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Development Analysis of Leisure Agriculture—A Case Study of Longjing Tea Garden, Hangzhou, China

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Abstract

Leisure agriculture is one sector of the agricultural tourism. The gist intends to provide a tourist with more relaxing activities. Since the developed leisure farms can provide more employment, this research analyzes the development strategies of leisure agriculture in Longjing tea garden. The study adopted concept of ASEB grid method. Studies areas were the Longjing tea gardens in Hangzhou. The results found that the SA composition had a good reputation. The SS showed the high-quality tea zone. The SE had a convenient transportation. The SB had more experience knowledge. The WA had insufficient theoretical guidance. The WS comprised many commercialized zones. The WE revealed the weakness of primitive tea garden. The WB hardly presented the guaranteed interests. The OA highlighted the tourism policy orientation. The OS implemented the leisure agriculture's system. The OE provided an educational project. The OB preferred an enjoyable a day-off. The TA found a single product. The TS had more pollution. The TE met a variety of psychological requirements. Finally, the TB discovered an ecology of the site environment. Hopefully, this study can help the policy-makers determine some practical means to develop and sustain the leisure farms.

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1. Introduction

Leisure agriculture is one of the developing directions for current tourisms as it integrates the natures of modern tourism, experience economy, agricultural products, farm management, etc. [1]. Recently, the leisure agriculture has been developed rapidly, especially in the rural areas. It becomes the alternative sightseeing places for the tourists who want to relax themselves from the hard and serious works. The leisure agriculture always functions with rural tourism. Both are the miracle of tourism industry that combines the farming culture together with the national culture into the traditional tourist culture.

With the integration of leisure agriculture and rural tourism, the countryside, agricultural sector, and rural infrastructure will be further supported and promoted to enrich the content of tourism industry. These can push a sunrise industry in the agricultural tourisms with multi-function of agriculture, new consumption demand, and high efficient resource. The leisure agriculture and rural tourism are, therefore, the broad prospects and great vitality in their functional advantages.

In China, there have been many leisure agricultural parks established in the countryside and around the big cities, for examples Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, and Hangzhou [2]. The country is a developing country where focuses on agriculture. Agricultural sector consists of the wide range of rural areas and abundant numbers of farmers. Since the opening-up country, China's economics has been reformed and gained high achievement recently. There is the fastest development in the city, as well as the townscape has been hugely changed in order to adapt to the global civilization. Whereas, the economics has been reformed in rural areas.

China leisure agriculture and rural tourism industry related in-depth research and investment strategy report [3] revealed that the tourism industry in China showed a high growing trend in 2010. The number of local tourists was 2.10 billion Yuan with the growth rate of 10.6 per cent. The income of domestic tourist was 125.8 billion Yuan with a year by year growth rate of 23.5 per cent. The number of international tourists was 133.76 million Yuan with the growth rate of 5.76 per cent. Presently, the fourth largest inbound tourism host country in the world belongs to China. Also, China becomes the biggest outbound tourism country in Asia.

The leisure agriculture and rural tourism are regarded as the global sunrise industry. Leisure agricultural parks always show the relationship of production function, advanced technology, cultural entertainment, catering, vacation, catering, shopping, etc. The leisure construction has not only expanded developmental space of agriculture, but promoted the structural transition of agricultural industry also. Besides, its function can hire the surplus number of rural labors to work in the leisure fields. This has a high potential to increase their income as well. The great contribution can be made through the high number of tourists and ecological environment. The urban residents can easily visit the recreational and leisure sites in the rural areas.

Several views for improving the balance between urban and rural development has been discussed in order to tightly consolidate the development of agriculture in rural areas. The China council recently states that leisure agriculture, forest tourism, rural tourism, rural-service industry have to highly developed to expand the rural full employment in the suburban zone and rural areas. The development of leisure agricultural is strongly supported and encouraged both national and international levels.

The managerial and operational processes on leisure agricultural sites need to reach the national criterion and improve the quality as much as possible to meet the high demand of tourists. Moreover, sustainable development is inevitable strategy in determining some useful policies. Somehow, it should place at the first priority on the leisure agricultural development. Thus, the development of suburban leisure agriculture, such as Longjing tea garden in Hangzhou, China, should be strongly supported without limitation from the China's government.

