

A NOVEL METHOD FOR DYNAMIC IMAGE LOCALIZATION OF TOURISM DESTINATION BASED ON BUTLER LIFE CYCLE THEORY

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Abstract: Nowadays, the competition of tourism industry is no longer the competition of quality, price and service, the planning of image strategy for tourism destination has become the key point in this competition. The establishment and spread of a well-known image for tourism destination can be a significant method to exploit the tourism market as well as attract tourist. Meanwhile, the image for tourism destination is also a huge fortune and intangible assets of the location and tourism enterprise. This thesis proposes the whole formation process of tourism image based on life cycle theory for tourism destination, then discusses the necessity of dynamic change of the image, finally we give a specific method as well as some instances to build up the image for tourism destination.

1 INTRODUCTION

Currently, the tourism image is the most important issue in completion of tourism. Most of the famous cities (tourism destinations) have their own unique and irreplaceable images, such as water city Venice, beer city Munich, art city Paris, angel city Bangkok, U. N. city New York, music city Vienna, Harem city Baghdad and so on.

However, after several decades' development, the number of tourist and income of tourism do not have a significant growth, even have a downward trend. If there is not a new image of tourism for these place, they will be eliminated from the tourism market. So a well known image of tourism is significant. This paper develop a novel method to build up an image adapt to the changes of the out environment.

2 LOCATION OF TOURISM IMAGE

Tourism Image is integrated embodiment of impression views, feelings and cognition people perceived from various tourist destinations in a certain period and certain circumstances. In short,

tourism image is people's comprehensive cognition and overall evaluation of tourist destinations.(Yang Shenlin, 1999)

The most important marketing strategy is product positioning. The key for effective market positioning and marketing strategy is to establish a suitable tourist destination image. To locate tourism image is to launch attractive selling point to tourists. Tourism Image comes from unique of tourism , is comprehensive demonstration of natural environment and human geography of the tourism, is combination of three-dimensional space-time of natural geography, history, cultural traditions and social accumulation. It is generally a brilliant and creative and appealing slogan to summary and show it.

Image orientation is the premise of tourism image design and give the direction for image design.

Many countries and regions attaches great importance to the tourism image orientation and establish a strong image in the majority of the target market. Spain, the Caribbean, Hawaii take sun, beaches and folk as their whole image; Italy takes Renaissance painting, sculpture, architectural masterpieces as the overall image(Zhang Lingyun, 1993).

Image is to make the tourism into the hearts of potential tourists, accounting for somewhere in the mind, and make the tourists form a lively, clear impression of strong sense. Tourism products or business itself is not the focus of orientation, but to promote tourism products into the minds of potential consumers by orientation. The old image ladder has been very solid, new image ladder is forming, which is the most basic features of tourism image for individual image orientation(Li Leilei, 1995).

3 TOURISM AREA LIFE CYCLE THEORIES

It's generally believed that any tourist area cannot be enduring. It has the process from the start to the end, which is called the Tourism Area Life Cycle. The most famous Tourism area life cycle theory is Butler's six-stage model.

In 1980, Canadian scholar Butler used the product life cycle model to describe the evolution of Tourism in the essay "Tourism Area Life Cycle Overview" (Butler R W, 1980). He proposed that the evolution of tourism will go through six stages, shown as figure 1: the exploratory stage, in phase, development phase, solid phase, stagnation, decline or recovery phase.

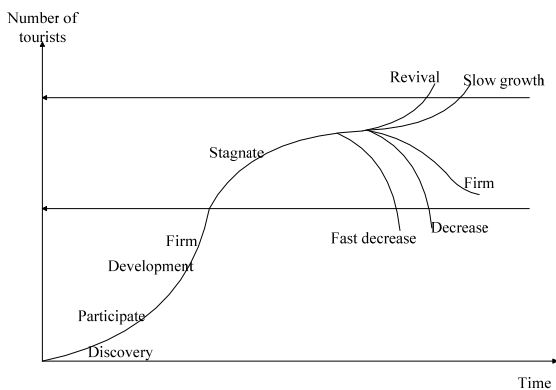


Figure 1: Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle Curve.

