

Analysis and Countermeasure Research on the Development Status of Guangdong Culture Tourism Industry

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How to cite this paper: Yang, G. (2023). Analysis and Countermeasure Research on the Development Status of Guangdong Culture Tourism Industry. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 11, 70-78.
<https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2023.112006>

Received: January 18, 2023

Accepted: February 7, 2023

Published: February 10, 2023

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Abstract

In the era of low carbon economy, culture tourism industry has gradually become the “green sunrise industry” that major countries in the world give priority development to. Guangdong has always invariably place a high premium on the development of culture tourism industry. However, the outbreak of the COVID-19 has greatly impacted the previously prosperous cultural tourism industry, which directly led to a sharp decline in the revenue of cultural tourism industry. Now, China’s management of COVID-19 has been downgraded to the less strict Category B from the current top-level Category A, meaning the culture tourism industry will usher in new development opportunities. Herein, we analyze and study the policy orientation, key projects, regional cooperation, intelligent construction and other aspects of Guangdong’s cultural tourism industry, put forward targeted countermeasures and suggestions on the development status and existing problems of Guangdong’s culture tourism industry by comparing the development modes of culture tourism industry in other cities.

Keywords

Cultural Tourism Industry, Policy, Key Projects

1. Introduction

As an important part of the tertiary industry, culture and tourism industry, which is known as “sunrise industry”, is one of the fastest growing emerging industries in the world. The development of culture and tourism can expand domestic demand, promote consumption, meet people’s pursuit of a better life, and promote high-quality social and economic development. According to the

Guangdong Provincial press conference held on June 17, 2022, Guangdong's cultural and tourism industries are flourishing, with the added value of related industries ranking first in China for 18 consecutive years, and tourism revenue, inbound tourist volume and other indicators ranking first in China all year long. As the result of Guangdong's highly opening to the outside world and the great influence on the changes of the international and domestic epidemic, in the past three years, the passenger volume of Guangdong has decreased significantly, and the revenue of cultural tourism industry has been declining (Huang & Peng, 2022), which is lower than the national average level. In 2023, China has managed COVID-19 with measures against Class B infectious diseases, instead of Class A infectious diseases, in a major shift of its epidemic response policies, and Guangdong's cultural tourism industry will face new opportunities. This paper will analyze the current situation and existing problems of the development of Guangdong's culture tourism industry, and put forward our own views on solutions to these problems in combination with Guangdong's local characteristics and policy guidance.

2. Current Situation and Existing Problems of Guangdong's Cultural and Tourism Industries

Guangdong has always attached great importance to cultural and tourism work. In recent years, it has issued and implemented the implementation plan for promoting the development of all-regional tourism, organized and implemented the construction of Hengqin International Leisure and Tourism Island, introduced 12 policies and measures to support cultural and tourism, and the 14th Five-Year Plan for the Development of Culture and Tourism in Guangdong, so as to steadily promote the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area as a world-class tourism and leisure destination. The economic and social benefits of culture and tourism industry are increasingly prominent. Under the background of the new development paradigm featuring dual circulation, in which domestic and overseas markets reinforce each other, with the domestic market as the mainstay, Guangdong, as a major tourism province, must attach great importance to, adapt to the situation and seize opportunities.

2.1. Lack of Unified Policy Planning Guidance

At present, Fujian, Shanghai, Zhejiang and other provinces have introduced a series of policies and measures to promote the high-quality development of culture and tourism. As a contrast, Guangdong lags behind in the planning and guidance of business innovation, resource integration and optimization. First of all, there is a relative lack of support for leading new business forms. Brother provinces, such as Guangxi, Hunan, Fujian and so on, have introduced a number of brilliant and practical measures in the fields of new cultural tourism and new forms of business, such as ecological tourism, rural tourism and low-altitude tourism. For example, Zhejiang Animation Industry Association raises public

