Research on Sport & Eco Park Sustainable Development—A Case Study of Shenzhen Mission Hills

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Abstract. With the resort life cycle theories of Butler, this paper firstly analyzes Mission Hills’ sport tourism process which changes from the golf club membership, high class, supporting established industries model to popular, various, star-up industry model through observation and interview to Shenzhen Mission Hills Sport & Eco Park, then provides the reference strategy for the development of the new sports tourism in China so as to extend the active stage.

Introduction

With the rise of national sports and tourism leisure, the integration of sports industry and tourism industry, sports and leisure tourism is becoming more and more popular. According to the world tourism organization, the global physical tourism industry is growing at 140% a year. Chinese sports tourism industry grows by 30% to 40% annual rate, showing strong growth momentum[1]. In the process of tourism development, ecological sports theme parks are gradually emerging to meet the daily leisure, the new tourism state of sports and cultural activities. As a world famous and high-class mature golf brand, Shenzhen Mission Hills Group is a typical representative of the innovative sports tourism industry model to meet the growing demand of leisure tourism, sports exercise and children's play, to adapt to the more extensive, diversified and civil market needs of the popular tourism era.

Literature Review

Leisure and sports tourism industry is a new kind of economic industry, which is the result of the fusion of leisure sports industry and tourism industry[2]. Leisure sports must be a kind of cultural leisure, and leisure can also be a scene of cultural development and performance[3]. In the popular consumer society, leisure sports have become the cultural mark and the object of consumption[4]. Leisure and sports tourism is perfect combination of sports and tourism, not only extending the scope of tourism, but also extending the connotation of sports, and offs the value of economic development, health, interpersonal communication, communication, humanities, self-value, leisure, relaxation and entertainment[5]. Leisure and sports tourism plays important role in promoting the development of China tourism industry[6]. Sports park has open, ecological function with sports competition, sports training, performance, fitness entertainment, sports business, sports science and technology, aiming as leisure ecological park[7]. The ecological sports park mentioned in this paper refers to the sports theme park, which focuses on the recreation movement, the ecological environment and the sports project being made in the rapid development of the modern leisure tourism.
Research Method

This paper, using the observation and interview method, conducts the case study, reveals the surface phenomena in the evolution of ecological sports park, analyzes the internal principle, finds the problem, offers concerned solution strategy, and provides reference for the development of the new sports tourism in China.

Case Study

In 2002, Mission Hills Golf Club was rated "the world's largest golf club" by the Guinness World Records. The group industry has been developing in Shenzhen, Dongguan and Haikou city, and has jointly formed the international leisure tourist resort area, integrating with the international leisure tourism resort, shopping center, spa and every kinds of projects and facilities. Covering an area of 200,000 square meters, Shenzhen Mission Hills Sport & Eco Park used to be the former member country club as special place for club members and their families to enjoy recreational games. In order to meet the needs of mass tourism, it is open to public in 2015 as a comprehensive park with children's center, summer camp, corporate outdoor training, tennis events and various kinds of activities. During the five months of its trial operation, the number of tourists from the Pearl River Delta Region reached 150,000 people, mainly family, group and self-driving tourists. It soon boasts as the only comprehensive theme park in the north of Shenzhen with ecological tourism, sports, leisure and entertainment[8].

Butler’s Theory

The theory of life cycle theory was proposed in 1980 by Canadian scholar R.W. Butler, who argues that the development process of the tourism is generally included "exploration", "involvement", "development", "consolidation", "stagnation" and "decline" or "rejuvenation", showing different characteristics in the different life cycle stages of the tourism development[9].

Interview and Observation

In order to carry out the research work of Shenzhen Mission Hills Sport & Eco Park objectively, we interviewed 15 people totally, including 8 managers (from M1 to M8) and 7 staffs (from S1 to S7) in four times, and the field observation have carried out in the park, and some of the interview and observation records have been marked in the following paper.

Findings and Discussion

Shenzhen Mission Hills Golf Club is the first leisure tourist area established by Mission Hills Group which currently has more than ten kinds of business, such as real estate, business center, school and mall. "In early 1990s, Mission Hills Golf Club established golf courses with huge investment. It had provided accommodation and transportation for tourists, with the help of local government to improve the infrastructure and traffic conditions because of its presence"(M1). "It soon becomes the first China Eco-tourism demonstration zone and 5A scenic spot, and it achieves the world biggest golf club within 10 years, really miracle in the world"(M2). "The growth rate has been slightly lower in the last 10 years, and the growth rate has been a slight decline, because the group has added the development of the Haikou garden lake resort area. Because of the off seasons and the fierce external competition, some of the passengers are subdivided"(S1).

