentives, promoting villagers' autonomy and governance efficiency. In this context, the rural governance points system has emerged as a structured approach to strengthening grassroots governance. Through quantitative assessment, points-based rewards, and public evaluations, the system enhances villager participation in environmental governance, improves governance efficiency, and supports broader rural revitalization efforts.

2.2. Impact Mechanism

The role of the points system can be analyzed from two perspectives: theoretical mechanisms and operational mechanisms. Theoretically, the system fosters interest-driven competition, motivating villagers to actively engage in rural affairs [28,29]. It also utilizes face mechanisms to enhance villagers' sense of honor and recognition [30,31]. Additionally, empowering communities strengthens villagers' self-governance capabilities, shifting them from passive recipients to active participants in governance [32,33]. Operationally, the points system relies on a transparent and fair management framework, ensures point redemption mechanisms provide tangible value, and optimizes rule design to align with

local rural conditions, ensuring long-term effectiveness. Rural revitalization encompasses five key dimensions: industrial revitalization, talent revitalization, cultural revitalization, ecological revitalization, and organizational revitalization [34]. Industrial revitalization focuses on enhancing rural economic development, while talent revitalization cultivates local expertise and strengthens the rural workforce. Cultural revitalization promotes community cohesion and ethical development, ecological revitalization improves the rural living environment, and organizational revitalization reinforces grassroots governance, increasing villagers' autonomy. Together, these five components form the foundation of rural revitalization. The points system impacts rural revitalization by enhancing governance effectiveness. In weak governance settings, low participation and limited administrative capacity hinder governance outcomes. By introducing quantitative assessment and incentive mechanisms, the system enhances governance capacity, encourages public engagement, and improves transparency and fairness. As governance transitions from weak to strong, collective awareness and social responsibility increase, facilitating the effective implementation of rural revitalization policies. Ultimately, the points system fosters the integrated development of industry, talent, culture, ecology, and governance, driving sustainable rural prosperity.

2.3. Impact Outcome

The goals and requirements of rural revitalization can be summarized by the "Twenty-Character Policy": "thriving industries, pleasant ecology, civilized rural customs, effective governance, and prosperous lives". This policy encompasses five key aspects—economic development, ecological environment, social culture, grassroots governance, and people's well-being—forming the core objectives of rural revitalization and reflecting the systematic approach required for its comprehensive advancement. The introduction of the rural governance points system may have a positive impact on various aspects of rural revitalization. By incentivizing farmers' participation in governance, promoting the self-management of public affairs, and optimizing resource allocation, the points system contributes to rural development. For instance, it can encourage villagers to engage in industrial development, boosting the vitality of agriculture and rural tourism. Ecological protection incentive mechanisms can guide villagers toward adopting environmentally friendly production and lifestyle practices. In terms of rural customs, the points system helps regulate villagers' behavior and promote social norms and ethical practices. Regarding grassroots governance, it enhances villagers' self-governance capabilities and improves governance efficiency. Ultimately, these changes contribute to increasing farmers' income and quality of life, thereby advancing the overall goals of rural revitalization.

In summary, we establish a theoretical analysis framework of the points system and rural revitalization (Figure 1) to analyze rural revitalization in China's undeveloped area as a result of the points system's rational application. By analyzing both the theoretical foundations and operational mechanisms of the system, the framework helps explain how rural governance becomes more effective and how the dynamics of rural revitalization evolve following the implementation of the points system.

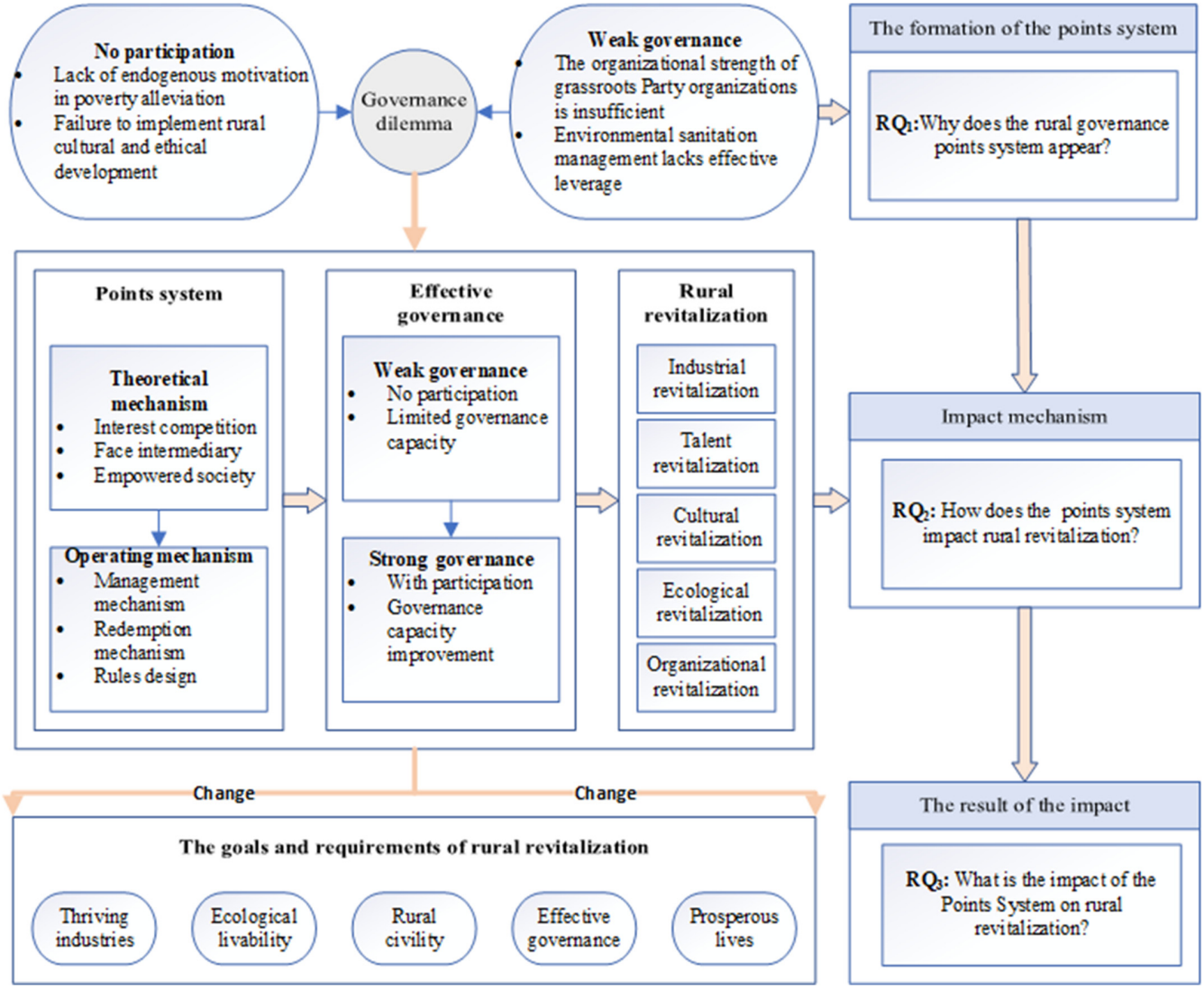

Figure 1. Theoretical framework of points system on rural revitalization.

