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Attractive Model and Marketing Implications of Theme Shopping Tourism Destination

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Abstract: This paper discusses the definition and connotation of Theme Shopping Tourism (TST) destination, and reveals the attractive distance of TST destination based on the utility function derived from the supposed demand function. An attractive model is deduced. According to this attractive model, it is can be known that the attractive distance is related to the price difference of the theme commodities between TST destination and tourist origin place, the average expenditure of transport, the demand elasticity of price, the actual price of sightseeing spot, the critical price that a tourist will afford, the number of nights that a tourist stays on the TST destination and the price level of accommodation in the TST destination. The change mechanism of attractive distance of TST destinations is revealed in this paper, and implications on TST marketing are put forward. First, theme commodities should be luxuries. Second, lower price is the primary pulling factor of theme shopping tourism. Third, the route combining with sightseeing spots is beneficial to shopping tourism. At last, TST development is one way of rejuvenating the falling destinations.

Keywords: theme shopping tourism destination; attractive model; utility function; tourism marketing

1 Introduction

Shopping is the most important part in tourism activities (Kent et al., 1983; Moscardo, 2004). Shopping activities are the most simple and effective methods to understand the culture of destinations during a short tour (Hsieh and Chang, 2006). In developed countries and regions, shopping accounts for above 30% of total tourism cost (Wong and Law, 2003; Luo, 2008). Tourism commodities in China have been lack of change, innovation and culture features (Gao, 2008). In the average level, shopping spending is less than 20% of total tourism expenditure in Chinese mainland (Luo, 2008). However, the situation is changing with more and more famous manufacturing cities and towns becoming outstanding shopping tourism destinations in China, attracting not only business travelers but also shopping tourists, such as Yiwu City and Haining City in Zhejiang Province, which marks the change of shopping's significance from a supplementary element in tourism system to core attractive element.

International researches are more likely involved in shopping tourist behaviors and case studies. There are three major research fields. 1) Tourist shopping behaviors. Many researchers analyzed the behaviors of shopping tourists qualitatively and quantitatively as well as shopping satisfaction level (Heung and Qu, 1998; Wong and Law, 2003; Lehto et al., 2004; Hsieh and Chang, 2004; Choi et al., 2008; Kemperman et al., 2009). 2) shopping markets in shopping tourism. Some researches uncovered the process of a general tourism destination gradually evolving into a successful shopping tourism destination. Yuksel and Yuksel (2007) found quality commodity, environment and safety of shopping markets were key factors in the changing progress. Getz (1993) proposed the planning and developing strategies of shopping tourism city. And 3) shopping significance in shopping tourism. The economic characteristics of shopping tourism destinations attracted more attention. Law and Au (2000) demonstrated the importance of shopping activities in Hong Kong, and forecasted the shopping share in tourism economy.

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Chinese tourism researchers have paid attention to the relationship between shopping and tourism since the 1980s. Most researchers took shopping as a supporting element of tourism activities, emphasizing on tourist shopping value (Tang, 2002; Huang, 2009), and tourist shopping environment system (Shi, 2004; Chen and Huang, 2007). Many researchers have realized that shopping is an attractive element of tourism destination, conducted some case studies on shopping tourism, and gave some countermeasures (Zhu, 2001; Xiao, 2002; Yuan, 2004; Lou, 2006; Zhang, 2007; Hu, 2008; Luo, 2008; Sun and Bao, 2009). Some researchers advocated the development of shopping tourism relying on special industry cluster in the southeastern China, and suggested the concept of shopping-oriented tourism destination (Wang, 2004; Huang, 2010).