The figure shows that if it wants to turn into the recovery stage from the stagnation stage, the attraction of the tourist area must have some fundamental changes. In order to achieve this goal, there're two ways: First, create a new series of man-made landscape; the second is to play untapped natural tourism resources, re-start the market. The result is the decline or recovery? There are 5 possibilities:

(1) The depth development is effective. The

number of visitors continues to increase, and the market expands. The tourism area goes into the recovery phase.

(2) Focus on resource protection. Limited to small-scale adjustment and transformation, tourists can be slightly increased, and the pace of recovery is slow;

(3) To focus on maintaining the existing volume, containing the downward trend of tourists, so to maintain a stable level;

(4) Excessive use of resources, do not pay attention to environmental protection, resulting in decreased competitiveness of the area. And tourists decreased significantly;

(5) War, plague or other catastrophic events will lead to sharp decline in the number of visitors; in order to return to the original level is extremely difficult.

Table 1: Tourism area life cycle model.

Stages	Image Characteristics	Direction of the image Strategy
Discovery	Less well known, explorers paradise	Establish the image
Start	New Tourism	Image promotion
Development	High-profile tourist destination which is	Weak image strategy
Firm	Long hot tourist destination	Anti-promotion
Stagnate	Reputation declines, no longer	Identity crisis management
Fading	Reputation is low, the declining	Design new image
Revival	Re-developing tourism	Re-positioning and image transmission

Tourists have different understanding and evaluation to different stages of tourist area development. The relationship between image characteristics, life cycle and the corresponding image strategy of the tourism area is shown in table 1. Table 1 is the guidance to image of the design and communication of the tourism area at different stages of development.

4 RENEWING THE IMAGE ORIENTATION OF TOURISM DESTINATION

4.1 The Image Orientation of Tourism Destination must be Periodically Updated

Once the image orientation of tourism destination

was defined, it will be certain stability, then, it will be used as media dissemination image and the repeated used slogan for marketing in a long period. But, the image orientation of tourism destination is not static, with the changes of the era, tourism competitive environment, the tourism consumers' psychology and needs, the development of tourism destination also undergo the emerging, growth, maturity and decline stages, the original image orientation of tourism destination cannot meet the changes of travel needs. Therefore, the image orientation of tourism destination must also be accordingly updated to the new image replaces the old image based on tourism development trends and competitive environment, the tourism consumers' psychology and needs, and the development of the tourism destinations' own, so that the new image occupies a favourable position in the minds of travellers.

When the image of tourism destination is in the stagnation phase of its life cycle, the reorientation issues has to be considered, this is not only a cyclical work, but also a strategic work.

After more than two decades of reform and opening up in China, many old tourism destinations have suffered stagnant growth or even declination in the number phenomenon, these phenomenon resulting from the lack of periodically updated the image orientation of tourism destination. For example, the famous tourism city Hangzhou which was famous for "paradise" was also met the challenge of declining attractiveness: In 1994 the number of tourists decreased by 20% compared with 1993, and tourists' resident time reduced to 1.65 days from 2(Li Leilei, 1999) the world. How to update tourism products, and alter the static literati travelling into the modern travelling which cater the taste of modern people, have been becoming an urgent need solve task to the local tourism development. Luoyang and Xishuangbanna also encountered the similar problem and Guilin is facing competition and challenges.

4.2 Strategy of Tourism Image Localization

(1) Update image localization by grasping the theme of tourism

Determining the basis of the image localization is the tourism resource and subject of product features of tourism destination, of course, which the orientation of image localization cannot be divorced from.

Any tourism destination has its unique local characteristics. Generally speaking, the study on the local is a basis of designing image localization, that is, through natural and geographical characteristics of tourism destination, which can "read" and "refined" the features of historical and cultural to summarize the basic style of the place.

