

Reaches on the Rural Tourism Experience Authenticity Based on the Local Dwellers, the Rural Tourists and the Rural Tourism Operators

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Abstract—The definition of rural tourism and experience authenticity theory are elaborated at first. Secondly, the relativity of the experience authenticity of rural tourism has been explored from the attitudes of the rural dwellers, the understanding of the rural tourists and the production of the rural tour operators on rural tourism experience authenticity. Thirdly, the internal mechanism of the rural tourists, the rural local dwellers and the rural tourism operators is analyzed. At last, the paper puts forwards that in the future development of rural tourism we should consider the interests of the different groups in order to fulfill the sustainable development of the rural tourism.

Keywords- rural tourism; experience authenticity; the local dwellers; the rural tourists; the rural tourism operators

1. Introduction

Rural Tourism is defined as a kind of way to travel based on the countryside away from the city area and the specific natural and cultural rural landscape as the attraction to urban residents by satisfying their demands for leisure, knowledge and returning to nature. The rapid life pace and the high work pressures which make the urban residents travel in the rural area to relieve their high work pressures in the rural area, therefore the rural tourism has become one of the ways of modern lifestyle for the urban residents. At the same time, the rural tourism can bring the enormous economic benefits to some villages which surge development boom of rural tourism in some rural areas, but some rural areas distort the nature and the purpose of the development of rural tourism in the development of the rural tourism which leads to the unauthenticity in rural tourism destinations.

2. The relativity of the experience authenticity of the rural tourism

Authenticity was originated from Greek which was used to describe the museum's art exhibits, and then was borrowed to the philosophical study of human existential. In 1973, Mac Cannell firstly introduced the 'authenticity' into the tourism research which lead a heated discussion and analysis in the tourism research. Nowadays, tourism scholars currently focused on the theory of authenticity in the following three aspects: the objective authenticity—the authenticity of tourism attractions; the existence authenticity - the authenticity of the rural tourists; the construction authenticity – different experience authenticity of the rural tourist based on the authenticity of the same rural tourism objective.

In the modern rural tourism, the rural tourists are mainly from urban residents who want to see the original authentic rural landscapes and hope to experience the different lives from their "real life". The rural tourism experience includes not only the Physical form of the pastoral experience of ecological landscape but also the traditional rural folk customs and the cultivation culture. The core experiences of rural tourism are the authentic rural pastoral landscape and the authenticity of folk custom, which is the key for the development of

rural tourism. Thus, the authenticity of the rural tourism experience should be relative. Firstly, in terms of the traditional folk culture of rural tourism, it should be in the form of the constant motion and change because the cultural change theory indicated that any kind of culture will be in a constant changing state. If any understanding of the authenticity of a culture should be in the quiescent state which can not cover the true state of development of this culture. Therefore, from a cultural point of view, the authenticity of the experience of rural tourism is a relative authenticity and is a constantly dynamic concept. Secondly, from the rural landscape environment point of view, the rural tourism experience authenticity also should be relative because the rural tourism experience authenticity can be influenced by objective factors and the subjective factors of the rural tourists in some degree. What's more, it will also be influenced by the Self-initiative of the suppliers which include the government, local residents, organizers and investors. Since the rural tourism experience authenticity is relative, different groups have different experiences on rural tourism. We should explore the three different group requirements from the residents of rural residents, rural tourists and rural tourism operators; only in this way we can better clarify the relative authenticity of rural tourism experience to guide the development of rural tourism.