Shopping tourism is a special tourism motivated by theme commodities. Shopping tourism destinations can be divided into two groups by the component characteristics of shopping commodities: comprehensive shopping tourism destinations and theme shopping tourism (TST) destinations. TST has become a new phenomenon arising from developed manufacturing industry clusters in the southeastern China, and have 4 main features of manufacturing industry clustering, market scalization, cheap and diverse theme commodities, and professional service for tourists. The development of TST destinations is helpful for the update of manufacturing industry cluster. The development potential of theme shopping tourism destination in China is so great that shopping tourism revenues become new growing point of tourism income. However, the phenomena and generation mechanisms of TST have not been paid enough attention by tourism researchers. This paper discusses theoretically the definition and connotation of TST based on utility function, and explores the attractive distance and the formation mechanism of TST. The establishment and application of an attractive model in this paper can be beneficial to making policies on TST development, and can supply an implication for the cities and towns where TST has not been developed yet.

2 Method

2.1 Fundamental principle

Utility function is a basic method in economics, and is often applied to the researches on welfare, tax and consumer behavior. This paper employs utility function to build the attractive model. Taking geographical distance as an independent variable, the attractive model is more approximating to fact. Theme commodities are the most important factor causing TST activities. This study built up an attractive model of shopping tourism by the price evaluation of shopping commodities of TST. There is commodity price difference between TST destination and tourist origin place. Consumer utility obtained from buying a theme commodity in TST destination is more than that obtained from buying the same commodity in tourist origin place. TST destination can attract tourists by the lower price of theme commodity, supposing that consumers pursue the maximization of utility. Given that demand function is one-dimensional and linear model, a quadratic function can be established based on it. The actual cost of theme commodity is not the same under different conditions, based on which the demand function of tourism products is established. Attractive model under different conditions can be built based on the above hypotheses.

2.2 Basic model of utility function

Demand function (Q_d) of theme shopping commodity is:

$$Q_{\rm d} = Q_{\rm d}(p) \tag{1}$$

where p is the price of theme shopping commodity.

Supposing that the demand function is a linear model, the above function can be changed into:

$$Q_{\rm d} = Q_0 - ep \tag{2}$$

where Q_0 is the demand quantity when the price of commodity is zero, and it is a constant in this equation; e is demand elasticity coefficient of price.

TST destination is the production place, where theme shopping commodity can be priced at below that in sale market. As a result, the price of theme commodity in the TST destination (p_1) is lower than that in tourist origin place (p_0) .

Based on the below utility function:

$$U = \int Q_{\rm d} dp = \int \frac{\delta Q_{\rm d}}{\delta p}$$
 (3)

where U is the consumer utility. When $Q_{\rm d}=0$ and $p=\frac{Q_0}{e}$, the utility function can be expressed as:

$$U = \frac{Q_0^2}{2e} - Q_0 p + \frac{1}{2} e p^2 \tag{4}$$

and

$$\Delta U = U_1 - U_0 = \left[\frac{1}{2} e(p_1 + p_0) - Q_0 \right] (p_1 - p_0)$$
 (5)

where U_1 means the consumer utility obtained from buying commodity in tourist destination, and U_0 means consumer utility obtained from buying commodity in tourist origin place. If $p_1 < p_0$ and $\frac{1}{2}e(p_1 + p_0) < Q_0$, then $U_1 > U_0$.

Equation (5) reveals that consumer utility obtained from buying commodity in tourist destination is more than that from buying it in tourist origin place. The difference of utilities between them is greater, the attractive distance is longer. Here the difference of utilities is controlled by different prices. When the price is fixed, the difference of utilities is related to the demand elasticity of price (e). $\triangle U$ changes with e value. When the theme commodity has a high value of demand elasticity, the attractive distance of TST destination is long.

3 Derivation Steps and Results

3.1 Utility function containing travel cost

The above calculation process shows that theme shopping tourism happens when the difference between p_0 and p_1 is great enough. Tourism is a travel for recreational, leisure or business purposes. The World Tourism Organization defines tourists as people who travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for more than twenty-four hours and not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited. In the real tourism activities, transport is essential and costs much. Transport expenditure should be calculated into the price of commodity. Consequently, a travel cost model is defined:

$$P_t = k m_k D_{\rm b} \tag{6}$$

where P_t is the travel cost (round trip); k is cost coefficient by different means of transport (airplane, railway, ship, bus or car), which is a constant when means of transport are chosen; m_k is transport expenditure per unit distance in definite means of transport; D_b is the double distance from TST destination to tourist origin place.