3. Case Study and Methods

3.1. Case Selection

According to the principle of representativeness, this study identified Xinqi Village, located approximately 3 km west of Xingsheng Township in Jingyuan County, Ningxia, as the focal case study site (Figure 2). The village area is about 7.2 square kilometers and has 767 households. The village was selected as a case study for two reasons: (a) Xinqi Village is one of the first villages to implement the points system in Guyuan City, Ningxia. As a result, we believe that the pilot area has important research value. (b) Xinqi Village represents a pioneering model in the institutional innovation of rural governance through the implementation of the points system. In July 2020, the General Office of the Central Rural Work Leading Group and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs jointly issued a policy document titled the Notice on Promoting the Application of the Points System in Rural Governance. The document explicitly stated the following: "The positive role of the points system in rural governance should be fully recognized, and its application should be promoted according to local conditions". As one of the first batches in China selected as a national typical case, Xinqi Village in Ningxia has become a representative example of how the points system can be effectively embedded into grassroots governance structures.

An analysis of the Xinqi Village's case can help us study the impact of the points system on rural revitalization.

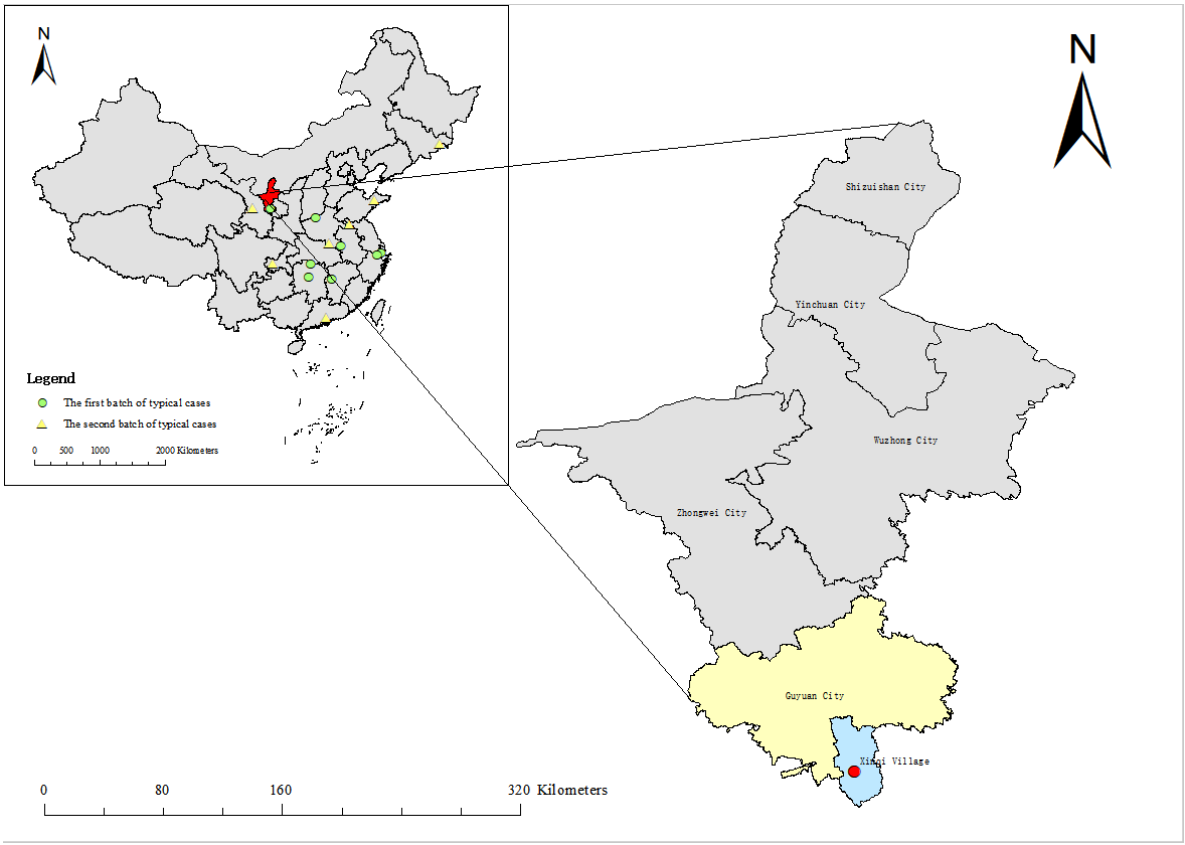

Figure 2. The location of Xinqi village. Source: authors' drawing.

3.2. Research Methods

The intricate and dynamic characteristics of the points system's influence on rural revitalization render the case study approach the most appropriate methodological choice for this research. The rationale for selecting this approach is founded on three principal considerations: (1) The primary research question "How does the points system facilitate rural revitalization?" pertains to the analysis of causal mechanisms. Using a case study approach enables a systematic and in-depth exploration of the underlying drivers and operational dynamics. (2) This research seeks to investigate the practical implementation of the points system within the framework of rural governance and its functional mechanisms. These issues, owing to their abstract and multidimensional nature, necessitate a comprehensive analysis supported by robust qualitative data and illustrative case studies. (3) The current dearth of systematic studies and empirical evidence on the points system's role and mechanisms in rural revitalization poses significant challenges to the development of precise quantitative models. By centering on exemplary rural contexts, the case study approach addresses this research gap, unveiling the system's dynamic evolutionary trajectories and key determinants of success. Through meticulous contextual analysis, this method elucidates the ways in which the point system advances rural revitalization and synthesizes the critical evolutionary principles underlying its complex dynamics.

