

Research on the Tourism Marketing Strategy of the New Countryside—"Auspicious Four Seasons" in Wuhan City, China

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Abstract On the basis of expounding connotation of "auspicious four seasons", the paper introduces related situations of spring peach blossom village, summer pomegranate blossom village, autumn osmanthus blossom village and winter plum blossom village, as well as major project and profit of "auspicious four seasons" new village tourism in Wuhan City. Development situations of "auspicious four seasons" new village tourism in Wuhan City are analyzed by using SWOT analysis. Among them, the strengths are analyzed from four aspects of geographical strengths, transportation superiority, rich natural resources and attached great importance by government, the weaknesses are illustrated from the five aspects of backward infrastructure construction, unsound governmental functions, needing improvement of service consciousness and service quality of villagers, shortage of publicity, insufficient input competence of tourism, the opportunities are analyzed from the two aspects of policy guarantee and tourism demand, the threats are analyzed from the two aspects of serious homogenization of tourism products and increasingly improved expected value of tourism products. Based on the analysis above, tourism marketing strategies of the new village—"auspicious four seasons" in Wuhan are put forward: First, strengthening publicity, it includes using network marketing strategies, enhancing traditional marketing publicity, strengthening festival tourism publicity and intensifying celebrity charm; Second, launching various new village tourism projects, it includes vigorously extending picking and exhibition tourism of fruits and vegetables, launching rural education tourism, launching flowers and plants cultural tourism and wedding celebration tourism, launching leisure tourism for old people and building learning base of new village construction; Third, exerting resource superiority of Han River water area, developing aquatic tourism projects, it mainly includes developing pleasure-boat of different types and grades, strengthening construction of waterfront accessible space and enhancing connection and cooperation with travel agencies.

Key words New village, Marketing management, Auspicious four seasons, China

In order to implement ambitious goal of constructing new socialist countryside clearly put forward at the Fifth Plenary Session of the Sixteenth Central Committee of CPC, governments at all levels have already made rapid development of rural tourism as the important measure in pushing forward new countryside construction and put it into effect. Particularly in recent years, National Tourism Administration put forward farm tourism and advocated to carry out farm tourism demonstration spot. A great upsurge in developing rural tourism has vigorously grown up since putting forward tourist activity year with the theme of "new countryside, new tourism, new experience, new tendency". Starting from 2005, according to the thought of "One Village One Product, One Village One Characteristic", Wuhan City developed ecological civilization rural community and leisure tourism area of "auspicious four seasons" with the theme of flowers of four seasons—"spring peach blossom, summer pomegranate blossom, autumn osmanthus blossom, winter plum blossom". It may be a typical case of vigorously developing rural tourism from conception, design to effectiveness. The author analyzes the current development situation of new countryside—"auspicious four seasons", and makes an overall evaluation of current development situation by using SWOT analysis method. Then the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats of development are obtained, consequently marketing strategy of further pushing forward rural

tourism development of the region is put forward.

1 General situation of new countryside of "auspicious four seasons" and current situation of tourism in Wuhan

1.1 General situation of new countryside of "auspicious four seasons" in Wuhan New countryside—"auspicious four seasons" is an ecological civilization rural community with the theme of flowers of four seasons—"spring peach blossom, summer pomegranate blossom, autumn osmanthus blossom, winter plum blossom". It extends in the scope of 18 kilometers of Cihui segment of north shore of Han River. Now, elegant dwellings are well-spaced, they display primitive simplicity and peacefulness just like the charm of Chu State in the old times. Watch gorgeousness of peach blossom in spring, view beautyfulness of pomegranate blossom in summer, taste refreshingness of osmanthus blossom in autumn, enjoy elegance of plum blossom in winter. It has blossoms in four seasons, fruits in four seasons and you can travel here in different seasons. It is an ideal leisure tourism resort for residents of Wuhan City to be close to and return to nature^[1].

1.1.1 Spring peach blossom village. Spring peach blossom village is the village of Land of Peach Blossoms and Eight Immortals. It is located in Baxiang Production Brigade of Cihui Farm in the north shore of Han River, west to Jingzhu Bridge. It covers an area of 37.07 hm², with 232 households and 756 persons. The greening style of the village is making "spring

reach blossom" as the theme and extensively planting peach forest about 2.33 hm², more than 1 400 plants in total. In the collocation of other trees, apricots, plums, weeping willows, loquats are planted to emphasize the artistic conception of eight immortals enjoying the sightseeing tour and each showing his special prowess. Embody the longevity theme and make it as the base of birthday, commemoration day celebration and so on.