The cost of transport in one trip is fixed. It can be added to the total cost and the price of the commodity. So the actual price (p_1') that tourists buy theme commodity can be gotten:

$$p_1' = p_1 + \frac{P_t}{Q(p_1')} \tag{7}$$

where $Q(p_1')$ is the amount of theme commodities bought by a tourist. According to Equation (2), $Q(p_1') = Q_0 - ep_1'$, the quadratic equation of p_1' can be derived as below:

$$ep_1'^2 - (ep_1 + Q_0)p_1' + p_1Q_0 + P_t = 0$$
 (8)

When p_1 is fixed, $ep_1 + Q_0$ and p_1Q_0 are constant, they can be set as $M(p_1)$ and $N(p_1)$. p_1' is expressed as:

$$p_{1}' = \frac{M(p_{1}) \pm \sqrt{[M(p_{1})]^{2} - 4e[N(p_{1}) + P_{t}]}}{2e}$$
(9)

when $p_1' = p_0$, the value of consumer utility from buying the commodities in destinations equals to that from buying them in tourist origin place. There is no need for consumers to travel to tourism destination for buying this commodity.

When travel cost is considered, demand quantity decreases with the rise of actual price. Under the condition of $\triangle U = 0$, the equation below can be established:

$$p_0 = \frac{M(p_1, Q_0) \pm \sqrt{M(p_1, Q_0)^2 - 4e[N(p_1, Q_0) + P_t]}}{2e} \quad (10)$$

As a result:

$$D_{c} = \frac{P_{t}}{2km_{k}} = \frac{(p_{1} - p_{0})(ep_{0} - Q_{0})}{2km_{k}}$$

$$ep_{0} < Q_{0}; p_{1} < p_{0}$$
(11)

where D_c is the critical distance within which the TST destination can attracts shopping tourists. If a distance is over that critical distance, the travel cost is too much, then the tourism destination can not attract tourists. Equation (11) illustrates that p_0 , p_1 and e are contributing factors to D_c .

3.2 Influences of other tourism products in TST destination

Attractions of TST destinations include not only theme commodities but also sightseeing spots, activities, events, and festivals. The attractive distance can be calculated by Equation (11) when a tourist only buys theme commodities. However, visiting scenic spots can enlarge the total utility. The attractive distance becomes bigger under the condition that there are sightseeing spots. Attractive model containing sightseeing spots can be built up.

3.2.1 No accommodation expenditure

In the travel without accommodation cost, the expenditure includes the cost of theme commodities, the cost of transport and the cost of spot tickets. Sightseeing spot is a special product which a tourist buys only once. So, the sum of producer surplus and consumer surplus is fixed. Thus, if the price of the ticket is higher, the utility is lower, and if the ticket is too expensive, the tourist will not buy the sightseeing spot ticket. However, the ticket price is not so expensive in reality. The theme commodities demand (Q_{ss}) function of sightseeing spot is:

$$Q_{ss} = 1 (p_{fact} \le p_{psychology})$$

$$Q_{ss} = 0 (p_{fact} > p_{psychology}) (12)$$

where p_{fact} is the ticket price of sightseeing spot; $p_{\text{psychology}}$ is the critical price that the consumer can afford.

Then the tourist utility from buying other tourism products, i. e. the experience of visiting scenic spots, is:

$$U_{\text{fact}} = p_{\text{psychology}} - p_{\text{fact}} \tag{13}$$

The total utility that a tourist buys all of the products is:

$$TU_{\text{all}} = U_{\text{fact}} + U_{1}(p_{1})$$

 $TU_{\text{all}} = U_{\text{fact}} + U_{1}'(p_{1} + c_{t})$ (14)

where U_1 is the utility when a tourist buys the theme commodities at the price of p_1 ; U_1' is the utility when a tourist buys the theme commodity at the price of p_1 plus the travel cost c_1 .

