

Research on Marketing Planning of Tea Culture Ecotourism

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ABSTRACT

As the tempo of modern life accelerates, an increasing number of individuals are aspiring to a leisurely and natural way of living, leading to the burgeoning popularity of tea culture and ecotourism. This form of tourism allows travelers to immerse themselves in the tranquility of nature while savoring the profound heritage of tea culture. This novel fusion of traditional culture and ecotourism has invigorated the tourism market with fresh vitality. On a global scale, growing concerns for environmental conservation and cultural preservation have placed ecotourism under the spotlight. Tea, hailed as the "nectar of the nation," carries a rich tapestry of culture and history, luring travelers in search of deeper exploration. Against this backdrop, effective marketing strategies are paramount in enhancing the allure of tea culture ecotourism and promoting its sustainable development. Through meticulously planned promotional campaigns, enterprises involved in tea culture ecotourism can better attract their target audience, elevate brand recognition, and achieve a harmonious convergence of cultural and economic benefits.

KEYWORDS

Tea culture; Ecotourism; Marketing planning

1. INTRODUCTION

Tea culture ecotourism has witnessed rapid growth in recent years. This form of tourism centers around tea culture, offering visitors a unique and immersive cultural journey through experiential activities intertwined with the ecological environment. In contrast to traditional tourism models, tea culture ecotourism fulfills travelers' yearning for the beauty of nature, allowing them to become enveloped in the nuances of tea culture while experiencing the harmonious relationship between humanity, nature, and culture. One of the significant challenges faced by contemporary enterprises in tea culture ecotourism lies in the compelling design and marketing of distinctive tourism products. As an emerging market, tea culture ecotourism possesses immense potential and driving force; however, it concurrently encounters numerous predicaments and issues. The competition within the market is increasingly fierce, rendering the task of distinguishing oneself among a multitude of tourism offerings quite formidable. The purpose of researching marketing strategies is to explore methods that can enhance the competitive advantage of tea culture ecotourism, ensuring its steady development in the marketplace while benefiting the local socio-economic landscape, thus facilitating the broader dissemination and inheritance of tea culture's essence, which holds substantial significance for society.

2. TEA CULTURE ECOTOURISM MARKET STATUS

2.1. Market Demand Analysis

In recent years, tea culture ecotourism has garnered increasing favor in the market, owing to its unique charm that harmoniously integrates nature, health, and culture—an irreplaceable allure. As modern society propels forward at an accelerated pace, the rhythm of life has become ever more compact, leading many individuals to aspire to reconnect with nature and seek inner tranquility. Against this backdrop, the demand for travel experiences that facilitate profound engagement with both culture and nature is on the rise. Tea culture, as an ancient and multifaceted cultural phenomenon, possesses inherent qualities of wellness and spiritual solace, attracting a significant number of discerning consumers who pursue a healthy lifestyle. They yearn not only to savor the rich and extensive history of tea but also to achieve physical and mental relaxation amidst the serene natural surroundings of tea gardens. The younger generation's consumption trends are gradually shifting towards personalization and experiential offerings; they long for greater interaction and knowledge acquisition during their travels. Tea culture ecotourism meets these desires splendidly, allowing participants to engage in activities such as tea picking, processing, and tasting, thereby immersing themselves in the profound and delightful essence of tea culture. Moreover, the growing emphasis on environmental preservation and sustainable development further propels the advancement of the ecotourism market, with numerous consumers favoring travel products that facilitate cultural experiences while safeguarding the ecological environment. Enshrined in its sustainable philosophy, tea culture ecotourism has captured the attention of environmentally conscious patrons. As China's cultural influence expands globally, foreign tourists increasingly express a keen interest in tea culture, seeking to experience and comprehend this exquisite treasure of Chinese cultural heritage through travel. Thus, tea culture ecotourism aligns seamlessly with the prevailing trends in the global tourism industry, emerging as a formidable force with substantial growth potential in the marketplace.

