

Inbound Tourism Promotion Strategy of Hainan International Tourism Consumption Center Based on Comparison of Experience in Hongkong, Singapore and Dubai

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ABSTRACT

The strategic positioning of Hainan as an international tourism consumption center proposed by China in 2018 requires higher for the development of inbound tourism there. However, its development has been undermined by such unfavorable factors as volatile market, competition from neighboring countries and weak price competitiveness since 2008. In view of this situation, this paper, by defining international tourism consumption center, describing the development status of inbound tourism, and summarizing the experience of inbound tourism in Hong Kong, Singapore, Dubai and other places, proposes development insight for inbound tourism from product, policy, marketing strategy and other aspects.

Keywords: international tourism consumption center, inbound tourism, comparison of international experience

I. INTRODUCTION

The international tourism consumption center, a policy concept, derives from China's strategic deployment of Hainan in 2018. It serves as a support for the construction of Hainan pilot free trade zone and the exploration and establishment of a free trade port with Chinese characteristics, and also a key element in the strategic development positioning of "three zones and one center (the pilot zone for comprehensively deepening reform and opening up, the national pilot zone for ecological civilization, the guarantee zone for national key strategic service and the international tourism consumption center)" of Hainan pilot free trade zone (port). Among them, "internationalization" is an important feature of the construction of international tourism consumption center, while inbound tourism is the best embodiment of internationalization. According to the Hainan statistical yearbook, the inbound tourism market has fluctuated greatly since 2009, when the strategy of Hainan international tourism island was proposed, and the proportion of overseas tourists is far lower than that of similar island destinations in the world. The inbound tourism in Hainan is mired in the issues of obvious seasonal variation and market downturn, so the pursuit of ways to promote inbound

tourism is of great importance. Therefore, based on the interpretation of international tourism consumption center and the comparison of international experience in Hong Kong, Singapore, Dubai, etc., this paper proposes promotion strategy of inbound tourism for Hainan international tourism consumption center in a bid to offer policy suggestions for the construction of Hainan free trade port.

II. CONSTRUCTION CONNOTATION OF HAINAN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM CONSUMPTION CENTER

Given the strategic positioning of international tourism consumption center in Hainan free trade port, the understanding of its connotation can be discussed from three aspects: market positioning theory, semantic structure and construction objective.

Firstly, according to the market positioning theory, strategic positioning is a strategic move that wins unique and valuable position in the mind of target customers through the design of enterprise products. The international tourism consumption center, which occupies a strategic position in Hainan pilot free trade zone, should design tourism products and consumption-related elements to obtain a unique and valuable position in the minds of Chinese and foreign tourists, and to distinguish it from other Chinese provinces,

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cities and autonomous regions, as well as other pilot free trade zones such as Shanghai and Guangdong.

Secondly, the international tourism consumption center should cover four keywords: "international", "tourism", "consumption" and "center" semantically. Among them, the understanding of "international" covers two perspectives. "International" in terms of tourism includes outbound tourism and inbound tourism, but mainly inbound tourism considering tourism destination. From the perspective of construction, "international" mainly refers to the degree of internationalization, which measures the internationalization of the construction standards of tourist destinations. "Tourism" and "consumption" cover the consumption of global tourists in "food, accommodation, travel, shopping and entertainment". "Center" is a regional concept meaning regional status, that is, the agglomeration effect exhibited by Hainan in the tourism consumption field within a certain region. Policy concepts and strategic positioning reveal that it mainly refers to the territory of China. Therefore, according to the semantic deconstruction, Hainan international tourism consumption center refers to the tourism destination with the agglomeration effect of international tourism consumption and the international construction standard in China.

As for the construction target, the *Implementation Plan for the Establishment of Hainan International Tourism Consumption Center* says that international tourism consumption center is designed to be an international tourism consumption resort with rich industries, brand clusters, comfortable environment, distinctive features and good ecology. Therefore, the construction of international tourism consumption center can be divided into three parts as for goals:

industrial development goal, consumption development goal and eco-development goal. The development goal of tourism includes four parts: industry, tourists and supporting system, and the consumption development goal covers three arms: brand, shopping and consumption environment.

Comprehensive analysis of theory, semantics, and goals makes clear that Hainan international tourism consumption center is to design and develop tourism products and consumption-related elements to attract tourists from China and foreign countries against the construction framework of pilot free trade zone (port) and based on local tourism resources, in a bid to become a tourism destination with international tourism consumption agglomeration effect and international construction standard in China.

