

Start-up Goals of Agritainment Proprietors in the Periphery of Wuhan, Chengdu and Shanghai*

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Abstract - On the basis of survey into the start-up goals of Agritainment Proprietors in the suburbs of Wuhan, Chengdu and Shanghai and comparative analysis of relevant results, conclusions were reached that the start-up goals of Agritainment Proprietors in the suburbs of above three cities share the common traits of rural tourism at the very beginning, such as strong inclination of life in the countryside, more care about short-haul economic goals and social goals but care less about long-haul economic goals and self realization.

Index Terms - agritainment, proprietors, start-up goals, empirical study

1. Introduction

Agritainment is one special kind of rural tourism worldwide which highlights entertainments on the farms. Rural tourism originated in Europe in the 19th century(Wenchang Sun,2001)^[1]. Modern rural tourism in China dates back to 1987 when a farmer named Jiyuan Xu in Nongke Village of Pixian county from Chengdu City of Sichuan Province first successfully treated tourists from Chengdu City(Guihua Yang, Xiuhong Wang,2006)^[2]. Due to villagers' ambitions to become rich and government's policies and funds, rural tourism in China developed rapidly, but studies abroad show that rural tourism have a limited role to help agritainment proprietors to get rich.

A. Rural tourism and start-up goals

There is no agreement on the definition of rural tourism abroad and in China. A typical definition, however, was given by EU and OECD, which says that rural tourism refers to tourist activities occurring in the countryside, and in which rurality is further regarded as the overall core and selling point of rural tourism (Oppermann. M,1996)^[3].

Rural tourism in this article refers to tourism taking place in the countryside and taking natural and human landscape in the countryside as attractions, in which two aspects must be included, that is, the countryside background, and natural landscape or human attractions.

Start-up goals, the goals pursued by rural tourism proprietors at the very beginning of their business, mainly include *lifestyle, money, social life and self-reliance*. For the convenience of analysis, the above four recessive goals were further divided into eleven dominant goals. Proprietors

finished filling out the questionnaire by choosing each most proper one from the five choices of each dominant goal with different approval degrees from *absolutely agree, agree, hard to say, don't agree to not agree at all* (evaluation marked as 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 in turn). In the end, related conclusion about rural tourism proprietors' start-up goals was reached through the analysis of the results of the eleven dominant goals belonging to the four recessive goals. The start-up goals in this article were designed by modifying Donald Getz and Jack Carlsen's design of rural tourism proprietors' goals in Australia(Donald Getz, Jack Carlsen,2000)^[4].

B. Research method

Literature study method, fieldwork method and related analysis methods were combined in this article. Literature study method was applied during the preparatory stage of this article, by which start-up goals of Chinese rural tourism proprietors was found to be untouched, and the questionnaire was designed by modifying related questionnaire design abroad. First-hand data were obtained through fieldwork.

C. Sample choice and field work

Direct investigation was applied in this method, that is, to investigate and interview certain representative proprietors by observation, interview and free discussion .

The first part of the questionnaire is concerned with demographical characteristics of rural tourism proprietors, which include such items as sex, age, marital status, respective city and resident status. The second part includes the four implicit start-up goals of rural tourism proprietors – *lifestyle, money, social life and self-reliance*, which are further divided into eleven explicit goals ,that is, “*to be able to keep our family together*”, “*to live in rural environment we like*”, “*to satisfy our leisure interests*”, “*to enjoy a lifestyle we like (lifestyle)*”; “*to keep agritainments as family property*”, “*to earn much money*”, “*to earn retirement income (money)*”; “*to get acquainted with more interesting people (social life)*”; “*to gain reputation and popularity by running the business*”, “*to be a boss*”and “*to be economically independent (self-reliance)*”.

Shanghai, Chengdu and Wuhan, whose rural tourism develop rapidly in recent years, lie in the east, middle and west part of China respectively, so they are geographically

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representative. Qianwei Village and Yingdong Village in Shanghai, Mount Mulan and Cihui Farm in Wuhan, and “Five Golden Flowers” in Sansheng Town, Chengdu were selected as sample spots for empirical study.