3. Stakeholders on Rural Tourism Experience Authenticity

A. The Local Residents of the Rural Areas

In order to ensure the rural tourists appreciate the authentic ecological and folk culture, rural residents must participate in the development of rural tourism and they must realize that their participations in these activities should become part of their lives. What's more, the residents are regarded as the rural cultural heritage, the interpreter and the defenders of the ecological landscape, for whom the authenticity of rural tourism is a natural state of living. The so-called "natural" state refers to not all the "past", or not all "now", and this "natural" life is still in a state of constant flux. Generally speaking, When the rural tourism has brought some certain negative effects for their lives, the rural residents believe that their natural living ways were destroyed, so they began to resist the further development of rural tourism, and they realize that the performance of the activity or display of culture are contrary to their understanding of local culture, which is entirely in order to meet the needs of tourists and did not reflect the authentic cultural heritage of their experience, therefore, the local residents will think these performances or activities are unauthentic. When the development of rural tourism can bring the considerable economic benefits for local residents and also meet their demands for the comfortable life, then local residents will be aware that their local folk culture and beautiful natural environment will bring the great economic benefits for them, they will actively participate in the activities to protect their unique folk culture and natural landscapes, in this case, the rural local residents will show the hospitality attitude to the rural tourist. At the same time, they will positively transfer their roles between the "front" and "background", and they will think that their "front" performance is authentic.

B. The Rural Tourist

Different rural tourists have the different rural tourism experiences and the demands of the rural tourism experiences and they have the different understanding for the authenticity on the rural local cultures and the customs because they have the different education background, the different career, the different aesthetic judgment and the different cultural background. Zhang Xiaoping(2002) pointed that in addition to the entertainment tourists and the entertainment tourism, the tourism should be defined as the cultural tourism. According to the classification of Zhang Xiaoping, the rural tourists will be divided into the entertainment experience rural tourism and the cultural experience rural tourism, and the rural tourists also can be divided into the entertainment experience rural tourists and the cultural experience rural tourists. The Statistical Yearbook of Chinese Tourism in 2006 shows that the purpose of travel is sightseeing for the urban residents in 2005, thus the entertainment tourist takes the large proportion, and the deepen travel is only in its infancy. The purpose of travel of the entertainment rural tourists is to pursue the enjoyment, or looking for something new, or enlarging their knowledge, or to gain the happiness, they want to release the enormous temporary daily work pressure, to find the leisure lifestyle, to take the fresh air, to enjoy the natural scenery, to enjoy the sunshine, to cultivate feelings, to participate in agricultural activities and rural sports, recreation and other village activities through rural tourism, so they purely pursue the entertainment and relaxation instead of the

requirements of one hundred percent authenticity of the rural tourism destinations, they only to seek the true self-object by means of rural tourism activities. Therefore, entertainment rural tourists only required for a "a visit" space transfer process, it is clear that the cognition on the authenticity of the rural tourism experience for the entertainment rural tourists is to find they are more real, more free than that in their daily lives not because they found the authentic rural tourism object but because they are free from all constraints of daily life to participate in unusual activities or to divert their attention, or to forget the past things to find a peace of mind, and to achieve the "visit" space transfer.

As for the experience cultural tourists, rural tourism is not only the materialistic appreciation, but more importantly, tourism must meet their spiritual demands, they travel to the countryside or suburbs to enlarge their knowledge and trace the history and understand the customs of different places, to experience different cultures to achieve purposes on the "culture shock" by observing real lifestyles of the local residents, the social and cultural change, the traditional customs, and by participating in local farming, ethnic festivals, traditional rituals, by processing and making the food and traditional folk crafts. Obviously, the awareness and understanding of the cultural experience rural tourists on the authenticity of different cultures is to experience the authentic and the different culture to achieve their expanding knowledge and trace the history and understand the customs of different places and to experience different cultures to get the "culture shock". But there exist the essential differences on the understanding the rural tourism authenticity between the rural experience tourist and the anthropologists and national scholars. Because the anthropologist pursues the accuracy of the information in the field work, they usually stay a long time or at least several years in the local residents' living places. They live with the local residents; work with the local residents to accumulate the first-hand data. They usually think about the development of local cultures, laws and other issues and participate in local development and construction. It is obvious that the general culture tourism can not achieve the above activities. Therefore, the awareness on the tourism authenticity of anthropologists and national scholars is to achieve the pursuit of the accurate information in the "field work"

