Research on Tourism Industrial Cluster from the Perspective of Network Platform

Qian Liu
Master. College of Economics&Management , Sichuan Agricultural University, Chengdu Campus, Chengdu 611130, China

Qi-zhi Yang (Corresponding author)
Professor. Tourism College, Sichuan Agricultural University. Chengdu Campus, Chengdu 611130, China

Abstract
The emergence of tourism industrial cluster supplies opportunities for tourism industrial cluster’s upgrade. As an important channel for information access and dissemination, network platform can improve tourism products’ transaction efficiency and promote its rapid escalation, which will help to breaks through the geographical limitation, save the costs of divergent, stimulate even enhance the innovative capability of enterprises, and strengthen division of labor, collaboration and competition between enterprises. Through analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of tourism industrial cluster, this paper discusses the new features of networking platform, and reveals the mechanism to tourism industrial cluster. At last, some suggestions to the existing questions of network applications are offered.

Keywords: Tourism Industrial Cluster; Network Platform; Mechanism

1. Introduction
In 1990, Michael E. Professor Porter proposed the concept of “industrial clusters” firstly in “Competitive Advantage of Nations”, and pointed out that the industrial cluster is the close integration of related industries in essence, which is the core characteristics of industrial developed countries [1]. Since then, as an economic phenomenon and the mode of economic development, the industrial cluster has caused widespread concern of scholars at home and abroad. Industrial cluster theory research also gradually spread from the initial manufacturing research to the tourism industry.

Although researches on the tourism industrial cluster were started relatively late, scholars of domestic and foreign have made certain achievements after years of researching. Foreign theoretical research basically follows traditional methods of the manufacturing industry and high-tech industrial cluster, namely, using the cluster diagram and “porter diamond model”. Practice researches were conducted generally. In this period, the earlier "South Africa tourism cluster research" was the representative, the results of which focus on three levels: national cluster, theme clusters and local cluster [2]. Yin Yimei was the pioneer. In her book named the tourism enterprise clusters: to improve the destination competitiveness new strategic mode as Domestic theory study. The tourism enterprise cluster is defined as: in order to obtain the common goal, tourist core material tourism enterprises, tourism-related businesses and departments which gathered in a certain geographical space, establish close contact, team work, and enhance its competitiveness [3]. Zhang Meng divided tourism industrial cluster into Tourism Resource Dependency and professional market-led industrial clusters from the point of view that the enterprises in the contacts and research centers on travel destinations and tourist, interpretation of the tourism industrial cluster is the important factors to enhance competition in the regional tourism [4]. Jing Xiuyan believed that resource endowments and market demand was the driving force of the enterprise cluster by analyzing the location choice of tourism enterprises [5]. Lu Mingyong divided the cluster enterprises into the core layer, the core auxiliary layer, spreading layer, and expansion of the outer layer with the cluster chain concept [6]. Zhang Chaozhi, Youwang aimed at the controversy between disintermediation and re-intermediation of tourism, through exploring changes in the function of the traditional travel agencies, and pointed out that the Internet has weakened the travel agency's information monopoly and enhance the dominance of the tourism body [7]. Practice studies usually proposed suggestions based on the analysis of the status and problems of tourism industrial cluster. The above study pointed out that the tourism industrial cluster has a certain spatial aggregation, and its development was restricted by the geographical, while the emergence of the network platform broke through the geographical constraints and create a new connotation for the tourism industrial cluster. At present, the tourism industrial cluster researches still follow the traditional research methods of industrial cluster, take the tourism industrial cluster connotation as an entry point or focused on the study profit model of e-commerce travel. While networking platform of underlying
mechanisms and mechanism of action, and other important issues of tourism industrial cluster is less involved. Therefore, exploring the role of network platform in the tourism industrial cluster is of great significance.