welfare support fund for animation tourism talents every year, and Fujian Province grants to the new Red Tourism A-level Scenic Spot Award. Guangdong Province has a solid foundation in industrial tourism, research tourism, rural tourism and so on, and has accumulated a lot of market advantages. However, because of the lack of planning guidance and policy support, the scale effect has not been formed and the development efficiency is not high. For example, in 2020, the average revenue of rural homestays in Guangdong Province was 110 yuan, much lower than the national average of 170 yuan. Secondly, local governments have insufficient long-term planning for tourism. Guangdong has a large number of cultural and tourism resources of different forms, however, because most of them are under-developed or not deeply explored, there is a lack of quality tourism projects (Zhang et al., 2022). Only Shenzhen and Qingyuan, the 21 cities in Guangdong province, have a spatial plan (2019-2035) for tourism development, and only the cities of Zhuhai, Jiangmen, Yangjiang, Chaozhou, Jieyang and Yunfu have medium and long-term special plans for tourism by 2030 or 2035. As a result of inadequate planning, such phenomena as “large agglomeration, small development; large resources, small industries; first-class resources, third-rate benefits” (The waste of excellent tourism resources because they are not well developed and utilized). There are many tourism resources in a sleeping state, and development remains in the initial stage, and the spatial structure is loose and the agglomeration effect is not strong. These phenomena have not been solved effectively for a long time. Thirdly, the homogeneity is obvious, the characteristic highlights are not outstanding. Guangdong’s cities are not integrated with culture, sports, industry and agriculture in industry, and the scale effect is not prominent, which leads to the lack of advanced brand operators and the inability to attract high-end talents. Moreover, this leads to the serious homogenization of cultural products and the inability to form consumption hotspots and industrial chains. According to the domestic tourism scenic area Development Index released by China Tourism Academy in 2021, Guangdong only ranks 12th in China, which reflects the relatively weak influence and attraction of Guangdong’s tourism. It is urgent to strengthen overall guidance on industrial structure optimization and development of fine and new products at the provincial level.

2.2. Insufficient Support for Key Tourism Projects

Key projects are related to the potential and durability of high-quality tourism development. There are some problems in Guangdong, such as low proportion of key projects, weak leverage on social capital, few leading projects and difficult implementation of projects. Firstly, cultural tourism projects account for a relatively low proportion. According to the 2021 Key Construction Project Plan of Guangdong Province released by the Development and Reform Commission of Guangdong Province, in 2021, there are 59 Chinese tourism projects in Guangdong’s key construction projects in 2021, accounting for only 4.2%, which is a big gap compared with the key construction projects of other provinces in 2021,

such as 18.8% in Yunnan Province, 10.7% in Henan Province, and 8.3% in Guizhou Province. Secondly, few leading projects bring about flimsy cluster effect. Guangzhou, Foshan, Dongguan, Zhongshan and other cities have the problem of lack of leading projects, small increment and so on. For example, in recent ten years, Zhongshan has only implemented two major projects: OCT Happy Coast and Cuiheng New Area Cultural Tourism Eco-City. The lack of large-scale characteristic tourism projects has seriously affected the transformation of cities from “origin” and “transit” to “destination” and “arrival”. At the same time, there is also a leader, without the phenomenon of cluster. For example, Guangzhou Panyu chime-long, flowers are a lot of influence, such as melting and attract big large-scale key projects. However, due to the large regional span, similar projects, incompatible and complementary themes, etc., the cluster effect is not formed and the scale is not significant. Thirdly, the problem of land use is prominent. Some problems, such as insufficient land use index and rigid ecological red line, make it difficult to develop tourism projects. Especially in the Pearl River Delta region, the project return rate is low, the project cycle is long (8 - 10 years on average) and the land reserve for cultural and tourism development is insufficient. Some projects in non-Pearl River Delta area are listed as agricultural protection areas or ecological control areas, so the land development of scenic spots is limited.

2.3. Scientific and Technological Empowerment and Intellectual Development Need to Be Strengthened

Although Guangdong is a big province of digital industry, it also has the phenomenon of insufficient intelligent construction of scenic spots and lagging information. As early as 2014, leading documents such as smart tourism city construction and service specifications and smart scenic spot construction guidelines were issued, but the advantages of science and technology have not been fully utilized to help the high-quality development of the cultural and tourism industry. Firstly, the construction of big data platforms lags behind. The construction of a smart platform for cultural and tourism public services needs to integrate industry information such as culture and sports, and share information with multiple departments such as transportation, meteorology, health, and market supervision. However, in many cities, tourism big data service centers and monitoring platforms have not been established or their service functions are immature. Secondly, the intelligent service system needs to be improved. Due to the lack of big data support, smart service in scenic spots have not been fully covered in 21 cities, and 4A level or above scenic spots and tourist resorts in the province have not been fully covered by smart tourism service centers. Smart transportation, smart parking, smart tour and other service functions in scenic spots are obviously insufficient, and the smart service capabilities and levels covering before, during and after the tour need to be improved. Thirdly, there are insufficient demonstration enterprises and scenic spots in Guangdong. According to the enterprise query platform Qiqiacha, Guangdong has 844 smart

tourism enterprises (more than 6,500 nationwide), leading the country in number, but few leading demonstrations. For example, none of the top 10 domestic online travel websites (Ctrip, Qunar, Feizhu, etc.) are from Guangdong Province. Zhuhai Chimelong (No. 14) and Shenzhen OCT (No. 65) are the only two places on the list of the top 100 national Smart Scenic spots in 2020.