2.2. Consumer Behaviour Analysis

Tea culture ecotourism, as a novel form of tourism booming in recent years, has captivated the attention of numerous consumers. Modern consumers increasingly seek personalized experiences, yearning for profound cultural immersion and physical respite through travel. For eco-tourism infused with tea culture, they particularly favor travel products that offer immersive experiences, such as participating in tea making, witnessing tea art demonstrations, and engaging in tea garden harvesting, thus fulfilling their desire for "deep experiences." Many travelers are increasingly mindful of the impact of their destination choices on local ecosystems. They lean towards selecting tourism projects that uphold sustainable development principles and respect natural ecosystems, thereby practicing their awareness and commitment to environmental responsibility. The rise in health-conscious lifestyles has also made tea culture tourism highly appealing, with the health benefits of tea serving as a significant draw for consumers. Related wellness programs, healthy dietary experiences, and tea therapy activities are of great interest, aligning with the current trend of pursuing a healthy lifestyle. Additionally, the influence of digital life is reshaping new tourism consumption concepts. Many consumers gather information via social media and travel review platforms before embarking on their journeys, placing greater trust in authentic user reviews and word-of-mouth recommendations. The convenience and flexibility of online bookings also enhance the appeal of eco-tourism focused on tea culture, propelling market growth. Thus, the current market landscape for Tea culture ecotourism reveals a strong consumer preference for personalization, environmental health, and digital consumption experiences, offering abundant opportunities for market development [1].

2.3. Competitive Situation Analysis

The tea culture ecotourism resources across various regions are abundant and distinct, each possessing its own unique charm. In the endeavor to attract tourists, regions employ a multitude of strategies to showcase their cultural allure. Areas with profound tea culture legacies, such as Wuyi Mountain in Fujian and Hangzhou in Zhejiang, have emerged as leaders in this market due to their rich tea plantation resources and extensive historical heritage. Other regions, like Yunnan and Sichuan, are diligently developing ecotourism, leveraging their distinctive geographical advantages and ethnic diversities to carve out a share of the market. Numerous international destinations, including Sri Lanka and India's tea plantation tours, have also joined this vibrant market by emphasizing the integration of local tea cultivation techniques with exotic flair, thereby attracting waves of international travelers. Each tea culture ecotourism destination adopts a differentiated competitive strategy: some focus on enhancing the experiential aspect through tea ceremonies and interactive activities, immersing visitors in the experience; others emphasize harmony with the natural environment, branding themselves as green and eco-friendly, catering to contemporary concerns about health and the environment. Meanwhile, the rise of digital marketing has injected new vitality into the industry, increasing customer engagement and reach through social media and virtual reality technologies. This diversified and multidimensional competitive landscape drives continuous innovation and development in tea culture ecotourism, but it also necessitates that market participants constantly elevate their distinctive charms to navigate the increasingly fierce market competition.

3. STATUS OF MARKETING PLANNING FOR TEA CULTURE ECOTOURISM

3.1. Implementation of Marketing Planning

Tea culture ecotourism, as a distinctive form of travel, is increasingly favored by tourists. Its marketing strategies are often intertwined with local natural resources and the historical cultivation of tea, crafting an alluring travel experience. For instance, the tea culture ecotourism in Wuyi Mountain, Fujian, leverages the renowned Dahongpao tea, not only developing scenic tea gardens, tea production experiences, and tea art performances but also integrating big data analysis of tourist behavior to optimize travel routes and enhance visitor satisfaction. Statistics reveal that the region welcomed over five million visitors last year, marking a 15% increase year-on-year. In Yunnan's Pu'er City, the rich cultural backdrop of Pu'er tea has been effectively utilized to create a "Tea Horse Road" brand effect through social media platforms, yielding impressive market feedback; discussions related to Pu'er tea on Weibo have exceeded 300 million views. The implementation of marketing strategies also hinges on the utilization of modern technology, with virtual reality (VR) employed to simulate tea garden environments, allowing tourists to experience the tea production process even from afar. This technological innovation has heightened visitor engagement and increased conversion rates. In the Anhui Huangshan region, the cultural value of Huangshan Maofeng tea has been thoroughly explored. By integrating online and offline resources, alongside live-streaming sales, the area has successfully captured the attention of the younger consumer generation. According to statistics, the sales of tea products during the travel season in this region surged by 30%. Each area emphasizes its cultural heritage and natural splendor when implementing marketing strategies, employing differentiated approaches to attract diverse tourist preferences. In this endeavor, professional marketing teams leverage their keen insights into market trends and precise understanding of consumer demands, closely integrating tea culture ecotourism with the modern tourism market, thereby promoting the sustainable development of the industry.