III. DEVELOPMENT STATUS OF INBOUND TOURISM IN HAINAN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM CONSUMPTION CENTER

From the perspective of tourism data, Russia, Republic of Korea and Japan are the three major source countries of inbound tourism in Hainan. However, the data of inbound tourism has fluctuated significantly since 2008, and data on inbound tourism from developed countries such as Republic of Korea, Japan, Germany and the UK have shown a downward trend over the past 11 years (See "Table I"). In addition, the development of inbound tourism is overly dependent on tourism intermediaries, especially travel agencies from the source countries, whose package tourism products often win with low profit due to the price. Some routes require large subsidies from the government to finish with poor sustainability.

TABLE I. NUMBER OF INBOUND TOURISTS FROM MAIN SOURCE COUNTRIES OF HAINAN PROVINCE FROM 2008 TO 2018 (UNIT: NUMBER OF TOURISTS)

Country Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Russia	174537	79723	148411	227557	191960	124888	93319	37446	80956	284021	255759
Republic of Korea	127126	23807	31737	26223	16053	27357	18245	38495	64138	91580	94964
Japan	36704	27481	24786	21340	16969	11009	9929	10004	9284	10331	10873
Malaysia	33167	21625	27544	22202	26624	25589	22399	18313	48877	67490	59827
Singapore	34007	27820	47555	59082	69446	44790	39601	33954	36224	36982	38344
the US	21949	16567	22375	28582	21137	23190	22791	23162	26599	29091	32309
Germany	13479	12010	17127	15484	10438	10378	9548	9610	10024	9486	10572
Britain	10421	7065	6379	8359	5722	6608	6906	6699	6504	7326	8162
Australia	7009	6069	7327	8592	6871	7685	8033	7266	7568	8681	16562
French	6986	6542	8138	8292	6216	6347	5495	5622	6437	6518	6995
Canada	6660	5719	7930	9254	7246	9278	9072	8831	9889	10573	10529
Thailand	5604	3320	5051	6185	7293	7104	5467	8037	12956	15371	18495

^a. Source: Tourism Statistics of Hainan Provincial Culture, Radio, Television, Tourism and Sports Bureau's official website http://lwt.hainan.gov.cn/xxgk_55333/lytj/2020data

Given such constraints as the competition of tourists from neighboring countries, weak price competitiveness, variation of tourism environment and

natural environment, Hainan international tourism suffers from two prominent weaknesses: market downturn and tourism seasonality. (Chen Yun, Tian

Liang, 2013; Zhou Yilong, Zhong Xiaodong, 2016) [1] [2] Despite China's proposal on international tourism island strategy in 2009, Hainan has not yet been effectively promoted in tourism source market, the internationalization level of tourism economy, and development of open environment and high-quality tourism attractions. Fortunately, the departure tax refund policy there has significantly increased the number of inbound tourists. Population size, economic development, as well as the geographical and cultural distance from source countries to Hainan also contribute a lot. However, the reception capacity and product supply of Hainan as a destination have little impact on the number of inbound tourists. (Zhang Yingwu, Zhao Wenhua, 2018) [4] Generally, Hainan is still in its infancy of tourism internationalization, with advantages in resources, facilities and policies, and disadvantages in market, environmental governance, information service and service quality. (Fu Yeqin, Chen Xuejun, 2019) [5] In doing so, it also encounters the problem of "scissors difference" between tourism infrastructure and tourism attractions in its international development path. (Xie Yanjun et al., 2019) [6]

IV. DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE OF HONG KONG, SINGAPORE AND DUBAI FREE TRADE PORTS ON INTERNATIONAL TOURISM CONSUMPTION

Although the concept of international tourism consumption center is proposed for the first time in China and foreign countries, the experience of some well-known free trade ports in international tourism consumption construction is still worthy of reference, such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Dubai and other regions. Hong Kong's inbound tourism revenue was \$4.854 billion in 2017, while Hainan's was about 16 percent of Hong Kong's in the same period, according to statistics from the World Tourism Organization. The number of international tourists in Singapore in 2018 reached 18.51 million, while Hainan was about 6.8% of Singapore in the same period. For the third year in a row, Dubai topped MasterCard Global Destination Cities Index for international overnight visitors spending in 2018. Therefore, the construction of Hainan international tourism consumption center has a long way to go. The comparison of the international tourism consumption development experience of Hong Kong, Singapore, Dubai and Hainan shows their unique advantages in four aspects.

A. *The local characteristics and cultural characteristics of tourism products are prominent*

Due to the similarity of tourism destination resources, the tourism products of Hong Kong and Singapore are concentrated in four areas: sightseeing, food, shopping and cruise. Tourism products include

city blocks, themed attractions, festival activities, culture and art, etc. The main advantages are obvious features of urban regional function planning, detailed development and classification of tourist spots, abundant number and types of festival activities, great influence, strong cultural and artistic atmosphere, and sufficient exploration of tourist demand to provide tourism products that meet various market segments. The design of tourism products in Dubai bears strong local natural and cultural characteristics, especially in adventure tourism, nature tourism and sports tourism, including desert exploration, parachuting, sailing and water sports, polo, hawk training, equestrian and other tourism products combined with local resources characteristics.