On March 4th, 2006, an empirical investigation was carried on into Mount Mulan and Cihui Farm around Wuhan City and 40 copies of questionnaire were obtained. On March 9, an investigation was conducted into Yingdong Village of Chenjia Town and Qianwei Village of Shuxin Town in Chongming Island and 50 copies of questionnaire were collected. On March 14th and March 15th, an investigation was carried out into “Five Golden Flowers” in Sansheng Town in the suburbs of Chengdu City and 50 copies of questionnaire were acquired. In these investigations, 140 copies of questionnaire were distributed, 140 copies collected, 136 copies effective, the effectiveness being 97.14%.

D. Thinking of the research

Analysis of proprietors’ start-up goals in above three cities includes two parts, that is, overall analysis and comparative analysis. The synthesis of the above two parts constitutes the research of this article.

Proprietors’ approval degree is the degree of agreement to each dominant start-up goal. Proprietors’ approval percentage is the total proportion of the proprietors who agree and absolutely agree to each dominant start-up goals. The agreement degree of dominant start-up goals are divided into absolutely- agree, agree, hard- to -say, disagree, not- agree- at- all with the evaluation value of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 in turn. Each proprietor chooses only one that he or she thinks is most proper from the five choices. The mean value of all the evaluation values of the agreement degree to each dominant goal is the approval degree towards this dominant goal. The total proportion of the proprietors who agree and absolutely agree to each dominant start-up goals is the approval percentage of this dominant goal. Suppose the number of the proprietors agreeing to the above five choices to be a_1 , a_2 , a_3 , a_4 and a_5 in turn, proprietors’ approval degree towards the start-up goals will be $(5a_1+4a_2+3a_3+2a_4+a_5) / (a_1+a_2+a_3+a_4+a_5)$, and the approval percentage will be $[(a_1+a_2) / (a_1+a_2+a_3+a_4+a_5)] \times 100\%$.

2. Overall analysis

A. Implicit start-up goals

The approval degrees and percentages of the four implicit goals –*lifestyle*, *money*, *social life* and *self-reliance* – are 4.085, 3.927, 4.160, 3.717 and 77.7%, 72.6%, 80.9%, 62.8% respectively. High approval degree and approval percentage show proprietors’ overall approval of the start-up goals in rural tourism.

The mean approval degree of *lifestyle* (4.085) and its mean approval percentage (77.7%) are higher than those of *money* (3.927, 72.6%) and those of *self-reliance* (3.717, 62.8%), which indicates that to profit from rural tourism to realize economic independence is based on the proprietors’ fondness for rural life. High mean approval degree (4.160) and

high mean percentage (80.9%) in the goal *to get acquainted with more interesting people (social life)* show that proprietors have rather strong motivation for social life while managing their agritainments.

B. Explicit start-up goals

Except that rural tourism proprietors in the three cities have low approval percentage and low approval degree in the goal *to be a boss* (47.0%, 3.21), the approval percentages and degrees of the other ten explicit goals are all higher than 60% and 3.60, which further enhanced rural tourism proprietors’ overall approval of the start-up goals.

Proprietors’ lowest mean approval percentage of explicit start-up goals is *to be a boss* (47.0%), and the highest (88.2%) is *to live in rural environment we like*, the disparity amounting to 41.2%; the lowest mean approval degree is 3.21 (*to be a boss*), and the highest is 4.40 (*to live in rural environment we like*), the disparity amounting to 1.19. The big gap between the two groups of data combined with high approval percentage and degree in the goal *to earn much money (money)* (76.5%, 4.03), in the goal *to earn retirement income* (69.1%, 3.79), in the goal *to take agritainments as family property* (72.1%, 3.96) and in the goal *to get acquainted with more interesting people* (60.3%, 3.65), fully demonstrated the characteristics of rural tourism in the three cities in its initial stage, namely, being sentimentally attached to country life, too much concern about economic benefit but insufficient concern about self achievement.