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C. Rural Tourism Operator

The tourists think that their experience is authentic, not because the attractions are authentic but the experience is regarded as the authentic symbols. The authenticity is produced by the tourism operators, the marketing agents, the explanation of the tour guide and the producer of the cartoon (Hughes, 1995). The tourism operators must produce the authenticity of the rural tourism destination because the native and objective "truth" can not bring enough business opportunities, but the authenticity which was modified by the tourism operators can meet the tour operator's demands. Thus, the authenticity which was understood by the tour operators should be always in the form of change and it was relative and decided by environment and the formed by the ideology. The awareness on the authenticity of the tour operators means the 'construal authenticity'.

In real life, the existing rural tourism resources was packed and constructed by many developers and operators. According to the Theory of Culture Change, any kind of culture is always in the state of constant changing, thus, the tour operators also think that the authenticity of the rural tourism should also be in the dynamic state, if the rural tourism was kept in the quiescence state, which can't cover the authentic development state of the traditional rural folk customs and rural eco-landscape environment. Therefore, the existence of any kind of folk customs should be in the state of inheritance and change state. In the course of their rural tourism experience, it is hard for the rural tourists to be avoided getting into the authentic environment which was produced by the tour operators. If the rural tourist has got the so-called 'authentic rural tourism' who just constructed the 'Shangri-La' and 'Paradise' in their mind from the tourism net forum. In fact, what they pursued is not the authenticity of the rural tourism destination but they are looking for the

artistic impression which was constructed in their own mind. But this artistic impression has related with the publicity of the media very much.

4. Researches on the inner mechanism of rural tourism experience authenticity of different stakeholders

In rural tourism activities, the awareness and understanding of authenticity of the rural tourism experience of different stakeholders is not isolated from each other, they are interconnected and interacted each other shown as Fig 1.