In comparison, Hainan boasts obvious advantages in terms of area, regional characteristics, and natural resources. It has 56 A-level scenic spots, 384 travel agencies, 38 golf venues, 897 3-level hotels and above, and 106 rural tourism spots. Ten tourism themes including marine tourism, fitness tourism, recreational & sports tourism, exhibition tourism, rural tourism, and forest tourism were introduced. There are also abundant tourism facilities and resources, and a wide range of tourism products. However, the products are obviously lagging behind in characteristics and quality, and the development of cultural tourism resources is insufficient, which is unfavorable for attracting international tourists.

B. *Well-established policies to promote shopping and excellent external conditions*

Convenient shopping is a distinctive feature of the free trade port compared with other tourist destinations. Taking Hong Kong as an example. Due to its long-term free trade policy, it enjoys no trade barriers and simple import and export procedures. All goods except alcohol, tobacco and cigarettes, hydrocarbon oil and methanol can enjoy zero tariff, which makes it more competitive in price. A wide variety of goods, including electronics, fashion, beauty, jewelry, watches and traditional crafts and other categories of international brands, forming a clustering effect. Shopping areas there are widely distributed, including 11 shopping areas, more than 40 large malls and department stores, as well as open-air bazaars and shopping streets. In addition, tourism souvenirs and other cultural and creative products developed based on local cultural resources have obvious characteristics. Therefore, duty-free policy, commodity characteristics and quality, shopping places allow tourists to make shopping conveniently.

C. *The construction of consumption environment featuring quality assurance and intelligent service*

Shopping at ease and convenience is the necessary guarantee for Hong Kong, Singapore and Dubai to promote international tourism consumption. Both Hong Kong and Singapore have taken measures to regulate and improve the experience of visitors: Quality Tourism Service launched by Hong Kong Tourism Board, and the Singapore tourism awards developed by the Singapore Tourism Board in collaboration with TripAdvisor. Detailed travel and shopping handbook, "refund guarantee scheme for shopping", complaints hotline and so on were also launched to protect consumers' rights and interests. Convenience shopping features intelligent services. Places like Hong Kong, Singapore, Dubai offer a variety of official apps for tourists to download, which provide them with more detailed destination information, improve the quality of tourism experience, and enhance their connections of tourists to the destinations and enhance their loyalty.

D. *Advanced governance of tourism destination and global approach to brand marketing*

The building of brand image with global vision and characteristics is an important strategy to attract tourists. Organizations such as Hong Kong Tourism Board, Singapore Tourism Board are mainly responsible for destination marketing rather than administration, setting up beaches around the world and in major tourist areas to carry out marketing activities. For example, Hong Kong Tourism Board is tasked with promoting Hong Kong worldwide as a leading international city in Asia and a world-class tourist destination. The destination brand of Best of All. It's in Hong Kong was introduced to cover brand DNA of wonderfulness, charming contrast, multi-dimensional concept, and cutting-edge trend. It also optimizes visitors' experience in Hong Kong by enhancing the contribution of tourism industry to Hong Kong, improving tourism facilities and providing guarantee for tourists.

V. STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE INBOUND TOURISM IN HAINAN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM CONSUMPTION CENTER

A. *Highlighting the development of multi-category tourism products with characteristic quality, cultural resources and international standards*

1) *Comprehensive planning and sorting of Hainan's tourism resources to highlight the characteristics and quality of tourism products:* Given its abundant natural resources, when developing tourism products, Hainan should conduct a comprehensive review and evaluation of tourism resources, market potential and

environmental carrying capacity, underline highlights, features, and coordinative exploration among unified planning, classify and rate products in accordance with international standards in a bid to form a high-quality tourism product system that satisfies the demands of various market segments.

2) *In-depth exploration of the island's cultural tourism resources to enhance its cultural atmosphere:* Compared with other similar tourism destinations, Hainan has a serious shortage in the development of cultural tourism resources. Cultural tourism resources falls into two camps: traditional humanities and emerging humanities. The former include Li and Miao cultures, demotion culture, Dankas culture, red culture etc., while the latter cover cultural creativity, art block and other lately regeneration culture. Therefore, on the one hand, it is necessary to carry out in-depth development of traditional cultural resources, enrich the types of tourism products, and improve tourists' experience of local culture. On the other hand, platform and policy incentives should be launched to attract professionals in humanities and arts to Hainan for cultural and creative practice, and art creation, thus forming a strong cultural and artistic atmosphere.

