

The Attractive Experience on Sustainable Tourism in Huangshan Star-scaled Hotels

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Abstract—Hotel, as a key component of accommodation, which is a major element of tourism industry with this sustainable idea, the long-term of view, is very attracting the eyes of sustainability in its regular management. Especially star-scale hotels' positioning remains important in global marketing by international growing and sustainable developing. However some star-scale hotels in China have been slow in adapting and contributing to sustainable tourism. They essentially need to learn from Huangshan Hotels, to improve their sustainability by this learning and enhancing their real sustainable competencies in this market.

This dissertation aims to show the behaviors, attitudes and perceptions towards the awareness and adoption of sustainability and contribution to sustainable tourism in hotels, especially star-scale hotels, take the Huangshan Hotels as an example, by surveying the hoteliers, by analyzing the relevant literature and investigating star-scale hotels and relevant local authorities in a traditional tourism destination- Huangshan, a typical representative, locates in Southeast China. A theoretical framework embracing sustainable tourism development, star-scale hotels, through which current and potential improvement as an essential component in sustainable tourism are analyzed. On the other hand local authorities' attitudes and policies to support the development of those hotels are also examined. Based on this framework, star-scale hotels and relevant local authorities in Huangshan are surveyed in an attempt to identify existing circumstance and potential developing of star-scale hotels' sustainability as a contribution to sustainable tourism, discover their awareness and attitudes towards that improvement as well as examine their future plans or expectations with regards to it. Given the attractive and valuable experience, the image may have been highlighted and amplified by those later followers.

Index Terms—Sustainable hospitality, sustainability, experience

I. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable tourism has concerned such a wide point of hospitality industry, especially star-scale hotels, as a key component of accommodation, which is a major element of the industry, plays an important role in sustainable tourism development. China, as a newly developed tourism destination, offers plentiful marvelous natural and cultural scenes, has been predicted as the first attractive tourism country by the year 2020 (WTO, 2002). The central and local authorities have targeted on "star-scale hotels' sustainability to improve sustainable tourism". Along with the fast development of sustainable tourism, many small traditional tourism cities in Southeast China become the

next focus of sustainable development- Huangshan City is such a typical representative, which is undertaking sustainable tourism development currently.

In this paper a review of sustainable tourism, hotel, especially star-scale hotels' sustainability and their contribution to sustainable tourism will be provided, addressing the development of sustainability in hospitality industry in the world, in China and in the targeted cities. The researchers are trying to set up an attractive image to guide and lead the slower and followers. Information is acquired from this star-scaled hotel, Huangshan Hotel, which is important way to conduct sustainable management and to keep sustainable tourism and demonstrate hotels' (and star-scale hotels') sustainability.

City Huangshan is a representative owning almost all characters that owned by other small, traditional destinations in Southeast China. The improving awareness of sustainability; the on-going procedure of enhancing service quality, and developing strength of authorities concentration and supporting of sustainable development.

According to Tourism Local Agenda 21:

Reported by Travel and Tourism Group (TTG) Asia Media Pte Ltd, (2000) that "Huangshan is the center of major plans to boost tourism in the area over the next five to 10 years in eastern China, has launched ambitious programs to boost tourism, in particular capitalizing on the province most famous landmark."

More than one third of the province total revenue is from the tourism sector. On average, Huangshan city receives more than four million tourists every year, including 250,000 from overseas.

According to provincial officials and local officials, attractions in the "tourism- zone" in Huangshan (covers about 400km²) have the potential to receive 600,000 international tourists and 15 million domestic visitors by 2005. Their tourism revenue may increase to RMB13 billion (equals to \$1.57 billion) to account for 68 per cent of local GDP, up from 31.9 per cent now."

The local authority has held "International Tourism Festival" since 1991 to enlarge tourism reputation, enrich tourism revenue, moreover, established some procedures of quicken economic tourism development, which has stressed authority should play the important role in supporting tourism development and promoting sustainable tourism, especially holding up the improvement of tourism amenities, such as hotels and tour operators... (Huangshan Governmental Publication, 2001).

Star-scale hotels in Huangshan are newly developed. Roughly, there are 29 star-scale hotels, including:

One 5 stars hotel, Eight 4 stars hotels, Thirteen 3 stars hotels, and Seven 2 stars hotels (Huangshan International Tour, 2002). Because of the typical situation of city

Manuscript received April 17, 2012; revised May 23, 2012.

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Huangshan, it is viewed as a representative of those small cities locates in Southeast China. All the researches (including hotels sustainability and authority’s policy to sustainable tourism and star-scale hotels sustainability) will be undertaken in this city.

II. METHODOLOGIES

A. The Employees’ Questionnaires

The employer questionnaire was separated into 2 sections, with totally 37 typical questions. The researcher has carefully thought about the busy situation of employers in hotel industry, therefore, the intention was to minimize the time taken to complete, about 30-40 minutes, in order to prompt a higher response rate from busy employers.