As the competition of agricultural tourism is very fierce, the domestic leisure tourism needs high cooperation in the industrial marketing research. Therefore, this research aims to analyze the developing means in Longjing tea garden, especially the in-depth research of tourists.

2. Data and Methodology

2.1. Study Areas

The research areas are aesthetic hectares in Longjing tea garden in Mei Jia Wu leisure farm located in the southwestern region of Hangzhou, China. The Longjing area is literally named as “dragon well”. Notably, its name is derived from the titular dragon well in Longjing village of Xihu district. Historically, a disguised emperor lived overnight in a farmhouse. He once dreamed that the whole areas where are full of hills and valleys could hide a giant sleeping dragon. The dragon decided to show itself in the dream of the sleeping emperor in order to foretell a province’s fortune in the future under his administration. Suddenly, after the emperor woke up, he named this place “Longjing”, with the implicit meaning of “dragon well”.

This area is 100 miles away from the southwest of Shanghai to Hangzhou in China. The Longjing area is one of the most attractive tourism places in Hangzhou. Also, the most famous Chinese tea named as “Longjing” has been grown within this area.

All neighboring areas encompassed the Longjing village have considerably been growing tea for many years. The studied areas consist of tea plantation areas, tea housing, habitats, national parks, and Chinese style temples. This area is very famous in tea drinking and tea processing products. Moreover, the Longjing place is very popular for visiting the eight scenes of the dragon well. It can be said that, the number of tourists in Longjing village is gradually increased year by year because of the tourism development.

2.2. Data Collection

The study collected the qualitative data from number of tourists who severally visited the Longjing tea garden by using an in-depth interview. The questionnaires were randomly distributed in different units of the studied areas. Around 50 tourists were asked with related questions on how to develop leisure agriculture for the purpose of analyzing the strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat in the studied areas.

2.3. Methodology

This research applied the concept of ASEB (Activities, Setting, Experiences, and Benefits) grid analysis’s model to identify the strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat in the Longjing tea garden. The ASEB grid analysis is a distinguished research method in business management for tourist attraction analysis. It was designed by [4] to determine a consumer-led organizational analysis for understanding the tourists’ experiences as a basic perception in developing a product.

The ASEB grid analysis is a joint derivative method based on a SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat) method [5]. It is particularly employed to analyze the benefits and experiences gained from the tourists in visiting the attractive tourism places. Moreover, the important issues arising from the experience economy and experiential consumption are prevalently analyzed by this method [6].

Its conceptual model is a matrix form showing a different rows derived from the conventional concept of SWAT analysis, meanwhile the implicit four columns defining as the sequential hierarchy’s demands that consist of Activities, Settings, Experiences, and Benefits.

Data collected from face-to-face interview were empirically entered into a matrix cell under the appropriate column and row headings. The matrix is normally required to read row by row from cell SA to SB, WA to WB, OA to OB, TA to TB, respectively, as shown in Table 1. In addition, the ASEB grid analysis is the customer orientated which not only the strength and weakness are not only defined by the customer perception, but the opportunity and threat can identified by the visitors through in-depth interview [7].

Table 1. Cell identifications between ASEB grid analysis and sequential hierarchy's demands

	Activity	Setting	Experience	Benefit
Strength	SA	SS	SE	SB
Weakness	WA	WS	WE	WB
Opportunity	OA	OS	OE	OB
Threat	TA	TS	TE	TB

3. Results and Discussion

Refer to the experience economy of four realms' analysis, the development analysis on Longjing tea garden derived from the ASEB grid analysis was empirically shown in Table 2. These data was worthily recorded and summarized from the face-to-face interview.

Firstly, the strength-activity (SA) consisted of high reputation in the studied area, together with superior location. The strength-setting (SS) combined high-quality tea zone and abundant resources. The strength-experience (SE) included two important things, convenience transportation and abundant tourists. The strength-benefit (SB) were to get more experience knowledge and to increase high-valued memory.