3) *Strengthening the cultivation of new consumer tourism products to speed its global path:* The business environment should be optimized to introduce international excellent emerging tourism consumer brands, encourage SMEs to expand portfolio in emerging consumption field, and tourism colleges in the island to culture professionals related to the emerging consumption through policy incentives. It is also necessary to develop emerging tourism products and establish entry system in accordance with international standards and perspectives, so as to strengthen the cultivation of new tourism consumer products such as low-level tourism, marine tourism, adventure tourism, RV tourism and so on.

B. *Promoting the tourism and shopping competitiveness in Hainan by simplifying policies, enriching places and gathering brands*

1) *The duty-free shopping policy has been further liberalized and simplified to enrich the product categories and brands:* The amount of tax-free shopping can be further improved, the tax-free shopping policy can be simplified from offline shopping to online-offline strategy, and tax-free shopping can be covered to the analysis of overseas shopping demands of tourists, so as to attract more high-end consumption. Various policies are adopted to encourage global excellent brands to set up outlets in Hainan, being a fashion-trend leader around the world.

The management of commodity import channels should be optimized, and sales period should be created according to the change of tourist flow to attract tourists to come to Hainan for shopping during the off-season.

2) *Reasonable planning of various shopping venues to improve the quality and characteristics of shopping environment:* Duty-free shops, shopping areas, shopping centers, local markets, open-air bazaars and other shopping places with different characteristics and offering different products should be formed through overall planning. Shopping places should have a richer variety of goods. Through policy incentives as reduced land occupancy charge, merchants are encouraged to make discounts to create a shopping atmosphere and ensure the consumption competitiveness of Hainan as an international tourism consumption center, so as to realize the agglomeration effect of regional tourism consumption.

C. *Creating high-quality tourism consumption environment through enterprise evaluation, quality supervision, and intelligent services*

1) *Developing plans for improvement of tourism services to ensure the quality of visitor experience:* The high-level and quality tourism experience guarantees the construction of international tourism consumption center. The marketing agencies in destination should strengthen the evaluation and supervision of tourism enterprises, and ensure the quality of tourists' experience by means of quality tourism service plan, blacklist of tourism services, promotion information of destination companies, service hotline, service center, etc.

2) *Improving intelligent tourism service to increase revisit rate:* The development of official websites, official apps and official tourism tools of tourist destinations should be consistent with international standards, and the service agencies of tourist attractions, hotels and transportation should be encouraged to employ intelligent service tools, in a bid to promote the intelligent level of Hainan international tourism consumption center and comprehensively improve the satisfaction and loyalty of tourists inside and outside China.

D. *Comprehensively enhancing Hainan's tourism image through hospitality culture, marketing update and international cooperation*

1) *Hospitality culture should be cultivated in tourist destinations to enhance the overall well-being of residents and visitors:* The existing free trade ports are all developed economies whose residents enjoy high living standards. These economies have more spending

power and benefit less from tourism. Therefore, the tourism planning and development of Hainan should not only consider the needs of tourists, but also the well-being of local people. Only when the local culture and living space are large enough can the attractive destination culture be shaped. Local hospitality should be improved, creating a virtuous circle that boosts the overall well-being of residents and visitors.

2) *Reshaping the marketing methods of tourism destination to enhance Hainan's image as international tourism brand:* The collection and development of tourism resources and benchmark tourism products are conducive to shaping brand image of tourism destinations with obvious local characteristics and differentiated from similar tourism destinations inside and outside China. Hainan's image as international tourism consumption center should be promoted globally through various channels including traditional advertising, large-scale events, new media to realize its distinctive strategic positioning of Hainan pilot free trade zone.

3) *Strengthening cooperation with countries along the Belt and Road to restore its strategic position:* Regional tourism integration should be gradually realized by cooperating with countries along the Belt and Road in tourism products development and tourists sharing. Exchange of experience in tourism resource evaluation, tourism product development, consumer environment construction and destination marketing with countries along the Belt and Road should be realized through common platform, in a bid to become major players in regional tourism, and reshape Hainan's strategic role in "Maritime Silk Road".

VI. CONCLUSION

Inbound tourism, embodying the characteristics of "internationalization" in the construction of international tourism consumption center, should be analyzed from two branches as for development: supply and demand because of the mismatch between supply and demand. By comparing the development of inbound tourism in Hong Kong, Singapore and Dubai with that in Hainan, it's obvious that Hainan's top priority is to improve the quality of tourism products, further liberalize policy limits on tourism and shopping, and comprehensively better its image as a tourist destination. What's more, the overall increase of inbound tourism requires the joint efforts of product, policy and marketing.

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