Shenzhen Mission Hills Sport & Eco Park is the new business of Mission Hills Group in the past 4 years. If it is regarded as an independent analysis object, it is not a spontaneous tourist land. The establishment comes from the strong background of the group instead of being formed by the tourists' spontaneous travel, and it has skipped the first two stages: the exploration stage. "At present, it is in the involvement and in development stage. The number of visitor to our Sport & Eco Park was 200,000 in 2015, then 400,000 in 2016 and 600,000 in 2017. It has very rapid growth rate, and the momentum is very strong "(M3). "The publicity and marketing activities of domestic and foreign media are also active, and there is a certain exposure frequency in various media, continuously
expanding the market, and the products and services are improving. At this stage, if we hold on to the good development plan and implement it, we will attract more tourists to form our giant market, and its bright future is available"(M4).

By contrast, we can learn that Shenzhen Mission Hills Sport & Eco Park is in the stage of involvement and development, while Shenzhen Mission Hills Golf Club is between consolidation and stagnation stage (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The Analysis of Life Cycle in Shenzhen Mission Hills Group.

From Shenzhen Mission Hills Golf Club to Shenzhen Mission Hills Sport & Eco Park, it has just implemented the three major changes from the membership system to the public, from the single high-end to the various levels of the enterprise, from the mature industry model to the start-up industry model, to create new economic growth points.

From Membership to Mass

"The group has served for social elite and successful people in quite long time, and the price of products and services is expensive because of the membership system"(S2). "The former Sport & Eco Park is the country club of members, although it provides a large crowd of leisure recreation, its service target population is still club member and their family"(S3). "The country club was fully attached to the golf club which was used to accommodate the guests' casual play outside the court, or the fun of having a meal and playing with the family after golfing, which were not particularly important and used to provide additional services to the club members, and to highlight the distinguished people of the club" (S4). "It is an opportunity for the public to enter the theme experience tourism stage, and the total amount of consumption in the mass future leisure tourism market will rapidly improve and replace high-end consumption as the mainstream of the city's field" (M5). "In the wave of mass tourism, especially the people born after 1980s and 1990s, who are more willing to accompany their parents and children, make the domestic leisure tourism market more popular and even crazy" (S5).
From a Single High-end to a Variety of Levels

"The establishment of this new business in Sport & Eco Park has filled the vacancy of the popular leisure sports tourism market, because it has developed the popular tourism and parent-child recreational sports tourism, and has overcome the uniqueness and the one side of the golf product line, enriched the product line variety, expanded the channel of the group's profit, and made it more extensive in the leisure and sports tourism consumption market" (M6). "Golf has always been the foundation of Shenzhen Mission Hills Group, even if the golf industry is affected by all factors, the group has a high-end golf club access system. The group adds Sport & Eco Park, making the leisure sports tourism products of the group more diverse, attracting different types of tourists to find their pleasure of leisure travel according to their own needs" (S6).

From Mature Industrial Models to Start-up Models

"After 30 years of development, the mature model of Shenzhen Mission Hills Golf Club has been formed, and the operating mode of the group has been steadily established in the process of cultivation for more than three decades" (M7). "In the mature industrial model, everything is fixed and documented. But as a new industry model for the theme park or the leisure tourism industry, Shenzhen Mission Hills Sport & Eco Park has no complete corresponding benchmark." (S7). "There is infinite possibility in the operation of the model, and there is greater freedom in the management operation" (M8).

Summary

The establishment of new business state of Shenzhen Mission Hills Sport & Eco Park belongs to the product combination strategy, emphasizing the new product innovation, from the membership system to the popularization, from the single high-end to the diversification, from the mature industry model to the start-up model. It overcomes the weakness of the original single and expensive golf product by enriching and reinforcing the combination of new leisure style tourism to the public. With the gradual loss of the high-end leisure sports tourism market in the resort area, the Sport & Eco Park will be the new core for mass customers, making the leisure strategy development transformation and extending the consolidation stage.

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