To comprehensively investigate the implementation of the points-based system in the rural governance in Xinqi Village, we conducted fieldwork between March 2021 and June 2023. We conducted semi-structured interviews with government agencies overseeing the points-based system and associated village organizations. The interviews encompassed two district-level government officials, three township administrators, four village-level

leaders, two points system coordinators, and eleven villagers. District officials elaborated on the policy framework, strategic objectives, and the system's integration with the broader rural revitalization strategy. Township administrators provided detailed analyses of organizational coordination, policy dissemination, and resource allocation mechanisms at the grassroots level. Village leaders outlined the system's operational protocols, implementation outcomes, and key challenges encountered during its execution. Points system coordinators offered insights into the development of points allocation rules, data management procedures, and the application of reward and penalty frameworks. Villagers contributed feedback on how the system shaped their behavioral patterns and facilitated improvements in the local environment (Table 1). Through systematic field observations and in-depth interviews, we obtained recordings, documents, photos, and other forms of data to ensure the accuracy of the primary database. We used inductive data analysis and systematically classified the material. We then critically assessed the operational architecture and performance of the points system in Xinqi Village.

Table 1. Interviewees and core content of the interviews.

No.	Position and Number of Respondents	Core Interview Content	Interview Frequency	Total Duration
1	District-Level Government Officials (2 people)	Policy framework and strategic objectives	3	215 min
2	Township Administrators (3 people)	Integration with the rural revitalization strategy Organizational coordination at the grassroots level Policy dissemination Resource allocation mechanisms	5	310 min
3	Village-Level Leaders (4 people)	Operational protocols of the points system Implementation outcomes Challenges encountered during execution	3	189 min
4	Points System Coordinators (2 people)	Development of points allocation rules Data management procedures Application of reward and penalty frameworks	2	210 min
5	Villagers (11 people)	Feedback on the system's influence on behavioral patterns Contributions to environmental improvements	1	330 min

4. Research Results

4.1. Management Mechanism of Points System

The rural governance points system is an innovative model that promotes community participation by evaluating, supervising, and incentivizing villagers' involvement in public affairs. This system enhances both the efficiency and fairness of rural governance. It operates through two core teams, the Points Evaluation Committee and the Supervisory Operations Team, which ensure fair assessments, transparent management, and standardized point redemption.

4.1.1. Points Evaluation Committee

The Points Evaluation Committee, democratically elected by the village representatives' assembly (Figure 3), typically consists of three to five members. Its main responsibility is to assess and rank villagers based on their points. Every Friday, the committee conducts household evaluations, objectively scoring each household according to predefined criteria, such as environmental sanitation and participation in public affairs. To ensure fairness, impartiality, and transparency, the final results are publicly disclosed before the 25th of

each month. This timely disclosure keeps villagers informed of the status of their points, enhancing both their sense of participation and the system's credibility.



Figure 3. Democratically recommended Points Evaluation Committee.

4.1.2. Supervisory Operations Team

The Supervisory Operations Team is democratically nominated by members of the village's "two committees" and typically comprises three members. Its primary role is to ensure the fairness and transparency of the points evaluation process while standardizing the implementation of the points redemption system. The team regularly reviews the scoring results of the Points Evaluation Committee to prevent errors or management loopholes and conducts on-site supervision to ensure the rational allocation and utilization of points. By implementing a dual-review mechanism, the Supervisory Operations Team enhances the fairness of both evaluation and redemption, promotes mutual oversight and accountability, and strengthens villagers' trust in the points system.

4.2. Redemption Mechanism of Points System

The redemption mechanism of the rural governance points system is designed around two key platforms: the Rural Governance Points Card and the charity public welfare supermarket. This system functions as both an incentive and a feedback mechanism, encouraging villagers to actively participate in rural governance, labor production, and public welfare activities. Villagers accumulate points through daily engagement in village affairs, environmental maintenance, and mutual assistance. These points can then be exchanged for goods or services at the charity public welfare supermarket. To ensure the system's long-term sustainability, the government provides subsidies to compensate for shortages in redeemable goods.

4.2.1. Rural Governance Points Card

The Rural Governance Points Card is a key tool that allows villagers to accumulate and manage points. Developed collaboratively by village and township authorities within an institutional framework, it is officially implemented upon approval by the village representatives' assembly. The village's "two committees" oversee its formulation, administration,

and evaluation, ensuring compliance with established standards and regulations. Villagers earn points through productive labor, diligent work, maintaining hygiene, keeping the environment clean, and promoting positive social values. They can regularly check their points balance and redeem them for goods or services, fostering enthusiasm and a sense of honor in rural governance participation. The points system values 1 point at approximately 1 RMB, with funding sourced from a combination of market-based revenue and government subsidies.

4.2.2. Loving Charity Supermarket

The charity public welfare supermarket is a key redemption platform in the rural governance points system, allowing villagers to exchange accumulated points for tangible rewards. It operates under a market-based management mechanism, where market entities or professional operators oversee daily operations. By adopting a self-sustaining business model, the supermarket ensures efficiency and long-term viability through market-driven operations.

In practice, villagers can redeem points for daily necessities, agricultural materials, or other physical rewards (Figure 4), effectively transforming the incentive system into tangible benefits and increasing participation in rural governance. The funding model follows a "market-based revenue + government subsidy" approach, with 70% of funds sourced from market-based channels such as village collective rental income, social donations, and waste recycling revenue. The remaining 30% is covered by government subsidies, ensuring the system's stability and sustaining incentives for continued rural governance engagement.



Figure 4. Villagers in Xinqi Village use points from their points card to redeem goods at the charity public welfare supermarket.

4.3. Rules Design of the Points System Under Rural Revitalization

The Rural Governance Points Card System was initially introduced to address key challenges faced by villages during the poverty alleviation process, including weak organizational capacity, insufficient endogenous development momentum, and the lack of effective mechanisms for environmental sanitation management. As the system was gradually implemented and began yielding positive results, its scope was continuously refined and expanded, evolving from an initial focus on environmental governance to a comprehensive tool for advancing rural revitalization.

Under the research and guidance of Municipal Party Secretary Zhang Zhu, along with the direct supervision of the Municipal Organization Department and key county leaders, the Rural Governance Points Card System in Xinqi Village was rigorously studied and refined to ensure its scientific validity and practical feasibility. In alignment with China's rural revitalization strategy, Xinqi Village expanded the applicability of the villagers' self-governance points card system, establishing a structured framework under the rural revitalization strategy. The objective is to leverage the system to drive holistic rural revitalization at the village level, fostering sustainable development and community engagement.

The Rural Governance Points Card System is designed to regulate and guide villagers' behavior across five key dimensions: industrial revitalization, talent revitalization, cultural revitalization, ecological revitalization, and organizational revitalization. Its framework consists of both incentives (Table 2) and disciplinary measures (Table 3), ensuring a balanced approach that combines rewards and accountability. Through this structured mechanism, the system aims to establish a self-reinforcing governance model that enhances village-level development and contributes to the broader goal of rural revitalization.

Table 2. Point addition criteria for the rural revitalization in the rural governance points system.