1.1.2 Summer pomegranate blossom village. Summer pomegranate blossom village is the garnet village of crow ferry. It is close to the village of Land of Peach Blossoms and Eight Immortals in the east and next to Xingou Farm in east-west lake area. It is located in the most west segment of demonstration area of "auspicious four seasons". It covers an area of 133.33 hm² with 215 households and 753 persons. The greening style of the village is standing out the characteristics of summer pomegranate blossom and extensively planting pomegranate forest about 3.33 hm², more than 3 000 pomegranate trees along the dike. Collocate with evergreen species such as ginkgo, orange trees and so on. Make happy farmhouse of rural tourism as the main body of management. On the cultural connotation, using "happiness culture" as the theme, make the village as the base of wedding celebration and countryside tour.

1.1.3 Autumn osmanthus blossom village. Autumn osmanthus blossom village is Caijia orange osmanthus village. It is located in Caijia Production Brigade of Cihui Farm, west to Jingzhu Bridge, east to educated youths plum forest. It covers an area of 86.33 hm² with 343 households and 1 067 persons. The greening style of the village is making autumn osmanthus blossom as the theme and extensively planting osmanthus trees about 2.67 hm², more than 2 000 plants in total. Collocating with golden osmanthus, silver osmanthus flower, laurel, plantain, palm and so on, the alternation of sceneries of four seasons in osmanthus garden is kept, cultural characteristics of Shu State is blended in the sceneries. The connotation of "official culture" with the theme of "be an official" is embodied. It is the base for successful people to hold celebrations like thanking teachers, thanksgiving and promotions.

1.1.4 Winter plum blossom village. Winter plum blossom village is the village of educated youths plum forest. East to Jingzhu Bridge and connect with the village of Land of Peach Blossoms and Eight Immortals in the west. It covers an area of 151.13 hm² with 86 households and 252 persons. The greening style of the village is making winter plum blossom as the characteristic and planting winter plum blossom about 1.67 hm², more than 2 000 plants in total. Collocate with the representative plants. The collocation of pine, bamboo and plum form the scenery of "the three cold-weather friends"; The collocation of plum, orchid, bamboo and chrysanthemum form the scenery of "four gentlemen". The scenery mixes together with the characteristics of educated youth culture. The connotation of "fortune culture" is embodied. It is the base of mass greetings of spring and reviewing the history of educated youth.

1.2 Current situation of development of tourism of "auspicious four seasons" in Wuhan City Starting from 2005,

the garnet village of "auspicious four seasons" in Wuhan City firstly pushed forward agricultural tourism with the main content of "enjoying blossoms, ploughing and weeding, picking fruits, fishing" and so on. It is favored by tourists. It is becoming a new fashion of citizens in Wuhan to have farming life experience tourism with the main content of "living in farm house, having farm meal, doing farm work, enjoying farm happiness". Garnet village has developed from a single village to a leisure tourism area and demonstration area of construction of new countryside—"auspicious four seasons" with four different themes—"spring peach blossom, summer pomegranate blossom, autumn osmanthus blossom, winter plum blossom" and different characteristics. Tourist industry has become a new industry which drives the 887 peasant households in the area to get rid of poverty and become better off.

From golden week of National Day to then end of the year in 2005, the new countryside—"auspicious four seasons" have total received more than 300 thousand tourists, and got income more than 3.1 million yuan. In garnet village, the average annual income per capita is 7 300 yuan, almost twice than 3 700 yuan in 2004. In 2006, just garnet village has received 150 thousand tourists, and 400 thousand in 2008, with 8 million yuan tourist income. At the end of the year, the average annual income per capita in garnet village has reached 10 thousand yuan. The village used the model of "production brigade pay the large part, peasant households pay the little part, government throw into a little, society donate a little". The buildings are rebuilt on the original basis by using the form of "dressing and capping". At present, the village has already realized "four connections, four changes, one measure and two rooms": power connection, water connection, road connection, information connection; quality change, water change, circle change, stacking form of rubbish change; afforestation of village; multifunctional hall, multifunctional playground. The living conditions of villagers have greatly improved. The construction target of "auspicious four seasons" is becoming demonstration and the first-class leisure tourism area of riverside. The annual income per capital of the peasant households in the scope of construction work reaches above 15.7 thousand in two to three years. Taking garnet village as an example, at present, the main tourist projects include rural sightseeing tour, rural leisure tourism, sightseeing and picking tourism of vegetables and fruits. There are vacant rooms for guests in every house of peasants. And the price is cheap (The newest offer is: single room 30 yuan per day(24 hours) with color television set; double room 40 yuan per day (24 hours) with color television set; triple room 50 yuan per day (24 hours) with color television set. Provide hot water 24 hours for every room. Provide mahjong in every room, automatic mahjong table 5 yuan per hour, common mahjong table 10 yuan per day.). The raw material of every meal is vegetables and chickens cultivated by peasants in order to let tourist enjoy green and nuisanceless food as much as they like. The comparatively characteristic farm restaurants are "Qiyuan Residence", "Yiran Residence", "Lanxin Garden". They receive more than 20 tables

of tourists in tourist fastigium, the income of peasant households per day can reach 3 000 yuan^[2].