2.4. Regional Cooperation and Joint Development Need to Be Improved

First of all, the inter-provincial tourism cooperation mechanism needs to be activated. At present, the provinces of Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning and Mongolia, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui have established the Northeast Revitalization and the Yangtze River Delta tourism cooperation Alliance to smooth the regional circulation and continuously improve the tourism attraction and competitiveness. For example, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui have implemented the “Key work plan of alliance” to steadily promote the integration of tourism in the direction of integration. Although the pan-Pearl River Delta region established a grand tourism alliance in 2017, because of the lack of a regular operation mechanism and effective support and guidance, it still lags far behind the Yangtze River Delta and other regions in promoting tourism integration. For example, Zhaoqing City promoted the tourism cooperation of “Guangdong-Guangxi Gallery”, which connect the class A tourist attractions between Zhaoqing, Guilin and Hezhou. However, the lack of effective support and guidance at the provincial level has affected the in-depth development of trans-regional cooperation. Then, the convergence of rules with Hong Kong and Macao needs to be deepened. Hong Kong and Macao are an important source market for inbound tourists in Guangdong Province, accounting for nearly 70% of inbound tourists in Guangdong province. Deepening cultural and tourism cooperation with Hong Kong and Macao is an inevitable requirement for the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area as a world-class tourist destination. At present, Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao lack specialized cooperation organizations in tourism development, and have not yet formed joint forces in brand building, marketing network, publicity and promotion. The practice scope of Macao tour guides in mainland China is still limited to Hengqin, and the connectivity of vehicle traffic, mutual recognition of insurance, medical and health care is not smooth, which restricts the development of self-drive tour, health tour, sports tour and other business forms. There are still further breakthroughs to be made in the connectivity of rules and free flow of elements in the cultural and tourism market.

2.5. The Linkage between the Top and the Bottom and the Coordination of Resources Need to Be Deepened

The development of cultural and tourism industry is a systematic project. In recent years, Guangdong has established working mechanisms such as the joint conference on tourism industry development and the joint conference among

tourism working departments. However, the linkage between the upper and lower levels and the support of elements need to be strengthened. First, the joint mechanism is not sound. At present, only one city in the province has established a special tourism development committee, and some cities have established a tourism joint conference mechanism, but most of them have not been operated normally, and some have not even established a municipal joint conference mechanism. In addition, there are few measures for other municipal functional departments to actively integrate into and support the development of the cultural and tourism industry; the integration of multiple plans, such as land planning, urban and rural development and ecological environment, is insufficient; the ideological concept and working mode have not really realized the transformation from the efforts of tourism industry to seek the integration and development with relevant industries to the active integration and joint efforts of other industries and tourism industry; the working pattern of the whole province is in urgent need of optimization. Second, financial support is relatively weak. Compared with the expenditure of other provincial governments on special funds for tourism development (450 million yuan in Jiangsu Province, 510 million yuan in Sichuan Province and 300 million yuan in Shandong Province), Guangdong Province (100 million yuan) has relatively less provincial special funds for tourism development. Although most cities have established special funds for tourism development, the scale is small, the special funds are too small, and most of them are global funds or stage funds with one-off payments. They lack long-term fund security, and the investment in new business projects is often short of money. Thirdly, infrastructure is not perfect. In terms of transportation, there is also the problem of “the last kilometer” in local scenic spots. Some cities tourism signage system is not perfect; Individual cities and dozens of towns can not quickly ground high-speed. In terms of supporting facilities, the construction of comprehensive tourist centers in each city lags behind, car camps and parking lots are limited, and Shaoguan even do not have five-star hotels.

3. Methods to Promote the Development of Cultural Tourism Industry in Guangdong

In terms of the history and endowment of cultural resources, Guangdong's cultural resources are no less than many other tourist attractions today (Zhuang et al., 2012). Guangdong should give full play to its policy, geographical, resource and industrial advantages, accelerate the upgrading of the cultural and tourism industry chain, promote the prosperity of the cultural and tourism market, and better serve economic and social development. Insist on using literature to shape tourism and tourism to complement literature, and promote the in-depth integration of culture and tourism.