	Evaluation Criteria for Industrial Revitalization	**Score**
1	Registered impoverished households can develop industries on their own, without relying on the government, and proactively apply for poverty alleviation.	30
2	Strive to develop industries, cultivating a new industry for each household.	5
3	Expand the original industry, doubling its scale.	5
4	Wealth-leading individuals drive others to increase their income and achieve prosperity.	5
5	Impoverished households participate in the "I Am Proud to Overcome Poverty" dedication speech once.	5
6	Introduce a foreign investor to develop an industry in the village.	50
7	Talented migrants return to their hometowns to start businesses.	10
	Evaluation criteria for talent revitalization	
1	Actively send students to receive compulsory education.	5
2	Actively participate in skill training on rural management and industrial development.	2
3	Cultivate a university student in the family.	5
4	Family members actively learn skills, mastering each labor skill.	3
5	After graduation, university students proactively establish themselves at the grassroots level and return to the village to start a business.	30
6	Encourage the introduction of skilled talents, rewarding for each person introduced.	10
7	Recognized as a wealth-leading individual.	5
	Evaluation criteria for cultural revitalization	
1	Actively sign up for village-level cultural and sports activities, earning points for each participation.	2
2	Promote ethnic unity and actively resist the infiltration of cults with concrete actions.	5
3	Carry out public welfare donation activities.	10
4	Publish or share positive energy articles in the village Party members' WeChat classroom or farmers' night school group.	2
5	Pay attention to personal hygiene and maintain a good mental outlook.	2
6	Use elegant language and treat others with politeness and respect.	2
7	Actively participate in and resist exorbitant bride prices.	10
8	Participate in the "Xuexi Qiangguo" learning platform, earning points for every 200 points exceeded.	2
9	Actively participate in "law popularization" publicity and learning, earning points for each participation.	2
10	Participate in the cultural benefit "Three Teams" initiative once.	3
11	Protect public cultural property.	3
	Evaluation criteria for ecological revitalization	
1	Actively clean river waste once.	3
2	Actively participate in a voluntary tree-planting activity once.	5
3	Strictly enforce mountain closure and grazing bans and report illegal grazing activities.	3
4	Weekly household hygiene evaluation rated as "environmentally clean".	3
5	Weekly household hygiene evaluation rated as "relatively clean".	2
6	Actively participate in waste exchange programs, earning points based on the quantity.	—

Table 2. *Cont.*

	Evaluation Criteria for Industrial Revitalization	Score
7	Actively clean up the public area environment once.	5
8	Actively participate in public welfare labor for the construction of beautiful countryside once.	2
9	Actively support rural environmental sanitation improvement efforts and take the lead in upgrading water systems, toilets, and stoves.	5
	Evaluation criteria for organizational revitalization	
1	Support the work of the village's two committees and actively contribute to collective affairs.	2
2	Family members actively participate in village committee elections.	2
3	Village representatives attend village representative meetings on time, earning points for each participation.	2
4	Actively participate in democratic discussion and political activities.	1
5	Actively participate in learning sessions at the New Era Farmers' Lecture Hall.	1
6	Actively comply with the national family planning policy.	2
7	Maintain stability and unity in the village, taking the lead in promoting harmony and stability.	5
8	Participate in mediating conflicts and disputes, earning 3 points per successful mediation.	3
9	Prevent malicious petitioning.	5
10	Attend a "One Covenant and Four Meetings" related meeting once.	2
11	Be able to actively respond to government land acquisition and demolition efforts, setting an exemplary role.	10
12	Receive commendation under the "Two Rates and One Innovation" initiative.	5
13	The public is satisfied with the monthly implementation of the "Five Systems" by the village's "Two Committees" members.	2
14	Party members actively participate in organizational life meetings, "Three Meetings and One Lesson", and other organizational activities.	2
15	Party members receive a quarterly rating of 10 red stars.	5
16	Family members are able to participate on time and pay the "Two Insurances".	5

Note:"—" indicates that the points for this item are not yet determined and will be finalized by the Points Evaluation Committee based on the actual circumstances.

Table 3. Point deduction criteria for the rural revitalization in the rural governance points system.

	Evaluation Criteria for Industrial Revitalization	Score
1	Severe dependency mindset, relying on the government to provide supplies.	−10
	Evaluation criteria for talent revitalization	
1	Causing a student to drop out of school will result in a deduction of 5 points per dropout.	−5
2	Disqualified as a "wealth-leading individual".	−5
	Evaluation criteria for cultural revitalization	
1	Participation in feudal superstition activities results in a deduction of 2 points per occurrence.	−2
2	Participation in pornography, gambling, or drugs results in a deduction of 3 points per occurrence.	−3
3	Failure to consciously abide by ethnic and religious policies, making remarks that undermine ethnic unity.	−5
4	Publicly making negative remarks results in a deduction of 2 points per occurrence.	−2
5	Using foul language in public places results in a deduction of 2 points per occurrence.	−2
6	Accepting an excessive bride price.	−10
7	Party members who are not actively engaged in learning will receive a deduction of 1 point per reported instance.	−1
8	Damaging public cultural property results in a deduction of 3 points per occurrence.	−3
	Evaluation criteria for ecological revitalization	
1	Willfully damaging the ecological environment results in a deduction of 2 points per occurrence.	−2
2	Illegally occupying riverbank land results in a deduction of 3 points per occurrence.	−3
3	Failure to strictly enforce mountain closure and grazing bans, with instances of illegal grazing, results in a deduction of 2 points per occurrence.	−2
4	Weekly household hygiene evaluation rated as "unclean environment".	−2
5	Littering results in a deduction of 3 points per occurrence.	−3
6	Piling up garbage or dirty cow dung in public places results in a deduction of 3 points per occurrence.	−3
7	Refusing to participate in mandatory public labor results in a deduction of 3 points per instance.	−3
8	Engaging in unauthorized construction or alterations results in a deduction of 5 points per occurrence.	−5
9	Illegally reclaiming collective land or barren slopes results in a deduction of 2 points per occurrence.	−2
10	Unauthorized discharge of wastewater results in a deduction of 3 points per occurrence.	−3
11	Damaging river ecosystems, riverbanks, or green vegetation results in a deduction of 3 points per occurrence.	−3
	Evaluation criteria for organizational revitalization	
1	Inciting disturbances, stirring up trouble, or blindly following disruptions results in a deduction of 3 points per occurrence.	−3