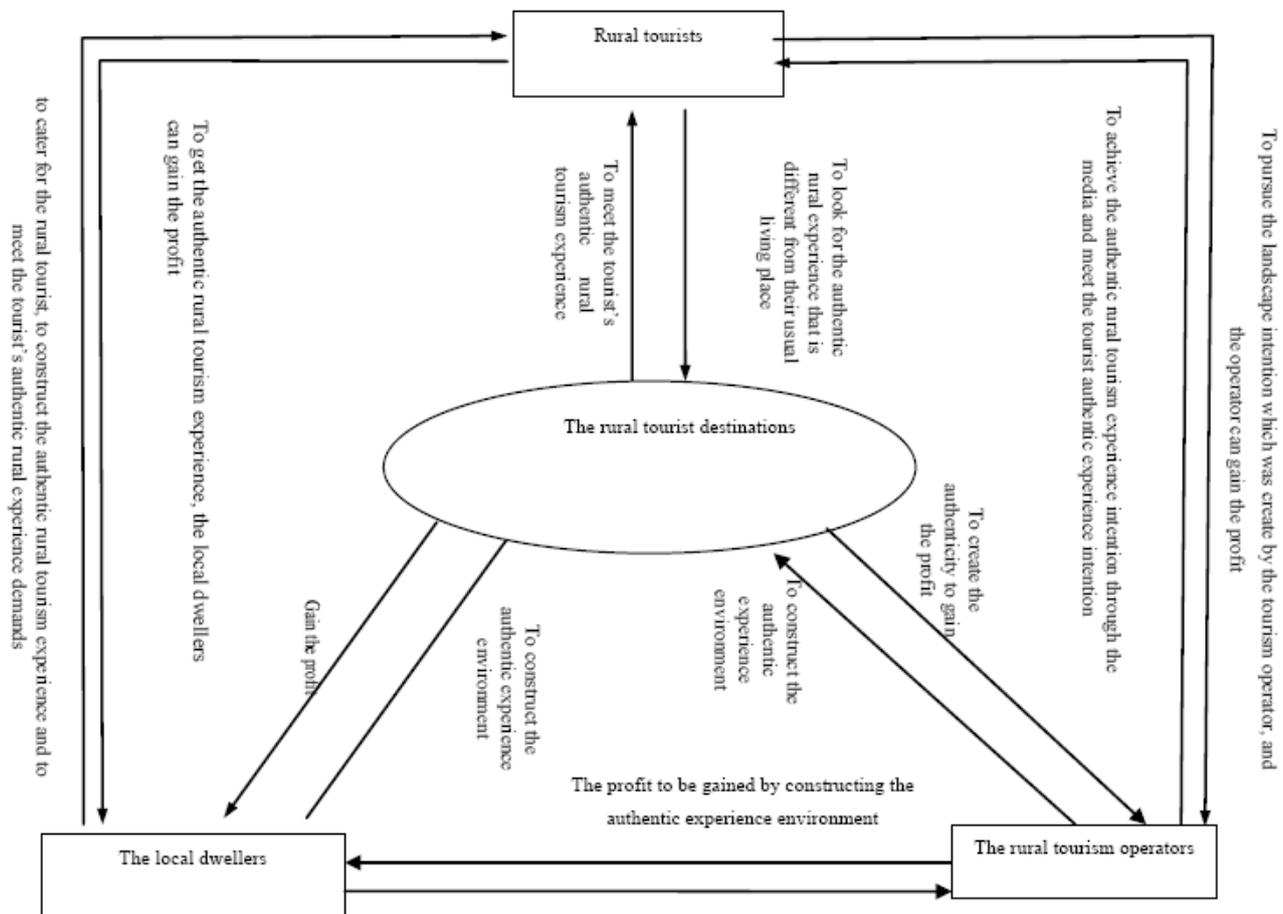


Figure 1. The inner mechanism of the rural tourism experience authenticity of the local dwellers, the rural tourist and the rural tourism operator

The rural tourists go out for the rural tourism because they want to find the differences between in the living environment and the rural tourism destinations. The authentic rural ecological landscape and traditional culture and the natural environment are different from the usual living environment of the rural tourists. As for the entertainment rural tourist, they do not have the enough efficiency to distinguish what is the so-called ‘authentic’ rural tourism destinations, so they just pursue the authentic landscape impression, before they have reached the rural tourism destination they just pursued the authentic landscape impression which was constructed by the tourism operators. At the same time, this kind of authentic impression is related with the own experiences or the impression which was publicized by the media. When the rural tourist reached the rural tourism destinations, they have achieved their authentic rural tourism experience demand through the rural tourism activities and the rural tourism objects to meet the process of the space transfer. At same time, the tourism operators can make a profit and the local dwellers can get the benefit through the process of the experience.

As for the local dwellers and the rural tourism operators, the purposes to develop the rural tourism is to gain the profits or to get the benefits, so in a sense, the local dwellers and the rural tourism operators have the same interest relations. That is to say, the local dwellers associated the rural tourism operators to construct the

authentic rural tourism experience environment from the front stage and the back stage performances, in this case, the rural tourism operators must pay for the dweller's associations, and therefore, the local dwellers will gain the profit. But as for the rural tourism operators, they are the providers of the rural tourism media image, thus the image that the operators spread and shaped has been packaged with the particular commerce purpose. The authentic effect must be constructed, designed and organized based on the expectations, imaginations and preferences by the rural tourism operators in order that they can gain the profit.

5. Conclusion

This paper has researched the rural tourism from the local dwellers, the rural tourist and the rural tourism operators. It shows that in the development of rural tourism the natural living state of the local dwellers mustn't be destroyed. According to the experience demand hierarchy and the individual psychological characteristics of the rural tourist, the rural tourists can be divided into the cultural experience rural tourists and the entertainment experience rural tourists, therefore, different rural experience projects can be set according their individual characteristics. At the same time, the rural tourism operators should run the rural tourism with the perspectives of theoretical development and cultural changes. Thus, in the future rural tourism development and construction, the interests between the local dwellers, the rural tourists and the rural operators should be considered in order to achieve the sustainable development of the rural tourism.

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