Next, the weakness-activity (WA) showed the lack of theoretical guidance in Longjing tea garden. The weakness-setting (WS) revealed abundant commercialized zones in the leisure farm. The weakness-experience (WE) presented the weakness of primitive tea garden. The weakness-benefit (WB) performed the hardly guaranteed interests in the studied area.

Later, the opportunity-activity (OA) highlighted the orientation of tourism policy. The opportunity-setting (OS) displayed the implementation of leisure agriculture's system. The opportunity-experience (OE) provided an educational project. The opportunity-benefit (OB) mostly preferred an enjoyable a day-off in the leisure farm.

Finally, the threat-activity (TA) was a single and repetitive tourism's products. The threat-setting (TS) showed more environmental pollution and destruction. The threat-experience (TE) met a variety of psychological requirements. The threat-benefit (TB) found an ecology of the site environment.

Table 2. Qualitative categorization on ASEB grid analysis

Evaluation	Activity	Setting	Experience	Benefit
Strength	- Reputation - Superior location	- High-quality tea zone - Abundant resources	- Convenience transportation - Abundant tourists	- Getting more knowledge - Increasing high-valued memory
Weakness	Lack of theoretical guidance	Many commercialized zones	Weakness of primitive tea garden	Hardly guaranteed interests
Opportunity	Orientation of tourism policy	Implementation of leisure agriculture's system	Providing an educational learning project	Enjoyable a day-off
Threat	Single and repetitive tourism's products	More environmental pollution and destruction	Meeting a variety of psychological requirements	Ecology of the site environment

Thus, the discussion of this research mainly relies on the experience strategy gained from tourists. The development and utilization of tea garden need to meet the tourist's requirement in order to get closer to the nature as much as possible. Tourist's feedback has a high influence in experience design of the developing

strategies. The main practical means in developing the Longjing tea garden should improve and adjust the weaknesses and threats found in this research. All strengths should be maintained and advertised to attract the tourists around the world to visit this place. Besides, a farm operator is supposed to develop the Longjing tea garden to be a sustainable farm in leisure agriculture.

It can be said that agriculture is the sector that involves in developing local economics. A remote area with the good scenarios background, like Longjing tea garden, is the right place to absorb the good environmental ecology. Tourists can relax their worries from the serious works to enjoy the real natural and return to the beautiful gardens. This is the niche of leisure agriculture. Based on this issue, the operator in leisure agriculture have to play a direct role in developing experience economy in several sections, for instance, using farm areas as the stage, mountain as a background, forest as a rural scenery, tourist as the protagonist, agricultural products as the attractive properties, etc. The tourists can satisfactorily be pleasure with the long memory in good services and nice places.

4. Conclusions

It is important to develop and utilize some useful strategies toward Longjing tea garden in Hangzhou, China. These practical means based on the experience strategies which could mainly be achieved from five ways. Firstly, two patterns of “packaging” and “innovating” have to be utilized through the extraction, concentration, and integration in this area so that the tourists will appreciate an unrivaled place and products with indelible impression. Secondly, natural environments have to be kept and maintained as long as possible such as the old trees, local bamboos, and the primitive tree houses in the forest due to these can provide the tourists with the places to return to nature and live in. The tourists highly gain a profound experience economy.

Thirdly, the leisure agricultural operators have to arrange an appropriate travel adventures, for instance, folk custom travel, forest bathing tour, and forest adventure because these experiences strategies can pursue the tourists who seek the adventure activities. Fourthly, sensory stimulation have to be supported in the leisure agricultural theme to carry out the visual design, sound design, sensory design, touch design, as well as the smelling design in the tourists’ felling. Finally, the signs based on the educational experience have to be used in the areas to explain the distinct things, such as ornaments, sculptures, stones, etc. in order to highlight the peculiarity of education and sustain nature in abstract or concrete forms.

The development of leisure agriculture in Longjing tea garden not only can promote the agricultural transformation, but also can improve the farmer’s employment. In addition, the fundamental change in developing way could be updated in order to construct the new countryside and modern agricultural industry.

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