3.2. The Problems in Marketing Planning

Cultural eco-tourism centered around tea holds immense potential, yet there persist notable issues in current marketing strategies that merit attention. One primary concern is the imprecision in market targeting; many tea-centric tourism projects attempt to cater to overly broad audiences, thereby overlooking the specific needs and consumption patterns of the target clientele. This misallocation of resources can inadvertently dilute the appeal to core demographics. Narrowing the focus to precisely identify and comprehend prospective customer segments and subsequently crafting tailored tourism experiences is crucial for achieving effective market penetration. Another significant issue is the inadequate brand building; tea tourism often lacks distinctiveness and differentiation. Many ventures fail to effectively narrate their unique stories or establish a robust brand image, making it challenging to stand out in a competitive landscape. The rich cultural nuances of tea represent its greatest asset, yet these are frequently under-exploited. Developing a brand with a clear personality and strong appeal necessitates deep cultural refinement and creative expression during the marketing planning stage. Lastly, the insufficient application of digital marketing represents a glaring shortfall. Many tea eco-tourism projects do not fully leverage social media, self-media, or short video platforms to expand their influence, nor do they employ data-driven precision marketing techniques. This results in relatively weak interactions and connections with potential visitors, thus missing opportunities to garner greater attention and clientele through digital channels. Consequently, harnessing emerging technologies and digital tools for effective marketing strategies has become a pivotal strategic imperative for tea cultural eco-tourism [2].

4. TEA CULTURE ECOTOURISM MARKETING PLANNING STRATEGY

4.1. Market Segmentation and Positioning

Eco-cultural tourism centered around tea culture, integrating sightseeing, leisure, and cultural experiences, distinguishes itself from simplistic eco-tourism or cultural tourism alone. Market segmentation in this field necessitates a comprehensive consideration of tourists' interests, purchasing power, and travel motivations. In practice, it can be finely divided based on interests. One segment comprises avid knowledge seekers of tea culture, often deeply captivated by the origins, production processes, and historical nuances of tea. These enthusiasts are elevated in their engagement and sense of belonging through immersive tea culture activities such as tea-making experiences, tea art performances, and historical tea explorations. Another segment is passionately drawn to the ecological environment, entranced by the natural beauty and serene ambiance of tea gardens, favoring activities like hiking, simultaneously fostering their appreciation for ecological conservation and a profound reverence for nature. Additionally, consumption levels serve as another critical dimension. High-end clientele can indulge in more private and personalized services, such as customized tea ceremony courses and premium tea tasting, while the mass market focuses on cost-effective arrangements, tailoring flexible packages to meet diverse cultural and leisure needs. Considering travel motivations, the fusion of education and leisure has grown increasingly popular. Collaborations with schools and corporations can yield distinctive check-in spots and team-building activities, crafting theme routes that blend education with entertainment. When positioning in the market, tea culture ecotourism should firmly grasp its rich cultural heritage and natural resources advantages. The integration with modern technology, such as utilizing VR for immersive experiences, can enhance cultural branding, ensuring precision and uniqueness in positioning. Leveraging new media channels like WeChat official accounts and mini-programs for promotion, especially in targeted marketing to distinct clienteles, is crucial for not only shaping brand recognition but also bolstering market competitiveness. This realm presents both challenges and opportunities; only by deeply understanding the target market and devising flexible and creative marketing strategies can one stand out in the competitive landscape [3].

4.2. Product Development and Innovation

In the realm of product development and innovation, diverse and multi-layered tourism programs can be explored to cater to the varied needs of different travelers. Building upon the rich connotations of tea culture, a series of interactive experiential projects can be developed, such as handcrafting tea experiences, tea ceremony performances, and tea tasting courses. These initiatives enable visitors to delve deeply into the craftsmanship and historical significance of tea production, thereby igniting their interest in tea culture. Another vital strategy in tea culture ecotourism is the integration of technology to create intelligent travel experiences. By leveraging augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies, tourists can be offered virtual tours of tea plantations and immersive historical experiences of tea, allowing them to appreciate traditional culture through modern technological aids. The development of projects focused on ecological preservation also presents a robust avenue. As tea plantations are often situated in ecologically pristine areas, organizing activities like eco-walks through tea gardens and hikes up tea-covered hills can allow visitors to enjoy the natural beauty while enhancing their environmental awareness. Collaboration with local communities is another effective approach, fostering mutual benefits. Developing community cultural experiences, such as inviting local residents to participate in tea-making exchange sessions and traditional craftsmanship showcases, allows tourists to directly experience local lifestyles and humanistic charm. This method facilitates the organic integration of cultural heritage with tourism development.