Table 3. *Cont.*

	Evaluation Criteria for Industrial Revitalization	Score
2	Failing to actively participate in or resist elections results in a deduction of 2 points.	−2
3	Engaging in gambling or other bad habits and receiving a public security penalty results in a deduction of 2 points per instance.	−2
4	Village representatives attending fewer than one village representative meeting results in a deduction of 2 points.	−2
5	Party members failing to attend "Three Meetings and One Lesson" as required will be penalized.	−2
6	Engaging in fights without justification results in a deduction of 5 points per occurrence.	−5
7	Malicious petitioning results in a deduction of 5 points per occurrence.	−5
8	Making unreasonable trouble, maliciously defaming others, spreading false information, or inciting others to cause disturbances.	−10
9	Public dissatisfaction with the village "Two Committees" members' monthly implementation of the "Five Systems" results in a deduction of 2 points per instance.	−2
10	Party members failing to participate in organizational life meetings as required results in a deduction of 2 points per instance.	−2
11	Party members receiving a yellow star in quarterly rating evaluations results in a deduction of 2 points per star.	−2
12	Each missing insured family member results in a deduction of 1 point.	−1

4.3.1. Rules of the Reward System

The rural governance points system establishes a reward-based scoring framework across five key areas: industrial, talent, cultural, ecological, and organizational revitalization. Each domain is structured with specific scoring criteria and reference points, creating an incentive mechanism that encourages villagers to engage in rural governance and supports the effective implementation of the rural revitalization strategy.

For industrial revitalization, the system incentivizes villagers to engage in entrepreneurship, modern agricultural development, industrial project introduction, and job creation. This category has a maximum score of 50 points, highlighting the priority given to economic growth and industrial upgrading. Talent revitalization focuses on improving villagers' professional skills and competencies by encouraging participation in vocational training, academic advancement, and entrepreneurship upon returning home. Points are awarded for obtaining professional certifications and completing relevant training programs, contributing to the development of a skilled rural workforce. Cultural revitalization rewards villagers for preserving traditional culture, engaging in volunteer services, and promoting positive family values. Activities such as writing high-quality articles and participating in cultural events earn points, fostering cultural prosperity and community cohesion. Ecological revitalization focuses on environmental management, waste classification, and ecological protection. Villagers earn points by maintaining cleanliness, participating in afforestation, contributing to ecological governance, and promoting sustainable rural development.

Finally, organizational revitalization encourages active participation in grassroots self-governance, village affairs, and democratic supervision. Points are awarded for attending village meetings, assisting in governance, and undertaking public service duties. By strengthening collective responsibility and enhancing self-governance capabilities, the system contributes to the continuous improvement of rural governance.

4.3.2. Rules of the Punishment System

This section of the rural governance points system defines deduction criteria across multiple areas, including environmental sanitation, social security, public affairs, cultural ecology, village regulations, and grassroots governance. By implementing a negative incentive mechanism, the system encourages villagers to comply with village regulations, regulate their daily behavior, and enhance overall rural governance.

From an environmental sanitation perspective, points are deducted for littering, damaging public facilities, or illegally occupying land. More severe offenses, such as destroying key ecological environments or refusing to make necessary corrections, result in higher deductions, reinforcing the importance of cleanliness and environmental protection. In terms of social security, significant point deductions apply to criminal activities, involvement in gambling, drugs, or cult organizations, and alcohol-induced disturbances. This measure ensures social stability and maintains a safe and harmonious rural environment. Regarding public affairs, villagers who refuse to participate in communal activities, neglect their responsibilities, or interfere with village governance will face point deductions. For instance, failing to fulfill public health duties, refusing to engage in volunteer services, or neglecting public facility maintenance results in point loss. These measures promote active participation in village governance and strengthen collective responsibility. In the cultural ecology domain, deductions apply to those who damage cultural facilities, harm the village's cultural image, or fail to support social and cultural development initiatives. These rules foster cultural awareness and create a positive cultural environment. Village regulations also play a key role in the deduction system. Disrupting neighborly relations, violating village rules, or refusing to complete public tasks assigned by village authorities lead to point deductions. This policy reinforces villagers' sense of responsibility and upholds order in rural governance.

Finally, grassroots governance deductions apply to those who obstruct decision-making, incite opposition against the village committee, or illegally occupy public resources. These measures ensure fairness, order, and the sustainable development of rural governance.

4.4. Effectiveness of Points System on the Rural Revitalization

Since the introduction of the points card system in Xinqi Village, Ningxia, over a year ago, villagers have accumulated 20,000 points and redeemed 4500 items. Participation in rural governance has increased significantly, self-regulation has strengthened, environmental sanitation has improved, and social customs have become more positive. The system's effectiveness is evident in three key areas.

4.4.1. Achieving Effective Governance: Mobilizing Villagers' Enthusiasm

Before the implementation of the points card system, the distribution of benefits in Xinqi Village was largely concentrated among grassroots power holders, excluding most villagers from this network. This imbalance led to disorganized rural governance, hindering true village autonomy and the development of a political and social environment conducive to rural revitalization. Additionally, villagers relied heavily on external support and financial aid, showing little motivation for self-driven poverty alleviation or participation in cooperative organizations that could improve their income. Since the introduction of the points card system, these issues have significantly improved. First, using the charitable supermarket as a platform, the system incentivizes villagers to engage in village affairs by awarding points and providing material rewards. This approach has strengthened village autonomy, enhanced self-organization and self-management capabilities, and activated the internal potential of rural organizations, driving rural development. Second, to address the lack of intrinsic motivation for poverty alleviation, the system adopts a "teach people to fish" approach. By leveraging social capital and unused village funds, it has transformed households' passive attitude toward poverty alleviation, reducing their dependence on government and corporate support.

4.4.2. Ecological Revitalization: Enhancing the Rural Living Environment

Before the implementation of the points card system, Xinqi Village struggled with persistent sanitation issues. Courtyards and surrounding areas were often unsanitary, and village streets had low cleanliness levels. These poor conditions not only affected the village's appearance but also diminished residents' quality of life. The root cause was largely tied to lifestyle habits, as many villagers viewed poor hygiene as a norm of rural life and lacked the motivation to change. The introduction of the points card system aligned villagers' personal interests with overall village governance, leading to immediate improvements in ecological conditions. Initially, some villagers participated passively, driven by peer pressure or the system's rewards and penalties. Over time, however, they developed better habits, actively engaging in cleanliness and environmental stewardship. As a result, the village's appearance improved significantly, demonstrating the system's long-term success in fostering a cleaner and more sustainable environment.

4.4.3. Promoting Rural Cultural and Social Civility: Cultivating Civilized Rural Customs

Before the implementation of the points card system, village regulations and agreements in Xinqi Village were not effectively internalized. This was primarily due to limited collective participation and the absence of a supportive environment, which impeded the formation of a positive moral and ethical climate. Since the official launch of the points card system, rural culture has been significantly restructured and revitalized. The system assigns scores to villagers' behaviors, directly linking civic actions to points. This linkage has activated villagers' intrinsic motivation to engage in self-management, public service, education, and community oversight, thereby fostering a more positive social atmosphere. In addition, interpersonal relationships—both among villagers and between villagers and local organizations—have improved. By incorporating village regulations into the points-based system, residents are encouraged to adopt core socialist values. This shift has helped reduce outdated customs such as excessive bride prices, disrespect for elders, and disengagement from communal affairs, ultimately advancing the development of rural spiritual and cultural life.