The difference between the utility that a tourist buys all tourist products in TST destination and that a tourist only buys the theme commodity in tourist origin place is:

$$\triangle TU_{\text{all}} = U_{\text{fact}} + \triangle U' \ge 0$$
 (15)

where $\triangle U'$ is the surplus utility, which is the tourist utility difference from buying the same commodities between TST destination and tourist origin place under the condition that transport cost is calculated.

Shopping is the major pulling factor, and travel cost is brought about by the shopping behavior, thus, it should be calculated into the expenditure of shopping activity. The surplus utility that a tourist buys theme commodities should be greater than the utility that a tourist buys the experience of visiting scenic spots. So,

$$U_{\text{fact}} \le \triangle U'$$
 (16)

According to Equation (5):

$$p_{\text{psychology}} - p_{\text{fact}} \le -p_1' Q_0 + \frac{1}{2} e p_1'^2 + p_0 Q_0 - \frac{1}{2} e p_0^2$$
 (17)

Theme shopping tourism happens when the utility from buying theme commodity in tourism destination is greater than the utility from buying the same product in tourist origin place. However, when there is another tourist product, the utility of a tourist buys the experience of sightseeing can equals to the travel cost, and shopping tourism activities may take place. Under this condition, the equation below can be deduced:

$$U_{\text{fact}} = p_{\text{psychology}} - p_{\text{fact}} = P_t$$
 (18)

According to constraint conditions (16) (17) (18), it can be known:

$$-\triangle U' \le P_t \le \triangle U' \tag{19}$$

Finally, the attractive distance model can be calculated. And it is a quartic equation with p_1 , p_0 as independent variables as Equation (20). To simplify it, some complicated equations are set as X, Y and Z.

$$D(p_1, p_0) < \frac{\left| -Y + \sqrt{Y^2 - 144e^2U} \right|}{144e^2km_k}$$
 (20)

$$X(p_0, p_1) = e^2 p_1^2 - 2eQ_0 p_1 - 2e^2 p_0^2 + 2Q_0 - Q_0^2$$

$$Y(p_0, p_1) = 4e^2 p_1 - 4eQ_0 - 12eX$$

$$Z(p_0, p_1) = -4e^4 p_1^4 + (4e^2 Q_0 + 2e^2 Q_0^2) p_1^2 + (X^2 - 4eQ_0^2 p_1 - Q_0^4)$$

However, it is too complicated to use. There is another way to calculate the attractive distance when there is a sightseeing spot. According to Constraint (18), a simple model can be deduced. There are new independent variables—the actual price of ticket ($p_{\rm fact}$) and the critical price of ticket ($p_{\rm psychology}$) that a tourist will afford. The equation is:

$$D(p_{\text{psychology}}, p_{\text{fact}}) \le \frac{p_{\text{psychology}} - p_{\text{fact}}}{2km_k}$$
 (21)

According to Equation (21), the utility of sightseeing product is greater, then the attractive distance is bigger. In fact, the utility of sightseeing product is related to the price of ticket and the critical price that a tourist will afford. Furthermore, the critical price is related to a tourist's dispensable income. The maximum distance is $\frac{p_{\rm psychology} - p_{\rm fact}}{2km_b}.$

3.2.2 Considering accommodation expenditure

Supposed that there are several sightseeing spots, a tourist will spend and several nights in a TST destination. Under this condition, the attractive distance can be known according to Equation (21):

$$D(p_{\text{psychology}}, p_{\text{fact}}, N, C) \ll \frac{n(p_{\text{psychology}} - p_{\text{fact}}) - NC}{2km_k}$$
(2)

where N is the number of nights that a tourist will spend in the TST destination; C is accommodation expenditure per night; n is the number of sightseeing spots that a tourist will visit.