4.3. Price Strategy

Ecotourism centered around tea culture differs from conventional travel expenditures, as it demands pricing strategies that are more flexible and personalized due to its rich cultural heritage and ecological characteristics. When devising pricing strategies, it is crucial to fully consider the unique nature of this market and the psychological expectations of consumers. Ecotourism products that focus on tea culture can cater to tourists of varying consumption levels through a stratified pricing method. For instance, basic products can involve solitary tea garden visits to attract general tourists, while higher-priced offerings can encompass tea ceremony experiences or ecological meditation courses, providing deeper cultural engagement. Seasonal pricing can effectively leverage the changes in tourist flow during off-peak and peak seasons, adjusting prices appropriately to stimulate demand. The sustainability of ecological environments and tea garden management is a focal point for consumers. Therefore, a portion of the price should be allocated to environmental protection and sustainable development projects to enhance the brand's sense of social responsibility and consumer recognition. In the current era, digital and networked means offer more possibilities for the innovation of pricing strategies. Utilizing big data analysis to observe tourists' consumption habits can enable precise adjustments to pricing strategies, not only increasing revenue but also improving the tourist experience. The introduction of dynamic pricing platforms allows for real-time adjustments based on market demand and competitive dynamics, enhancing the agility and market responsiveness of tourism operations. Tea culture ecotourism can also experiment with membership or subscription services, strengthening tourist loyalty through periodic cultural activities and product discounts [4].

4.4. Promotion and Communication Strategy

The culture of tea and eco-tourism attracts a large number of visitors with its unique cultural heritage and natural environment. In the fiercely competitive market, promotional and communication strategies become particularly crucial in standing out. Based on the culture of tea, the marketing of eco-tourism should emphasize creativity and interaction to create distinctive consumer experiences. In an era where digitalization is highly advanced, utilizing new media platforms such as Douyin and WeChat for profound dissemination is an energetic choice. Short videos can showcase the beauty of tea gardens and the entire process of tea picking and processing, allowing viewers to visually appreciate the charm of traditional techniques and the elegance of the ecological environment.

Inviting travel influencers and cultural celebrities for firsthand experiences and sharing them on social media can help rapidly expand brand influence. In terms of promotional strategies, integrating ecological and environmental protection concepts is advisable. Introducing green tourism packages that include low-carbon activities like cycling and hiking, along with customized tea art experiences, can make visitors feel like active participants in the preservation of tea culture. Launching limited-time offers, such as "Spring Tea Rush Tours," encourages visitors to experience different tea flavors and the joy of picking tea during specific seasons. Given the current heightened focus on health issues, incorporating the health benefits of tea into the design of health-themed tourism routes can enhance visitor engagement and recognition. This can be achieved through free health seminars, tea therapy experiences, and other activities. Creative event planning is also a significant component of communication strategies [5]. Organizing events like "Tea Culture Festivals" or "Tea Tourism Carnivals," which incorporate local specialty foods, artisan displays, interactive games, and diverse experiential projects, can engage consumers of all levels. Considering the personalized pursuits of contemporary youth, regular online and offline interactive activities with mechanisms like raffles or points exchange can increase brand loyalty.

5. CONCLUSION

The success of ecotourism centered around tea culture is not solely contingent upon unique cultural experiences and natural landscapes; it also necessitates effective marketing strategies. The formulation and implementation of these strategies require precise market analysis, consumer insights, and innovative marketing techniques. Through meticulous market segmentation and accurate positioning, ecotourism focused on tea culture can attract a greater number of visitors who are interested in tea culture. In the development and innovation of products, integrating more modern technology and interactive experiences can create a diversified range of tourism offerings. Reasonable pricing strategies and extensive promotional efforts are also crucial means of enhancing the appeal of such tourism. Moving forward, the sustained development of ecotourism centered around tea culture must emphasize the excavation of cultural connotations and environmental protection, ultimately achieving the unification of economic and social benefits. The potential of the ecotourism market is vast, and it is imperative to actively explore more attractive and sustainable tourism development models, thereby propelling the global dissemination and development of tea culture.

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