The above shows that rural tourism proprietors in the three cities take positive attitude to the start-up goals. Strong attachment to rural life, too much concern about economic goals while insufficient concern about self achievement, and strong motivation for social life demonstrated the characteristics of rural tourism in its initial stage. The reasons why proprietors start agritainments are mainly to make money, to get to know more people, and to be economically independent.

3. Comparative analysis Among three cities

A. Lifestyle

The *lifestyle* goal is the most explicit one among the four implicit start-up goals in the three cities. The mean approval degrees *to live in rural environment we like* and *to enjoy a lifestyle we like* are 4.40 and 4.22, the mean approval percentage coming up to 88.2% and 85.3% respectively, which indicates that most proprietors start their agritainments because they like rural environment and rural life. The mean approval degree of another goal of *lifestyle*, *to satisfy our leisure interests*, is 4.04, and the mean approval percentage 73.6%, which shows that most proprietors take their interests and hobbies into consideration when starting the business. There is little approval of the goal *to keep my family together* with the percentage of a little more than 60%, while 23.5% proprietors takes negative attitude to that goal. Besides, the approval degree is only 3.68. On the one hand, this reflects proprietors’ lack of knowledge about rural tourism when it is

at its early stage. On the other hand, this shows that at the beginning, the scale of rural tourism is not large enough, its operation has not fulfil their expectations, the attendance of the other members of the family is rather low, so family cohesion caused by rural tourism is still rather limited.

B. Money

The three explicit goals of the implicit goal *money* are *to earn much money*, *to keep agritainments as family property*, and *to earn retirement income*. The approval percentages of the three goals are 76.5%, 72.1% and 69.1%, and the approval degrees are 4.03, 3.96, and 3.79 respectively. As can be seen from the above data, the approval percentage and degree of *to earn much money* by proprietors of rural tourism in the three cities are higher than the approval percentage and degree of both *to keep agritainments as family property* and *earn retirement income*. That indicates from one side that proprietors show too much concern about making money.

C. Social life

As to the explicit goal *to get acquainted with more interesting people*, Shanghai's, Wuhan's and Chengdu's proprietors' approval percentages are 84%, 78.9%, 79.1%, and approval degrees 4.48, 3.57, 4.29 respectively. Proprietors in the three cities all show much approval to the idea that rural tourism can enable them to get acquainted with more interesting people, and the difference in the approval percentage small, which shows that a lot of proprietors in the three cities start rural tourism as a way of social communication and take positive attitude to the idea that they can make more friends by starting rural tourism. In addition, Wuhan proprietors' approval degree is obviously lower than Shanghai's and Chengdu's proprietors', which can be explained as poor rural tourism operation in Wuhan, fewer tourists and fewer chances for proprietors to get acquainted with tourists.

D. Self-reliance

The implicit goal *self-reliance* includes the three explicit goals: *to be economically dependent*, *to improve one's own reputation and popularity*, and *to be able to be a boss*. The approval degree and percentage in the goal *to be economically*

dependent (4.29 and 85.3%) are obviously higher than the approval degree and percentage in the goals *to improve one's own reputation and popularity* (3.65 and 60.3%) and *to be able to be a boss* (3.21 and 47%), which indicates that most proprietors show great interest in making money by starting rural tourism to get rich quickly so as to achieve economic independence, but little interest in improving social popularity and status, which demonstrates the characteristics of rural tourism in its early stage that proprietors show too much concern to the economy goal but insufficient concern to the social goal of self value realization.

4. Conclusion

Through analyses of the survey results, conclusion about the start-up goals of agritainment proprietors in the suburbs of Wuhan, Chengdu and Shanghai show a comprehensive confirmation of start-up goals. Proprietors hopes to make money to realize economic independence, their strong inclination to rural life and longing for social intercourse. The start-up goals in the three cities share common traits of rural tourism in its initial stage, that is, favor to rural life, care too much about money but care less about realization of self value.

There are also some differences of start-up goals among three cities, and each city also has its own characteristics in choosing the start-up goals. The study of this article is both practically and theoretically significant.

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