Part A

6 common questions were involved in this part, such as star-scale levels, number of employees and their educational levels.

Part B

In this section, all the questions strongly linked to “sustainability in tourism development”, which the researcher wanted to gain from these targeted hotels, 31 common questions were contented in this part, such as the awareness of “sustainable tourism”; how about their contribution to the environment; what is the future development of “ISO 9000” or “ISO 14001”, in order to evaluate the research questions. It is a one-part questionnaire with all the 11 questions related to personal information of these employees, such as the position, the educational level, the awareness of sustainable tourism and so on.

B. The interview

Interview is a useful way to get key information. In the present research, interviews with the officers from local government were with strongly aims:

- The aim of the interview with the officer from “tourism relative economy-development department” was to further analyze “stared hotels’ contribution to sustainable tourism in Huangshan” from economic point of view.
- The aim of the interview with head officer from “environmental development and protection office” was to further analyze “star-scale hotels’

contribution to sustainable tourism in Huangshan” from environmental point of view.

Additionally, because the interviews would be completed by email, so that a letter was designed based on the central framework concerning the topic in order to carry on to the interviews.

Particularly, as the interpretation and analysis of those answers from the interviews would be compared and measured according to Agenda 21, Tourism Local Agenda 21 Green Hotels Association, ICLEI, CERES, (IHEI) and Chinese authorities legislation and regulation of sustainable tourism and hotels sustainability, particularly CNTA.

III. FINDINGS

A. Awareness of Sustainability (Green Hotel policy) and Sustainable Tourism

Surprisingly, a little less than 85% of the 16 respondents have been strongly aware of sustainable notion, It should be specially pointed out that, the main concept of “Green Hotel” or “Green Star-scale Hotel” is the representative of sustainability of hotels, which has been widely accepted by star-scale hotels in Huangsh).

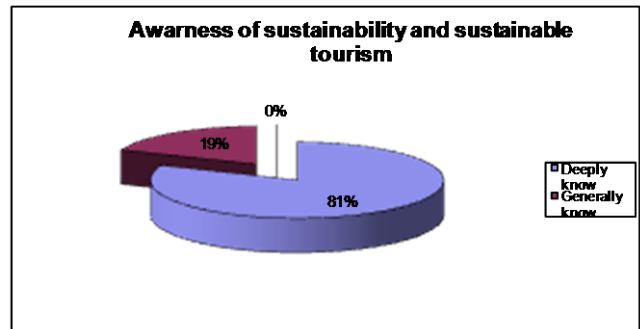


Fig. 1. The awareness of sustainability and sustainable tourism

B. Questionnaire Two- The Employees’ questionnaires

As it has been mentioned at Chapter 3, 160 questionnaires has been sent randomly to the employees working in star-scale hotels in order to get the general impression about their opinions of sustainable tourism and hotels’ sustainability. 95 out of 160 questionnaires (59.4%) have been collected are listed in Table I.

Analyzing the Feedback of employees’ questionnaires

TABLE I: FEEDBACK OF EMPLOYEES’ QUESTIONNAIRES

Star-scale	Name	Feedback	Total number	Percentage of the respondents that have provided back
5 stars	Golf	11	11	11.6%
4 stars	Yun Song	6	39	41.05%
	Jian Guo	5		
	Guo Mai	9		
	Hong Ta	9		
	Guo Ji	10		
3 stars	Li Yuan	8	24	25.25%
	Tao Yuan	16		
2 stars	Lv Zhou	10	21	22.1%
	Tian Yu	11		

IV. DISCUSSION-CONCLUSIONS

In this survey, star-scale hotels in Huangshan (which is a

typical small traditional tourism destination, as well as other similar cities in Southeast China.) are examined to reflect the current circumstance of sustainability and their

contribution to sustainable tourism, moreover to explore the further improvement.

A. Discussion-Conclusions from the Employers and Employees Points of View

From the economic viewpoint

In the current survey, almost all the star-scale hotels in Huangshan are newly developed during the recent 10 years shows the fast developing speed of star-scale hotels that contribute to tourism; moreover from the relationship between established year and property, the emerging of more non-state-owned hotels that mirrors the trace of opening market of tourism industry development- more profits from the overseas or the publics have been gathered to release tensional capital in the local area or from the central government.

Higher star-scale hotels, with advanced facilities and non-state-owned hotels have strong reputation to the international visitors, which bring foreign currency to the local area to contribute to the local economy. In addition, the higher level the hotel is the better representation it wants to show to the public in order to gain more profits and reputation. Quite contrarily, lower level hotels always have repeaters, which offer them a steady income to those hotels to contribute to the local economy.