2 SWOT analysis of tourist development of new countryside—"auspicious four seasons" in Wuhan City

2.1 Strength

2.1.1 Location and transportation strength. The countryside has convenient location strength. It is only separated from the city center of Wuhan by a dike. It is depended on the well-developed east-west lake district of Wuhan, the district provides powerful economic support for the village in tourist development. Meanwhile, the transportation in the village is convenient. It is located along the shore of Han River, road along the river goes across in the front of village. It is near to 107 national road and Han-Yu railway in the north, next to Beijing-Zhuhai expressway in the east and connected with Han River, the transportation is very convenient.

2.1.2 Abundant tourism resources. The riverside village has advantaged tourism resources. Rippling Han River is flowing zigzag, the green trees are so many to form a forest on both coasts, green grass is full of slope, water birds fly together in the sky, dike is in the scenery, beach is in the park; The riverside landscape and scenery along the shore of Han River is beautiful; The village has distinctive features, garnet village has developed from a single village to a leisure tourism area and demonstration area of construction of new countryside—"auspicious four seasons" with four different themes—"spring peach blossom, summer pomegranate blossom, autumn osmanthus blossom, winter plum blossom" and different characteristics, and it has many happy farmhouse projects, such as playing Mahjong, playing chess, playing fireworks, playing cards, participating in farm work, fishing and so on; There are vegetables and fruits base in the village to provide material base for development of diet tourism; The village owns ecological tourist infrastructure, for example, it has constructed the first pipe network auxiliary project of energy conservation of "happy farmhouse" in changing agricultural wastes into gas.

2.1.3 Governmental attentions. The leaders and the villagers of the countryside attach importance to the progress of rural culture and thought. They use developmental sight to treat the development of village. For example, in order to celebrate Olympic Games, the village held "Green Olympics, Green Countryside" poetry arena contest, it attracted many poetry enthusiast to travel and leisure.

2.2 Weakness

2.2.1 Backward construction of infrastructure. Some and often practices of the village are still working for appearance sake, focusing on form but not on actual value. For example, in the process of infrastructure construction, sewer line and feed piping are connected with each other in one place, latrine improvement project and drinking water safety engineering don't match up with each other in planning and construction. Such-like construction measures emerge in endlessly, they not only haven't improved peasants life, instead, having increased the

burden of peasants.

2.2.2 Unsound governmental functions. In the process of construction, functional departments of the village haven't well coordinated and reasonably planned, but each does things in his own way. For instance, in administrative division of the village, highway, agriculture, forestry and other different departments make specific plan and investment in their own responsible scope. The functional department with no capital cannot get involved even if the problem is serious enough; Pushing forward by administrative order, positivity of peasants cannot mobilized. In some place, it still rests on words that urban areas have regurgitation-feeding on rural areas in constructing a harmonious society, the policy of "giving more", "taking less" and "loosening control" hasn't put into practice.

2.2.3 Service consciousness and service quality of villagers remain to be improved. At present, the service personals are still limited to local villagers, they haven't received normal service training. Meanwhile, increasingly prosperous happy farmhouse project desiderates more tourist service staff. It needs new energies, and service quality remains to be improved.

2.2.4 Lack of publicity. From 2007 to now, "auspicious four seasons" new countryside has strengthened network marketing publicity. But the clients are still confined to residents in Wuhan City or surrounding areas. Nearby provinces and cities have little acquaintance about it. The strength of publicity remains to be improved.

2.2.5 Insufficient input of tourism "Auspicious four seasons" new countryside is the model of new countryside development at present. But it still needs more capital input in infrastructure construction, as well as intelligence input of development of rural tourism. The tourism industry of the village is still need more venture capital, not only includes capital, but also capital input of technology and management and so on^[3].

2.3 Opportunity

2.3.1 Policy guarantees. Development of rural tourism is a significant measure in promoting new countryside construction. Supports and strength from the State provide policy guarantees for the tourism development of the village. Meanwhile, the government of Wuhan City and the people's government of East-West District provide a great amount of capital and policy guarantees for the construction of "auspicious four seasons" new countryside. These measures establish financial and policy support for the development of rural tourism of the region.