5. Discussion

5.1. Potential Drawbacks in the Implementation of the Points System in Rural Revitalization

Overall, the implementation of the rural governance points system in Xinqi Village has made notable progress. However, it still encounters several challenges, primarily in the following three areas.

5.1.1. The Rural Revitalization Goals of the Points System Are Too Ambitious

The rural governance points card system in Xinqi Village encompasses five core areas of rural revitalization: industrial, talent, cultural, ecological, and organizational revitalization. However, its objectives are overly broad and lack clear priorities, which undermines the system's focus, precision, and practical effectiveness.

As previously discussed, the system has demonstrated early success in enhancing governance efficiency, promoting ecological revitalization, and fostering rural cultural development. These achievements have contributed to improved rural governance and environmental quality. However, its effects on industrial growth and residents' livelihoods remain limited, with no notable outcomes to date. To address this gap, the incentive mechanisms require further refinement to better support economic development and livelihood improvement.

5.1.2. The Points System's Indicators Lack Sufficient Scientific Quantification and Cultural Adaptability

The indicators employed in rural points systems exhibit significant deficiencies in both scientific quantification and cultural responsiveness. These shortcomings are evident not only in the technical configuration of the indicators themselves but also in their normative construction and sensitivity to localized sociocultural contexts.

First, the selection of indicators demonstrates insufficient conceptual coherence. A methodologically sound indicator system should reconcile scientific validity with operational practicability. In practice, the points card mechanism implemented in Xinqi Village performs reasonably well in terms of procedural operability but lacks epistemic rigor. For instance, several indicators in the evaluation matrix display overlapping or redundant definitions, thereby undermining the system's internal consistency and analytical autonomy and, ultimately, diminishing the credibility of assessment outcomes. Second, the assignment of point values to specific indicators reveals incentive misalignment. Under the category of "industrial revitalization", for example, a villager who successfully facilitates external investment in local industries is awarded merely 50 points. Given the existing conversion rate of 1 point to 1 RMB, this equates to a reward valued at only 50 yuan. In light of the village's underdeveloped industrial infrastructure and the substantial barriers to attracting investment, such an incentive is evidently inadequate to catalyze proactive engagement in local economic development. Beyond these technical and incentive-related deficiencies, the design of the indicator system also reflects deeper normative contradictions and cultural incongruities. Certain evaluative criteria raise concerns regarding their appropriateness in governing quotidian rural life. Villagers may incur point deductions for losing their designation as a "wealth-leading individual", for voicing critical opinions in public forums, or for expressing dissatisfaction with the monthly performance of the village "Two Committees" under the "Five Systems" appraisal mechanism. Although these measures ostensibly aim to promote collective cohesion and behavioral conformity with institutional objectives, they risk curtailing legitimate dissent and marginalizing households that diverge from state-sanctioned development paradigms. In particular, the penalization of public criticism threatens to obscure the distinction between participatory governance and top-down social control. Moreover, punitive measures are frequently applied to culturally embedded practices such as participation in so-called "feudal superstition" or the acceptance of an "excessive" bride price. Yet ethnographic accounts indicate that these customs remain deeply entrenched and continue to perform vital social and symbolic functions within many rural communities. Their codification as infractions within the points framework reflects a top-down moral logic that may conflict with indigenous normative systems, thereby generating local contestation or implementation resistance. This dynamic underscores the inherent tension between formalized behavioral governance and the pluralistic moral orders that underpin everyday life in rural China.

5.1.3. The Material Incentives of Points System Are Limited

Although the points system allows rural residents to redeem accumulated credits for goods or services, the material incentives it generates remain marginal and do not signify a shift toward the privatization of public goods. Functioning within a collectively administered governance architecture, the system is designed and regulated by village committees rather than market-oriented entities. Its principal objective is not the commodification of public resources, but the facilitation of civic engagement and the reinforcement of behavioral norms aligned with localized governance priorities. While the distributed rewards possess monetary value, they are widely construed as collectively endorsed welfare entitlements, frequently associated with state or community support. This prevailing

perception upholds the system's normative legitimacy as a mechanism of public, rather than market-based, governance. By linking individual contributions to communal benefits, the points system fosters social solidarity, mutual accountability, and equitable redistribution. Within this institutional framework, material incentives serve primarily as symbolic affirmations of public recognition rather than as mechanisms of economic exchange.

However, despite this symbolic function and the system's perceived legitimacy, its material incentives are constrained by significant operational limitations. In practice, redeemable items are predominantly sourced from charity-based rural supermarkets that rely heavily on external donations and public subsidies. Due to the limited and volatile nature of funding, the quantity and quality of available goods are often inconsistent, which diminishes their effectiveness as instruments of behavioral reinforcement. These shortcomings are structurally rooted in the village's underdeveloped industrial foundation and restricted collective fiscal capacity, both of which hinder the system's ability to provide stable and high-quality material benefits on a sustained basis. Consequently, while the symbolic and social dimensions of the points system remain salient, its ability to generate consistent material motivation remains institutionally and financially constrained.

5.1.4. Limitations on Participatory Expression and Personal Autonomy in Practice

The points system implemented in rural China is principally intended to enhance civic engagement and incentivize normatively desirable conduct. Nevertheless, our empirical findings suggest that participatory mechanisms, in isolation, may be insufficient to ensure that the system equitably represents the heterogeneous interests of all community constituents. The initial formulation of rules and incentive structures in Xinqi Village was undertaken by local administrative personnel, subsequently undergoing iterative refinement through deliberative mechanisms such as village assemblies and courtyard consultations. While these platforms nominally facilitate the articulation of local voices, several participants reported experiencing implicit pressures to conform to dominant socio-normative expectations, even when these conflicted with their individual beliefs. As one respondent remarked, "Even if I don't completely agree, I still follow the rules—otherwise, people might think I don't support the collective". This illustrates a broader concern: in rural contexts characterized by strong social cohesion yet marked stratification, agenda-setting and evaluative criteria may be disproportionately influenced by elite actors or culturally dominant groups, thereby marginalizing minority perspectives. Accordingly, the prevalence of majoritarian influence—what some scholars conceptualize as "soft" majority domination—poses a legitimate risk to procedural equity. Furthermore, structurally disadvantaged populations may encounter tacit exclusion on the basis of age, gender, or limited access to social capital. In response, the pilot site has introduced several procedural safeguards, including anonymous voting, rotational representation on evaluation committees, and independent monitoring bodies. However, these innovations remain localized in scope and have yet to be institutionalized into a scalable governance framework. Therefore, although participatory approaches are integral to inclusive governance, they must be complemented by contextually tailored institutional safeguards to uphold representative legitimacy and protect individual agency within the evolving architecture of the rural points system.