Next let's take Hang Zhou as an example to illustrate the idea. As we know, Hang Zhou has a good reputation of "Just as there is paradise in heaven, there are Su Zhou and Hang Zhou on earth". However, Hang Zhou has already prepared to take "The city of Love" as new reputation to update image localization.

Relatively speaking, the landscape of Guilin is much more beautiful than that of Hang Zhou, and Hang Zhou doesn't possess the ancient capital of Xi'an. To the nation and the whole world, the most famous of the place of interest in Hang Zhou is the West Lake; naturally Hang Zhou should take the West Lake, which emphasis on Love, as her natural core. Even though the slogan of "Just as there is paradise in heaven, there are Su Zhou and Hang Zhou on earth" has played a huge role to promote the development of the city, it is inadequate to continue to follow it in the new environment for not good revealing the true distinction of Hang Zhou.

It is no exaggeration to say that historical and cultural environment of Hang Zhou is the basis of "The city of Love". Hang Zhou's beautiful, warm atmosphere gave birth to one by one moving love stories, which is born of seed of love.

In China, there are four famous love stories which have moved most of Chinese generation by generation, and two well-known legends of the four, that is, "White Snake" and "Butterfly Lovers", were born in Hang Zhou. Over time, the historical stories are more compelling and moving love stories. Let us take two examples to identify it. Firstly, Su Shi is a poet who has high reputation in China, leaves eternal farewell of "The West Lake looks like the fair lady at her best, whether she is richly adorned or plainly dressed" to show deep love to Qin Cao. Secondly, Su Xiaoxiao, a famous courtesan in Southern Qi dynasty, was the representative of the pursuit of happiness of love. In conclusion, Hang Zhou has been considered the birthplace of the ideal love story since the ancient. Love is the new image localization of Hang Zhou, so the city should try to mine resources associated with affection, and refine the market to establish the new image of "The City of Love".

(2) Update image localization based on market research

The main purpose of tourism image updating is to promote tourism destination to potential tourists, helping travellers clearer and easier to understand the characteristics and specifics of tourist place, in order to generate tourism motivation and make the potential tourists turned into reality ones. Conducting market research to understand the psychological needs of tourists and their perception of the Tourism Image can provide some realistic basis to location updates. For example, Hong Kong's original positioning image is "Charming Hong Kong, The Vientiane capital". The main purpose of tourism image updating is to promote tourism destination to potential tourists, helping travellers clearer and easier to understand the characteristics and specifics of tourist place, in order to generate tourism motivation and make the potential tourists turned into reality ones. Conducting market research to understand the psychological needs of tourists and their perception of the Tourism Image can provide some realistic basis to location updates. For example, Hong Kong's original positioning image is "Charming Hong Kong, The Vientiane capital". The unique social development of Hong Kong brings the combined East-West culture and varieties of cultural shapes. Its rapid economic development and the state of business center make commercial culture flourish in Hong Kong. Urban economy and appearance change with each passing day, while urban culture together with life acts differently. People spiriting, Hong Kong shows the power and vitality, charm, exciting. Hong Kong sets the Eastern mysterious and Western high lever civilization in one, always attracting tourists through changing and a variety of activities. After a market research, Hong Kong was found as a colourful, full of fresh, creative and energetic city in the hearts of respondents. Therefore, a new image "Energetic capital Hong Kong" is located and designed to replace the original (Du Jang, 2000).

(3) Update image localization according to Humanities, ecological environmental characteristics of the Tourist spots

Tourism Image updates needs considering the positioning of the image of tourism in the human environment and ecological environment, the characteristics of integrated development to meet their own unique image.

California's Location update is a successful case. In tourists' heart, California's image has long been concentrated and reduced to such concept as swimming pool, beach, Golden Gate Bridge, Hollywood, etc. These images continue be used by other scenic spots, so California needs to be

redefined in order to set more distinctive images among tourists. Closely around a new image of "diversity" features in geography, climate, race and culture, California uses a plural name "those Californians" as the position image. Thus, even the least curious people will ask the question "How many Californians in United States"(Li Leilei,1999).

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