2.3.2 Tourist demand. Nowadays, residents are eager to go back to nature. The tourist demand is increasing. These make state and local government attach more importance to and support the development of rural tourism in the region. so, it provides policy guarantee and financial support for this area.

2.4 Threats The challenge from rural tourism development of surrounding areas of Wuhan City, improvement of expected value of rural tourism development from people and increased contradiction of current situation of the area bring threats to further development of "auspicious four seasons" new countryside of Wuhan City. In particularly, Caidian District of Wuhan has the same tourism resource and regional advantage as

East-West District, it becomes the biggest threats to the development of "auspicious four seasons" new countryside.

3 Tourism marketing strategies of "auspicious four seasons" new countryside in Wuhan City

3.1 Strengthening tourist publicity At present, "auspicious four seasons" new countryside has some status and influences in Wuhan City. But, to the surrounding cities and counties, even the surrounding provinces, it needs to vigorously strengthen publicity.

3.1.1 Using network marketing strategy. Network marketing is using internet to do market research, publicize products or service, complete online transaction and dispose after-sale affairs. It has lots of characteristics such as low cost, few marketing links, large information content, wide marketing scope, all-day marketing and so on. At present, network marketing has already favored by many tourist areas, especially international group companies. The area can use four ways to implement network marketing strategy, those are setting up E-shop, joining forum, newsgroup or notice board, publishing on-line ads and sending E-mails. At the same time, the area has to realize two transformations. On management idea, transform from two-dimensional structure (output and quality) to four-dimensional structure (output, quality, individuality and time); On sales method, transform from face-to-face sale to chat-on-line sale. Meanwhile, it is needed to strengthen deep development of network marketing and add business like on-line registration, ticket booking, room reservation, procedure fee payment and *etc.* to make convenience for tourists from other places^[4].

3.1.2 Strengthening traditional marketing publicity. Although the influence of internet has gone deep into all aspects of our daily life, there are still some people (for example, old people), it is impossible for them to keep watch the computer looking for information, so we need to strengthen traditional marketing publicities. Traditional marketing publicities include papery publicity brochure, publicity from and TV and radio, signboard on streets or bus and so on. These traditional marketing publicities can strengthen selective attention and selective retention of citizens or tourists. We cannot ignore traditional publicity patterns when using new patterns.

3.1.3 Increasing festival tourist publicity activities. China is a great country with deep culture and history. It has many festivals and holidays. We can launch some publicity activities in festivals and holidays to enhance popularity of the area. Meanwhile, we can strengthen cognition and love degree of audiences with the help of advertising media.

3.1.4 Intensifying celebrity charm. Many ads use celebrity to be their spokesman in order to improve its popularity. There are many leaders from many countries in the world come to visit this area. There are many characteristic resources. For instance, green and ecological vegetables, fruits, various flowers and plants, unique buildings, earthy folk custom, scenery along the Han River and so on. We can increase strength of

publicity of celebrities to improve popularity and cognition.

3.2 Launching various tourism projects of new countryside

3.2.1 Vigorously popularizing fruits and vegetables picking tourism and exhibition tourism. At present, "vegetables cultivation" project of garnet village has obtained nice profit. The residents in urban area or residents along the river can pay 800 yuan each year to undertake a block of vegetable field. It is cultivated by local villagers, the residents can pick them in any leisure time. Under the enormous pressure in metropolis, people go out to pick their own vegetable field, in this way, it can not only loose enormous pressure but also satisfy eager for returning to nature and eat green and nuisanceless vegetables. These vegetables can also be for sale, net income can be divided in proportion with villagers. This project can continue to carry out in the other three villages. Meanwhile, we can cultivate different fruits and vegetables according to different times and carry out fruits and vegetables picking tourism. For instance, on March 3, 2008, strawberry planting base of the village attract a lot of urban residents to pick and buy. Villagers can do transactions without traffic expense. And it can also drive the development and utilization of other tourism projects. It can be said killing two birds with one stone. Such projects should vigorously popularize in four villages.

3.2.2 Launching rural educational tour. Along with the acceleration of urbanization, the development of the primary industry-agriculture and popularization of culture have already been seriously backward. Now, only the children living in rural areas know the essential farm work and agricultural products, the children living in urban area know next to nothing of cultivation, growth and fruits of agricultural products. Meanwhile, with the progress of agriculture science and technology, the traditional bid agricultural country-China, her agricultural culture with long history and characteristics has gradually decline. In order to make children in new generation or even undergraduates know more about our great history of agricultural civilization, we can launch agricultural products expo and agricultural culture exhibition in "auspicious four seasons" new countryside. Let the younger generation make deep acquaintance about our development history of agricultural culture. We can also make them participate in farm work in order to let them know hard-earned food. So, they may know more about cherishing life, cherishing food and cherishing livelihood. Students can organize a group leading by teachers to visit here. We can also take activities such as "agricultural knowledge contest" and *etc.* to attract more young people. It can make our long agricultural history continue to last, and also indirectly drive the development of transportation, hotel and catering industries.