5.2. Inspiration and Policy Recommendations

5.2.1. Clarifying the Objectives of the Rural Governance Points Card System

A clearly defined institutional objective is essential for implementing reforms effectively and achieving practical results. As the rural governance points card system continues to evolve, it is crucial to clarify its functional role and developmental direction. Current

evidence shows that the system has been especially effective in advancing ecological revitalization, cultural civility, and effective governance. It has thus become a key instrument in promoting the modernization of rural governance. However, its impact on industrial prosperity and livelihood improvement remains limited. Future enhancements should focus on the system's core functions and address two key challenges. First, it is necessary to define the functional boundaries and coordination mechanisms between the points card system and existing grassroots performance evaluation frameworks. Second, attention must be given to managing differentiated participation and aligning interests among various stakeholders involved in implementation—such as ordinary villagers, village officials, and different administrative actors.

5.2.2. Scientifically Quantifying the Content of the Points System

First, the indicator system should be improved to ensure greater scientific rigor and internal consistency. A systematic review of existing indicators is recommended to remove redundancies and those lacking empirical validation. At the same time, key indicators that are theoretically sound and practically applicable should be introduced. This is particularly important in areas such as industrial revitalization and talent revitalization, where the interests and incentive needs of rural and returnee entrepreneurs must be emphasized. Second, the point allocation mechanism requires refinement. Currently, many indicators are limited to just two or three scoring levels, reducing assessment flexibility. Implementing a broader scoring scale is advised to enhance adaptability and precision. Finally, the relative weights of secondary indicators related to industrial and talent revitalization should be increased. This adjustment would strengthen the system's capacity to guide resource allocation and address weak links in rural revitalization efforts.

5.2.3. Enhancing Material Incentives

Adequate material incentives are crucial for the effective operation and long-term sustainability of the points card system. At present, the "Charity Public Welfare Supermarket", which provides goods for point redemption, depends largely on social donations and limited government subsidies. This reliance constrains resource availability, thereby diminishing the system's overall appeal and incentive effectiveness. To enhance sustainability, a long-term support mechanism should be developed. Government subsidies should serve as the primary funding source, supplemented by social donations and market-based approaches. For example, local governments could be encouraged to establish dedicated funds for the implementation of the points card system. Simultaneously, efforts should focus on expanding the village's collective economy, allocating a portion of its surplus income to support the points redemption program. This would strengthen both the material foundation and the system's endogenous vitality.

5.3. Research Limitations and Future Research Directions

The primary methodological limitation of this study is that a single case study of the points-based governance system may not fully capture the diverse implementation models and contextual variations across rural regions. While this approach offers in-depth insights into the system's operational mechanisms and governance outcomes, it restricts the generalizability of the findings [35]. Additionally, qualitative case studies rely heavily on policy documents, field observations, and interviews, which may not fully encompass the complex socioeconomic and political factors shaping the system's effectiveness. Another key limitation is that the findings are based on rural governance experiences in remote areas of western China, where economic development levels, administrative structures, and governance traditions differ significantly from those in more developed regions or other countries [36]. To address these limitations, future research should adopt a comparative

multi-case study approach to explore varying rural governance contexts and develop a more comprehensive analytical framework.

6. Conclusions

China's rural governance is undergoing a transformation to enhance grassroots administrative efficiency and advance rural revitalization. As an innovative governance tool, the points system has been introduced in many villages to guide individual behavior, foster community participation, and maintain social order. Although this mechanism provides new means to engage villagers and improve governance, its effectiveness in promoting rural revitalization remains unclear. Clarifying the relationship between the points system and rural revitalization is essential for informing the policy and achieving sustainable rural development in China. Therefore, this study established a theoretical analysis framework of the points system and rural revitalization and conducted an empirical study using Xinqi Village in Ningxia as an example.

Theoretical analysis suggests that the points system emerges from the interplay of interest competition, face-based intermediaries, and an empowerment-oriented society. It serves as a crucial tool for enhancing rural revitalization by improving the effectiveness of local governance. Empirical analysis indicates that the rural points-based governance system has contributed to rural revitalization, particularly in promoting ecological livability, rural civility, and effective governance. However, its impact on industrial development and improvements in living standards remains limited. Despite its potential, the system faces several practical challenges. These include overly broad and unfocused institutional objectives, poorly designed indicators lacking scientific validity and measurability, and inadequate material incentives. Based on these findings, this paper offers policy recommendations for optimizing the points-based system. The study of its application in rural China—especially in underdeveloped Western regions—yields valuable insights into its functioning and effectiveness and provides important references for its broader adoption both domestically and internationally.

Author Contributions: Writing—original draft, Y.Z.; Writing—review and editing, K.T.; methodology—Y.D. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research was funded by National Social Science Foundation Project (23BGL193); and the Social Science Foundation of the Ministry of Education of China (21YJC790104).

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available upon request from the authors.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

1. Chen, S.; Liu, N. Research on Citizen Participation in Government Ecological Environment Governance Based on the Research Perspective of "Dual Carbon Target". *J. Environ. Public Health* **2022**, *2022*, 5062620. [PubMed]
2. Gaventa, J. Towards participatory governance: Assessing the transformative possibilities. In *Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation*; Bloomsbury Publishing Plc: London, UK, 2004; pp. 25–41.
3. Nurlinah; Haryanto; Sunardi. New development, old migration, and governance at two villages in Jeneponto, Indonesia. *World Dev. Perspect.* **2020**, *19*, 100223.
4. Yu, X.; Wang, P.; Li, Y. Governance activities, villagers' awareness, characteristics, and willingness in rural environmental participation: Evidence from Fujian, China. *Environ. Dev. Sustain.* **2024**, *26*, 29075–29097.