4 Marketing Implications

4.1 Luxurious theme commodities

According to the theory of demand elasticity of price, the demand elasticity of luxurious goods, like gold ware, cosmetics, fashion clothes and handicraft is bigger. The precondition for a place to develop shopping tourism is that theme commodities should be luxuries rather than those used every day. Results of some survey have coincided with the conclusion that cosmetics and gold jewelry are the most common commodities that tourists from Chinese Mainland buy in Hong Kong (Luo, 2008). Jewelry is more popular than clothes and home textile in Yiwu (Wang, 2004). The southeastern China has many famous commodity markets, such as Small Commodity Market in Yiwu City, Textile Market in Shaoxing City and Leather Market in Haining City. However, only a few commodity markets attract shopping tourists, and most of them are not TST destinations. A survey of tourists in Shaoxing City by the authors in 2008 showed that more than 55% of them were for business rather than for tourism[©]. The Textile Market of Shaoxing provides primary products which are cheap and necessary for living, but cannot attract tourists. Thus, commodities should be promoted for Shaoxing to develop shopping tourism. Fashion clothes and famous brands are right ways for the TST development in Shaoxing.

4.2 Lower price

Equation (5) indicates that low price is the primary pulling factor of theme shopping tourism. The theme commodity in TST destination should be priced much lower than that in tourist origin place in order to attract tourists effectively. To enlarge the amount of tourists buying theme commodities, the price difference should be large enough. However, many commodity markets have not shown the price ad-

vantage because those commodities are for wholesale, not for retailing. So local government administrators, where sellers pay less attention to tourists, need to solve the problem so as to develop shopping tourism in those markets. To keep the price attraction, TST destinations may open convenient professional retailing markets for tourists.

4.3 Mixed route of sightseeing and shopping tourism

It is an experience to bring about unusual selling point of tourism product. The tourist experience through purchasing tourism product may come from several activities, such as sightseeing, shopping and entertainment. Sightseeing spots is beneficial to the development of shopping tourism. Leather Market in Haining City is designed for the purpose of attracting tourists, and cultural elements and scenic spots are integrated into the design process to keep tourist utility maximization. The website of Tourism Distribution Center in Hangzhou shows that tour route of Leather Market of Haining includes some sightseeing spots, such as Xitang Old Town and Qiantang Tide Park. These mixed routes are more popular than the separate sightseeing routes or shopping routes. So, it is essential to develop some sightseeing sites and entertainment activities to attract more tourists in TST destinations.

4.4 TST development activating stagnation destinations

According to the Life-cycle Theory, a destination will experience exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, recession or recovery. Many sight-seeing spots have been in the stagnation stage or in the recession stage. It is very imposing for local governments to regenerate these falling destinations. The development of TST can make old sightseeing destinations get rid of difficulty. In marketing practice, TST development should be accepted as a new way for destination rejuvenation.

5 Conclusions and Discussion

Theme shopping tourism is an activity that tourists buy theme commodities produced in tourist destinations. Theme shopping tourist destinations grow from those cities and towns with world-famous manufacturing cluster and professional commodity exchange markets. Several factors can be found through the process of model derivation. The attractive distance is related to the price dif-

① Liu Jiaming, 2009. Master planning of tourism development in Shaoxing County, Zhejiang Province. 20-25. (in Chinese)

ference of the theme commodities between TST destination and tourist origin place $(p_1 - p_0)$, the average expenditure of transport (km_k) , the demand elasticity of price (e), the actual price of sightseeing spot (p_{fact}) , the critical price that a tourist will afford ($p_{psychology}$), the number of nights that a tourist stays on the TST destination (N) and the price level of accommodation in the TST destination (C). So, the following measures can help to extend the attractive distance of TST destination: 1) to develop cheaper transport means (for tourists); 2) to minimize duration of stay (for tourists); 3) to decrease retail price of theme commodity; 4) to improve the quality and brand of theme commodity; 5) to set the ticket price of sightseeing spots at lower level in TST destination; and 6) to set the accommodation price at lower level in TST destination.

Some important marketing implications of attractive model for tourism destination are concluded as the following aspects. First, theme commodities should be luxuries. Second, lower price is the primary pulling factor of theme shopping tourism. Third, the route combining with is beneficial to shopping tourism. At last, TST development is one way of rejuvenating the falling destinations.

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