3.2.3 Launching flowers and plants tourism and wedding celebration tourism. "Auspicious four seasons" new countryside takes different flowers and plants as characteristic sign of the area. At the same time, every village has its own colloated plants and flowers. Spring peach trees, summer pomegranate trees, autumn osmanthus trees and winter plum trees are all distinctive tourism resource. Rural buildings in different

styles and distinctive plants and flowers add radiance and beauty to each other and form a fascinating picture scroll. We can launch flower show in different seasons to spread Chinese plants and flowers culture. And hold activities with "flowers" as the theme such as "flowers and plants culture poetry meeting" and so on. We can sell different flowers, attract a great amount of shutterbugs and artist, as well as hold wedding ceremony with folk custom in the village.

3.2.4 Launching leisure tourism for old people. Along with intensification of social aging tendency and urban reverse effect, more and more retired people choose to spend their remaining years in comfort in the place far away from metropolis. The "auspicious four seasons" new countryside in East-West District in Wuhan City is located in suburb of Wuhan City with the advantages of convenient transportation, place, natural resources and policy. In this area, we can develop leisure tourism for old people to let them return to nature and enjoy happiness from family relationships. If policy permits, we can construct some new departments for elders, or, we can free some rooms in every household and rent to elders. The time limit can be counted by weeks, months or years. Build centre of action for elders to give them a place to play card, playing Mahjong, play chess, read newspaper, sing and dance^[5].

3.2.5 Building study base of new countryside construction. The development of "auspicious four seasons" new countryside is obvious to all, it brings enormous economic, social and environmental benefits. This is a successful model of developing new countryside in out country. We can make the area as the study base of new countryside construction for village officials from surrounding provinces or the whole county to investigate and learn. It is sure to drive development of related industries. It has an endless developmental momentum.

3.3 Developing aquatic tourism project and enriching rural tourism project "Auspicious four seasons" new countryside is located in the side of Han River. The area has owned distinctive water resources of Han River. How can we make distinctive water resources fuse together with new countryside construction. It is a key point of developing this area.

3.3.1 Developing pleasure-boats of different styles and grades. Pleasure-boats should satisfy demand of tourists in different classes and ages. Meanwhile, they should reflect cultural characteristics of Wuhan, so they can be designed with local characteristics. Small yacht, small air boats and small sightseeing pleasure-boats are all needed to develop. The design of pleasure-boats should also consider about the sight-seeing features. Open-air, large capacity and wide-view pleasure-boats may be popular. The government should take strict examination and approval system to the tourist projects on the water, control the amount of pleasure-boats companies and avoid excessive

development.

3.3.2 Strengthening construction of waterfront accessible space. First, combining with historical and cultural characteristics and customs, create hotspot of riverside cities and develop riverside activity space facing to the whole city. Set up squares in a certain scale along the river, enrich activities. Hold festival parties, wedding ceremony, student parties and so on along the river, develop action center for old people. Second, pay attention to develop architectural opuscles, design seats, fence, lawn, trees and dustbins with distinctive characteristics of Wuhan in the riverside area. Make them corresponding with the whole landscape of the area, construct harmonious and united picture of riverside area. Third, strengthen activity hotspots of wharf and urban area, give significance for wharf outside the utility function, make it not only has shipping function but also has recreation function. Meantime, it can be the sign of the area. Fourth, in order to cope well with the relationships between flood prevention and water loving, safety and water accessing, reasonably develop dike and retaining wall along the river, get rid of the design of up-right revetment, take three-dimensional disposal by using layered, stepped, sloped, floated wharves. It can not only prevent or control the flood but also satisfy the demand of water loving, water accessing and water playing. Fifth, reasonably plan the river coast. Develop the riverside area as the leisure area, plant weeping willows along the river, reasonably plan lawn and riverside path for tourists to take a walk after meals.

3.4 Enhancing association and cooperation with travel agencies At present, most of the travel agencies in Wuhan are organizing groups to other places, few of them are doing local tourism services. But the agencies can design competitive ways, take "auspicious four seasons" new countryside in it. Enlarge it influences and publicity strength. Through publicity of agencies, further consolidate the area's position in rural tourism market.

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