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Development Strategy of Regional Tourism Industry: A Case Study of Hengyang

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Abstract

Based on the present situation of the tourism industry in Hengyang, through analyzing on its strength and weakness, as well as the opportunities and challenges it faces, this paper points out the principal factors which restrict the development of the tourism industry of Hengyang. Moreover, the author puts forward development strategies for the tourism industry of Hengyang in the period of the 12th Five-Year Plan from the perspective of supporting and promoting the relationship between tourism industry and regional economy.

Key words: Hengyang; Development; Tourism industry; Strategic analysis

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INTRODUCTION

Any industry intending to grow healthily in a region can not develop without research of industry development strategy plans. The development strategy of regional tourism industry is the plan and strategy to decide the development of the local tourism industry, while the correct choice of the strategy decides the success of the development of tourism industry. Therefore, if the problems of the development strategy of tourism industry

can not be solved, the tourism management department in local government will work by rules of thumb, and then get stuck in a dilemma. The preferable tendency in the development of domestic tourism industry may be destroyed by the shortsighted strategy planned by local government. How to scientifically make development strategy for the regional tourism industry? We think that the establishment and implementation of strategic target are extremely important.

1. CORE OF THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF REGIONAL TOURISM INDUSTRY

Tourism industry is a service industry of national economy, and it serves the whole national economy through promoting regional economic development. Obviously, the tourism industry and regional economy have a relationship of the double layer interaction, and they rely on and promote each other. The so-called reliance is that the development of tourism industry must rely on local economic development, while promoting is that the tourism industry's strategic target must first be able to promote the sustained and healthy development of the local economy. In fact, in any city with good tourism industry development, the tourism industry is based on the comparative advantages of the regional economy. As bittern chemical industry is a pillar industry in Hengyang, tourism in Hengyang will develop well through the transformation of bittern resources. If Hengyang neither plays its comparative advantages nor notices its regional economic characteristics, but holds Dragon Boat Festival like Yueyang, it will fail because of ignoring the comparative advantages of regional economy. Therefore, the analysis on its comparative advantages, and decisions on the specific planning for the development of local tourism industry are very important.

To promote regional economic development, tourism industry must not focus on the purpose of making money, as well as completely ignore the objective which tries to promote regional economic development through tourism. And it also cannot afford the cost of local economic development. In fact, any good tourism project should give prominence to and zoom out the comparative advantages of regional economy. It is helpful in building industrial chain in the region and in the formation of core competence. This advantage is not only our criteria to evaluate whether a tourist project is a success, and it should also become our strategic target in the tourism market planning.

In a word, the double relationships that rely on and promoted each other between the tourism industry and regional economy should be the core content of regional tourism development strategic targets.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF HENGYANG TOURISM INDUSTRY

(a) Industrial scale rapidly expands, and leisure and tourism projects are full of life.

Accelerated tourism development in Hengyang has five characteristics: increasingly sophisticated tourist facilities, continually optimized tourism environment, gradually improved tourism structure, greatly enhanced tourism brands, and dramatically increased tourism benefits. The average annual increase rate of Hengyang tourism industry was more than 20%.

(b) Tourist market is active and orderly, and potential market is huge.

After years of development, tourism market has undergone tremendous change in Hengyang. In 2001, there were only 3.92 million domestic and foreign visitors. However, in 2010, there were 19.7 million visitors, and the integrated tourism revenue was 10.275 billion Yuan, 32.25% and 28.84% increased compared with the year 2009, respectively. Among them, the count of receiving inbound tourism tourists was more than 100,000, \$43.4 million of foreign exchange earnings was created accordingly, respectively increased 29.84% and 34.57% compared with the previous year. Tourism revenues accounted for 7.14% of the city's GDP, and it has reached the standards of the backbone industry.

(c) As a tourism transportation hub, Hengyang is promising to be provincial tourism distributing center.

Traffic is a prerequisite for tourism development. Since ancient times, Hengyang has been the portal of Southwest and the thoroughfare of North and South. There are 8 railways: Jing-Guang, Xiang-Gui, Wu-Guang high speed railways, Heng-Cha-Ji railway, Xiang-Gui double-tracking high speed railway, Huai-Shao-Heng, An-Zhang-Heng railways, and Cheungsha to Hengyang inter-city light rail, the 6 highways: the national highways of

107 and 322, Jing-Zhu, Heng-Kun, Ji-Shao, West Jing-Zhu, Heng-Yue, and Yi-Lou-Heng highways, crossed over Hengyang to form a round-shaped traffic pattern. Hengyang was elected as one of national 15 railway hubs and one of 45 highway hubs. At the same time, water transportation is also very convenient in Hengyang. Projects under construction are to be completed in the period of Eleventh-Five-Year Plan and in the early period of Twelfth-Five-Year Plan. Therefore, in the period of Twelfth-Five-Year Plan, Hengyang is expected to have two-hour traffic circle covering four urban agglomerations, the Pearl River Delta, Wuhan, Changsha-Zhuzhou-Xiangtan region, and southern Hunan, and three tourist sites, Guilin, Jingtangshan, Dameishan. Hengyang will once again become an important hub in Southern China, and will become a provincial tourism distributing center sooner or later.