5. Xuejiao, L. From Institutional Design to Practical Operation: The Dilemma and Generative Logic of the Points-based System—An Empirical Analysis Based on T Village in Central Hubei. *J. Gansu Inst. Adm.* **2020**, *6*, 80–90.
6. Hutchinson, T.P.; Rowell, S. Points systems for car insurance. *Insur. Math. Econ.* **1986**, *5*, 255–259. [CrossRef]
7. Bofinger, R.; Rizk, K. Point System Versus Legal System: An Innovative Approach to Clinical Evaluation. *Nurs. Educ.* **2006**, *31*, 69–73. [CrossRef]
8. Sagberg, F.; Ingebrigtsen, R. Effects of a penalty point system on traffic violations. *Accid. Anal. Prev.* **2018**, *110*, 71–77. [CrossRef]
9. Fioravanti, F.; Tohmé, F.; Delbianco, F.; Neme, A. Effort of rugby teams according to the bonus point system: A theoretical and empirical analysis. *Int. J. Game Theory* **2021**, *50*, 447–474. [CrossRef]
10. Sumption, M.; Walsh, P.W. "The Points System is Dead. Long Live the Points System!" Why Immigration Policymakers in the UK Are Never Quite Happy with Their Points Systems. *J. Immigr. Refug. Stud.* **2023**, *21*, 89–103. [CrossRef]
11. Peng, S.; Tang, S. The Practical Logic of Empowering Rural Governance through the Points-Based System: A Case Study of F Community in J County, Guizhou Province. *Guizhou Soc. Sci.* **2023**, *7*, 161–168.
12. Wang, B.; Zhou, Q. The Clarity-Based Approach and Operational Logic of Rural Governance: A Deconstruction Based on the Practice of the Points-Based System. *Rural Econ.* **2024**, *11*, 56–66.
13. Li, H.; Lu, Y. Operational Mechanism and Governance Effects of the Rural Points System from an Incentive Perspective: An Empirical Study of Village X in Western Hubei. *J. Hunan Agric. Univ. (Soc. Sci. Ed.)* **2024**, *25*, 40–49.
14. Zheng, C. How to Promote the Modernization of Rural Governance in Transition in the New Era?—An Analysis Based on the Case of "Visiting the Secretary Without Issues" in Y District, L City, a Central Province. *J. Shanghai Adm. Inst.* **2024**, *25*, 83–95.
15. Wu, B.; Li, L.Y.; Dong, W.Q.; Xu, X.C. Exploration of the Logic, Models, and Pathways of Rural Digital Governance: A Multi-Case Study Based on Practices in Zhejiang Province. *World Agric.* **2025**, *1*, 31–43.
16. Ma, G.; Xu, X. The Operational Mechanism, Practical Dilemmas, and Solutions of the Rural Governance Points-Based System: An Analytical Framework Based on the "Three-Circle Theory". *J. Agric. For. Econ. Manag.* **2025**, *3*, 1–15.
17. Wang, Y.; Ding, M. Reshaping Identity: How the Points-Based System Advances Rural Governance. *China Rural Surv.* **2025**, *1*, 145–163.
18. Li, Z.; Zhang, Z. Mutual Trust, Interaction, and Interconnection: Exploring Feasible Pathways for Cultivating a Rural Environmental Governance Community. *J. Cent. South Univ. (Soc. Sci. Ed.)* **2024**, *30*, 159–169.
19. Jin, H.; Gao, Q. From Suspension to Integration: The Digital Transformation of the Points-Based System and the Internal Logic of the Mutual Shaping Between Rural Society and the System—An Empirical Study Based on Z Village, a National Model Village for Rural Governance. *E-Government* **2024**, *10*, 59–72.
20. Hua, X. A Practical Study on the Effective Linkage Between Poverty Alleviation and Rural Revitalization in Ethnic Minority Areas of Northeast Border Regions: A Case Study of Nehe City. *Heilongjiang Natl. Ser.* **2024**, *3*, 91–100.
21. Zhao, Z.Y.; Xu, H.Z. How Does Digitalized Points System Reshape Rural Civility?—A Case Study of the "Moral Points System" in County H. *Hunan Soc. Sci.* **2024**, *3*, 126–137.
22. Yang, C.H. Solidly Promote the Construction of Livable, Business-Friendly, and Beautiful Villages. *Red Flag Manuscr.* **2023**, *3*, 26–29.
23. Qin, G.; Ma, J.; Shi, Y.; Zhu, Y. "Dispersing Wealth to Gather People" or "Loss of Both People and Wealth": The Impact of Shareholding Cooperative Reform on Collective Action in Villages—Empirical Evidence from 381 Cases of Rural Collective Operational Assets in Henan Province. *China Rural Econ.* **2023**, *1*, 160–183.
24. Liu, Y.; Shu, L.; Peng, L. The Hollowing Process of Rural Communities in China: Considering the Regional Characteristic. *Land* **2021**, *10*, 911. [CrossRef]
25. Akao, K. An economic analysis of the "Home Appliance Eco-Point System" in Japan. *Environ. Econ. Policy* **2017**, *19*, 483–501.
26. Ito, H.; Kawazoe, N. Assessing and promoting eco-policies in Toyota City, Japan. *Policy Des. Pract.* **2019**, *2*, 35–52.
27. Meliá Martí, E.; Meira, D.; Corberá Martínez, J.; Bertuzi, R. Cross-border cooperation: A response to the challenges facing agri-food cooperatives in Southern European countries. *Ann. Public Coop. Econ.* **2023**, *94*, 981–1006. [CrossRef]
28. Homans, G.C. Social behavior as exchange. *Am. J. Sociol.* **1958**, *63*, 597–606.
29. Williams, T.A.; Shepherd, D.A. Building resilience or providing sustenance: Different paths of emergent ventures in the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake. *Acad. Manag. J.* **2016**, *59*, 2069–2102.
30. Lapinski, M.K.; Rimal, R.N. An explication of social norms. *Commun. Theor.* **2005**, *15*, 127–147.
31. McDonald, R.I.; Crandall, C.S. Social norms and social influence. *Curr. Opin. Behav. Sci.* **2015**, *3*, 147–151.
32. Scheyvens, R. *Tourism for Development: Empowering Communities*; Pearson Education: London, UK, 2002.
33. Zimmerman, M.A. Empowerment theory: Psychological, organizational and community levels of analysis. In *Handbook of Community Psychology*; Springer: Berlin/Heidelberg, Germany, 2000; pp. 43–63.
34. Wang, J.; Kuang, X.; Wang, Z.; Liao, W.; Qiu, H. The impact of rural revitalization talent cultivation on farm household part-time farming: Evidence from the "One Village, One University Student" program. *PLoS ONE* **2025**, *20*, e0318680. [CrossRef]

35. Willis, B. The Advantages and Limitations of Single Case Study Analysis.–e-International Relations Students. *E-Int. Relat.* **2014**, *4*, 1–7.
36. Peng, Y.; Peng, X.; Li, X.; Lu, M.; Yin, M. Effectiveness in rural governance: Influencing factors and driving pathways—Based on 20 typical cases of rural governance in China. *Land* **2023**, *12*, 1452. [CrossRef]

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.