3.1. Improve the Working Mechanism and Strengthen Planning and Coordination

The government plays the role of leader and mediator in the process of industry

development and industry integration (Yang, 2022). The government should improve the joint conference mechanism of cultural tourism industry, promote the regular operation of joint meetings between provincial tourism departments, encourage key tourism cities to explore the establishment of tourism development committees, and promote the joint meeting mechanism to cover all 21 cities, so as to effectively stimulate the driving force for integrated development of tourism-related departments. Moreover, the government should also speed up the formation of a work pattern in which provinces, cities and counties (districts) work in tandem and all departments work in tandem. Last but not least, the government should draw on the experience and practices of other provinces and cities, strengthen the coordination of special plans, formulate and introduce special plans for the development of smart cultural tourism and new business forms, strengthen policy guidance and project demonstration in online tourism and health tourism, deepen the integration of multiple regulations, guide and encourage all regions to fully tap their advantages in cultural and natural resources, and realize differentiated development and cluster integration in light of local conditions.

3.2. Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Promoting Industrial Upgrading

Regional characteristics are the core competitiveness of cultural tourism products (Ning, 2022). To give full play to the resource advantages of the Beibu Gulf Tourism Promotion Alliance, the Guangdong Coastal (Island) Tourism Alliance, the Northern Greater Bay Area Eco-Cultural and Tourism Cooperation Zone, and institutionalize and normalize regional tourism cooperation. The government should give priority to invigorating the pan-Pearl River Delta tourism Alliance mechanism, draw on the experience of the Yangtze River Delta in integrating tourism cooperation, develop a number of demonstration projects for cultural and tourism cooperation, including the “Guangdong-Guangxi Gallery”, and jointly develop key markets in Guangdong, Hong Kong, Macao and the Beibu Gulf. To seize opportunities such as the RCEP, in particular the development of Hengqin International Tourism and leisure Island, promote the establishment of a cooperation mechanism for tourism development in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, increase support for relevant supporting policies, deepen incentive policies for charter flights, chartered ships and special high-speed rail trains, and expand the connectivity of rules on the scope of business and vehicle access for Hong Kong and Macao tour guides in the Mainland. Jointly build a rich and diversified tourism brand system with the whole industry chain in the Greater Bay Area, and jointly build a world-class tourism destination.

3.3. Strengthening Basic Support and Enhancing the Sustainability of Development

The government should speed up the construction of supporting infrastructure

such as transportation, communications, science and technology, and health care, address the “three difficulties and one obstacle” that restrict tourism development from going to the toilet, parking, refueling, and communication signals, and promote comprehensive tourist distribution centers in all 21 cities. The government should seize the opportunity provided by foreign brands to explore the Chinese tourism market with unprecedented efforts, further optimize the business environment of the cultural and tourism industry, increase efforts to attract investment, and promote the landing of major projects and industrial upgrading. According to the 14th Five-Year Plan for Cultural Development of The State Council, relevant departments should promote the PPP model (the acronym of Public-Private-Partnership, which transfers part of government responsibilities to social entities (enterprises) in the form of franchise. The government and social entities establish a community relationship of “benefit sharing, risk sharing, and whole-process cooperation”. The financial burden of the government is reduced, and the investment risk of social entities is reduced) of cooperation between government and private capital in the cultural and tourism fields, encourage qualified tourism projects and major infrastructure construction projects to jointly apply for special bonds, and encourage qualified enterprises to seek financial support through asset securitization and other financial means. It is necessary to incorporate new land needs for cultural and tourism projects into territorial spatial planning, speed up land exploration such as “spot land supply (solve the problem of project construction land)” and “combination of leasing and exchanging”, learn from the successful practices of Zhejiang and other provinces, and give corresponding rewards to counties, cities and old areas with high tourism development quality in the province.

4. Conclusion

To sum up, Guangdong cultural tourism industry has a good foundation, broad prospects and huge potential. However, due to the lack of policy guidance, lack of coordination and other factors, the scale effect is not good, the level of science and technology is not enough, the dominant brand is not obvious, the lack of core competitiveness. Therefore, it is necessary to fully grasp the new opportunities and challenges of the development of the cultural and tourism industry. By focusing on forward-looking, overall and strategic issues (Ma, 2022), in the future industrial upgrading and development, we should make precise efforts to strengthen the policy guidance, improve the working mechanism, strengthen the basic guarantee, integrate superior resources, enrich the industrial connotation and other aspects, overcome difficulties, and optimize the industry in all aspects.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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