(d) The potential advantages gradually become clear, and the tourism brand "fairyland & southern hunan" has been set up

Since ancient times, Hengyang has been an important tourism destination because of Hengshan Mountain. Since the opening up of Chinese tourism industry, Hengyang tourism industry has developed to today's scale from scratch, due to the Hengshan mountain effect. Nowadays, while leisure tourism is popular, these resources become very valuable, and they can be made into excellent cultural leisure tourism products. The key issue is to avoid repeating the mistakes made by other cities.

3. FACTORS RESTRICTING HENGYANG TOURISM

3.1 Environmental Constraints

First, the policy environment should be optimized. It mainly reflects as follows: policy guidelines are not enough, policy support are not strong, and targeted, practical measures are lacking. This problem is included in No. 41 file of the State Council in 2009, and in No.41 files of Hengyang Government in 2006. Second, business environment should be well regulated. Some national preferential policies to tourism enterprises can't be implemented in time, and there are even some discriminatory policies. Some governmental departments asked for bribery, increasing the burden on enterprises. Third, the ecological environment should be well protected. Some tourism enterprises and tourists are lack of environmental awareness, causing air, water and soil pollution. They have no sense of security, so there are many hidden dangers. For example, as a national scenic area and a national nature reserve, Hengshan Mountain should ban smoking preventing from forest fire, but in fact, there are many flaws of management in fire protection.

3.2 Transportation Constraints

One is about the accessibility of the tourism destination. Now there are no suitable roads to connect scenic areas in Hengyang except of the scenic spots above 3A level, and most roads are on the low level. Such as travelling to rafting in Changning Xijiang River, it will drive more than 10 km of mountain roads, which are narrow roads with high altitude, and large vehicles can hardly drive there. Another issue is about tourism signs. Though there are many signs of Hengyang scenic areas set up in the major highway exits, after entering the city roads and ordinary road signs are surprisingly lacking, and it often makes tourists feel confused. Besides, tourist transport capacity is extremely inadequate. There is no direct bus to Nanyue scenic area at Hengyang East station and Hengyang railway station. There is only a tourism fleet under operation for irregular routes, with no more than ten vehicles. It is not worth to mention compared with Changsha and Zhangjiajie in terms of size of the fleet, which have hundreds of cars. Furthermore, the transportation facilities should be improved. The parking lots and parking capacity should be expanded. Mountain Yuntaishan in Henan province has parking capacity of 3,000 units, and it plans to increase to 5,000 units. The capacity of the parking lots in Nanyue Visitors Center is less than 300 units. We can note this obvious difference. Basically there is no parking for bus in some scenic spots in the urban areas of Hengyang, such as the Shigu academy, Huiyanfeng park etc. There are even less service facilities for self-drive car. For example, there is no large car repair plant in Nanyue, and the supply of accessories to famous brand car is insufficient.

3.3 Market Constraints

Nanyue stands out in Hengyang's tourism products, however, due to lack in both quantity and quality of tourist attractions, Hengyang tourism market has the following problems: First, the visitor's stay is short and per capita consumption is low, so the industry chain is unable to play its role. According to the survey in 2009, one day trip tourists to Hengyang accounted for 61%, per capita consumption was 283 yuan. One day trip tourists to Nanyue accounted for over 70%, per capita consumption was 489 yuan. Second, tourist consumption structure is irrational. Consumption of sightseeing, lodging and transportation account for large proportion, while the consumption of food, shopping, and entertainment is small. Through a survey on tourists' shopping and entertainment consumption in Nanyue, we know that per capita shopping consumption was 48 yuan, entertainment spending was 23 yuan, and compared with the total consumption it only accounted for about one-seventh. Third, there are a small proportion of non-native visitors, especially foreign tourists are less, and the market needs

to be developed. In 2009, non-native visitors accounted for only about 28%, and there were only 81,000 foreign tourists, mainly from Hong Kong, Macao, few of them are from foreign countries.

4. DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY ANALYSIS OF HENGYANG TOURISM INDUSTRY

(a) Refine tourist products and improve the layout of tourism industry

Tourism is fundamentally a systematic engineering. Any tourist attraction involves many aspects like theme design, implementation, effect evaluation, etc. And small mistakes at any aspects are likely to affect the efficiency of the whole system. Therefore, as for the development of tourism products, it is necessary to apply the concepts and methods of information theory, system theory, and cybernetics to specific work, so that the whole industrial system can function efficiently and orderly. And this requires to "refine" our macromanagement for the industry. In this regard, the priority is to design a great spatial layout, forming a layout of two centers and four groups, with the core scenic spots in the downtown area and Hengshan mountain in Nanyue being the two centers, and Cai Lun cultural tourism zone in Leiyang, Yinshan mountain-Yao village customs tourist area in Changning, former residence of general Luo tourism zone in the east of Hengyang, Hongqiao-Qishan mountain landscape recreational area being the four groups. The downtown area is the space hub of the development of Hengyang's tourism, the organizing center of inbound and outbound traffic, the service centre of Southern Hunan tour circle and collecting and distributing center of provincial tourism, as well as the chief base providing tour reception and information service; since it's a regional tourism city whose major tourist products are city leisure, cultural experience, meetings and vacations, Hengyang's downtown mainly relies on such tourist resources as Fuhai, Shigu academy, Xiang army historic remains, Hengyang defending battle preservation, Yumu mountain, Dongzhou island and Linghu leisure zone. The festival activities include traveling, trade and culture. The core scenic zone in Nanyue (includes Kaiyu new town where the Hengshan west railway station is located) is the leading attraction in Hengyang, whose core products contain sightseeing traveling, religion and culture traveling, as well as leisure vacation. It is an important base for tourist reception and information service, and mainly relies on "one of the five famous sacred mountains": the Holy Land, Ancestor Worship, and Natural Ecosystem, Martyr's Shrine, and Hengshan mountain Longevity Culture Festival.

(b) Perfect tourism culture and strengthen the brand effect, making Hengyang the fallow land for the big triangle Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao tourism zone and the backer of Southeast Asia

Hengyang is a historical and cultural city, and Nanyue is a historical and religious mountain which is a national scenic area. Since it is renowned as “the Ranking Mount of the Big Five”, which is located uniquely in the south of the Yangtze River, Nanyue becomes the religious pilgrimage traveling center at the southern part of China including Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. Its beautiful landscape and profound culture attracts millions of domestic and foreign travelers, especially travelers from Southeast Asia. Hence, the development of tourism in Hengyang should follow the route of further promoting religious and cultural tourism products. Meanwhile, the government should pay greater attention to increase financial input and intensify propaganda. All relevant departments should increase interaction, and rationally develop advantageous resources so as to build high quality attractions and characteristic traveling lines, and finally create the tourism image of “the fallow land for the big triangle Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao tourism zone and the backer of Southeast Asia” as well as “Ecological Paradise, Cultural Mecca, and Religious Sanctum”.

(c) Activate tourism industry, and create a unique tourism image to ensure the healthy development of Hengyang tourism industry

The overall tourism image of Hengyang has been inconspicuous. “Yancheng” is just its nickname and is not a city tourism image; “Hunan cultural city” is not unique or representative; Hengshan takes a part for the whole. Another flagship product is China Fuhai whose phase I project will be put into operation in early days of the 12th Five-Year plan, when the two flagship products work together to relieve Hengyang of tourism pressure. “China Fuhai, Blessing as East Ocean”, “Hengshan mountain, Health and Longevity” will decide that the new brand tourism image of Hengyang is “Happiness and Longevity Tour”.

(d) Focus on economies of scale and implement major projects en industrial chain and tourism industry

Tourism industry is an industry of distinct scale effect, that is, when a tourist business reaches a certain scale, its ratio of increased gains is greater than that of tourism production inputs. For this reason, when furthering its development, we should respect its trade rules and strengthen and enlarge tourism products and tourism enterprises through market competition. In the 12th Five-Year Plan, based on China Fuhai international tourism holiday resort and Leishuiwan international yacht club, Hengyang will develop Chashan-Jinjialing mountain tourism city economy zone which will be equipped with groups of holiday hotel, conference and exhibition centers, salt therapy and SPA centers, and a 27-hole golf club, water sports leisure world, personal vehicle camps, meditation culture gardens, agriculture and leisure parks, and theme property and education, culture, health facilities, finally construct an Hengyang’s OCT. Rely on California wine manor, Yashilin agricultural ecological leisure expo, Hengyang will build an industry clustering zone including leisure agriculture park, wine brewing and wine culture experience and wine culture experience community, golf club, religion and culture community and theme leisure community. In addition, Hengyang will construct grand Hengshan tourism economy zone on the basis of Nanyue tourism area including “Elegant Hengshan” tourism city, Hengdian film city and Hengdong Xintangtu food palace.

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