From the environmental viewpoint

The notion of environment sustainability, such as protecting the environment and saving energy is widely absorbed by the employers in star-scale hotels in this city. For instance, all the hotels deal with rubbish regularly according to the requirements from the central government.

Quiet evident, higher star-scale hotels are usually equipped with more impressive consciousness about the importance of environment compared with the lower star-scale ones, so that they not only protect the environment but also propagate the importance of the environment to the public to enhance environment awareness frequently. Furthermore, waving their hands to pass through the attestation of ISO14001 and establish certain environment-protection departments to improve their environmental quality, and to catch up with advanced hotels in the world to achieve environmental sustainability, and make a further sustainable development. However, different from the deeper realization of the employers, employees should enhance the awareness of environmental protection to improve hotels' sustainability and sustainable tourism.

From other viewpoint(s)

Moreover, a deeper discussion from social point of view is offered:

It is fortunate that, the notion of "sustainability and sustainable tourism" is more or less adopted by all the employers in star-scale hotels in Huangshan; moreover, the higher level the hotel is, the deeper awareness of sustainable notion the hotel owns, and the more it attempts to do sales promotion to compete with the competitors to maintain a healthy performance and gain further development. Above all, there seems to be some hotels that have:

- Deeper awareness and effective action of sustainability and sustainable tourism development.

Definitely, the only 5 star-scale hotel and most of the 4 star-scale hotels with the performances maximize their

sustainability in Huangshan.

B. Discussion and Conclusion from the Local Government Point of View

From environmental viewpoint(s)

The local government has realized the importance of propelling "Green Hotel" and "Green Star-scale Hotel", according to the requirement globally and domestically and has noticed the development, moreover gained some achievements. However, it has just recognized the significant meanings of environment, such as propagating the importance of environment and pushing the attestation of ISO14000 systematic criteria, they just gave the first step in the area, and still need to do more works in the latest future.

C. Star-Scale Hotels in Small Traditional Tourism Destinations- the Future as Contributors to Sustainable Tourism- Huangshan as a Representative

Apparently, there actually exist numerous prospects in developing hotels' sustainability and their contribution to sustainable tourism. The most meaningful and important points are as follows:

Huangshan International Tourism Festival

It is such a propeller, which has brought and will bring many benefits since 1991 (XinhuaNext, 2003), along with the maturity of the festival, it will create higher profitability to the local economy including job opportunities, new facilities, improve infrastructures and so on, star-scale hotels as a fundamental instrument to the visitors are without exception. They offer not only rooms to the tourists, but also conference halls (rooms) to the participants, which is definitely a "hot point for sale".

As for other small traditional tourism cities, most of them have owned such kinds of festivals, such as Hangzhou West-Lake International Festival, Suzhou Gardens International Festival, which shows the same advantages to the sustainable development from economic viewpoint.

The new "hot point" for tourism

Huangshan, as well as other similar cities in Southeast China, owns many scenes both naturally and literally. It has been stressed by the government that those cities are on their steps in developing tourism with a sustainable way. Star-scale hotels in those cities are newly facilitated around the tourism scenes, as parts of the scenery to the tourists.

Along with the policy supporting by the central government, moreover the local government, they will get further development of sustainability. However, it should be stressed out that the local government in Huangshan, as well as in other similar cities is somehow lagged from the steps of the central policy. In order to be sustainable, the local government should improve their working performance in terms of star-scale hotels to contribute to sustainable tourism.

D. Possible Ways for Star-Scale Hotels to Enhance Their Sustainability in Huang-Shan

As for the possible ways to be successful in enhancing sustainable tourism and hotels sustainability are listed below.

For authorities

- To prioritize which are the most urgent environmental and social issues in the area and urge

the hotel employers to operate sustainably and accordingly.

- To secure funding from the central government that would enhance hotels' sustainable operations and theirs' sustainability as well.
- To organize continuous training programs with specialists for both hotel employers and employees at a minimum cost.
- To establish an efficient service that would patrol the hotels and check their compliance with the guidance pressed.
- To standardize the publication of relevant details from hotels in a better way.

For hotel employers

- To pursue much of the above through their chamber
- To decide in a local sustainability price with the winner disseminating info to his colleagues
- To share common expenses among as many participants as possible to lower cost (for example, try to attract more employees from different hotels to the training program); Cooperate with the local and central tourism associations
- To do advertisement with media agencies to enhance their reputation
- To take part in useful seminars according to development of sustainable tourism and hotels' sustainability

To sum up, further researches should investigate more star-scale hotels in small traditional tourism destinations that contacting by some special ways, such as introduced by the

official department. Moreover, try to find more representative samples or more representatives. There are several important factors in terms of sustainability research and development around the lodging establishments, such as the green-thinkers with all-around-green-thinking-ways, the green-hoteliars with daily-green actions, the green-establishments with careful green-mechanisms and the sustainable research methodologies with a series of unification studies as well.

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