2. The new features of the tourism industrial cluster under networking platform

2.1 The strengths and weaknesses of the traditional tourism industrial cluster

Porter's concept of industrial clusters shows that the industrial cluster is the gathering of industry elements suppliers in certain geographic space, and triggers a series of economic effects. As an economic phenomenon, tourism industrial cluster is the gather of tourist six elements within the cluster, typically embodied as tourism related enterprises and institutions gather to the position of tourism resources and space. As a mode of economic development, tourism industrial cluster is formed as the flexible production complexes by related enterprises and institutions focus on, thus meet the demand of eating, living, travelling, shopping, entertainment and other diversified needs within a smaller space. Tourism industrial cluster has great influence in extending the chain of the tourism industry, forming accumulative effect, scale effect and external effect to enhance regional competitiveness. Although the tourism industrial cluster brings scale economy and specialized economy to the tourism industry, its regional characteristics and tourism industry characteristics lead to some deficiencies: first, geographic limitations, the traditional tourism industrial cluster is happened in a particular area, and their development is usually confined to the seat of the tourism elements, which is not conducive to the further growth and diffusion of the clusters. Cluster enterprises concentrated in a certain area contributes to serious crowding effect, leading to the sharp price rise of labor, transportation, housing, and other elements, which is not conducive to the sustainable development cluster; Secondly, the flow of information limitations, as information intensive and relying industry, the flow of information is essential to the tourism industrial cluster. Yet traditional trading patterns can not fully play this role and contact with external information easily, which produce information’ symmetry and cause rising costs and reduced efficiency; thirdly, lack of innovation, the homogenization of the tourism product has been difficult to overcome. Though tourism industrial cluster promotes the innovation of tourism to some extent, its rate of innovation is far lower than the speed of imitation, evenly, their creativity is based on local terms that does not have to contend with the entire tourism industry competitiveness. Therefore, the tourism industrial cluster needs to avoid disadvantages and find a more suitable cluster development platform to achieve a sounder development.

2.2 Networking platform creates new features to the tourism industrial cluster

The emergence of the network platform overcomes the specific geographic restrictions of traditional tourism industrial cluster, facilitates the rapid flow of information and breaks through the local restrictions of innovation, which help industrial cluster to possess agglomerate effect, scale effect, external effect and create new features to the tourism industrial cluster, enhance regional competitiveness even improve the competitiveness of the industry to achieve structure adjustment and optimization of the tourism industrial clusters.

2.2.1 Breakthrough the limitations of time and space to achieve cluster globalization

The market today is global trading market that trading may occur at any time, therefore, network platform is needed to facilitate the inter-regional trading. Network platform breakthrough the regional and time-bound limitations of traditional tourism industrial cluster, which contributes to the tourism industrial cluster’ openness and promotes exchanges, enhances the mobility of the tourism factor and achieves the globalization of the tourism industrial cluster.

2.2.2 Overcoming the information asymmetry and reducing transaction costs

The intangibility of tourism products makes the objects of the tourism market circulation field is not a commodity but the information of the tourism products [8]. As the rapid spread channel of information, network platform can quickly process transactions information from the supply and demand –side. At the same time, the network platform shows the vertical relationship between suppliers and demander, which avoids the cumbersome intermediate transaction procedures, overcomes the information asymmetry generated in the middle process, reduces acquisition costs of both sides, and promotes the tourism industrial cluster.

2.2.3 Avoiding regional crowded and reducing the cost of public goods

The concentration of geographic location is an important characteristic of the traditional tourism industrial cluster. It brings about crowding effect, improves the cost of local production factors, and needs a large number of public bodies and facilities to maintain and support. As a virtual cluster aggregation point, network platform does not produce crowding effect and greatly reduce the cost of public goods.

2.2.4 Accelerating the innovation of cluster and maintaining the development of cluster dynamics

Tourism industrial cluster can improve the competitiveness and innovative of the tourism industry, and the network platform makes it more prominent. The tourism industrial cluster under network platform is face to global and its competitive pressures will be even greater, of course, the demand will be harsher. To have constantly
innovate and unique competitiveness, the cluster enterprise must keep in with innovating and supply more cost-effective specialty travel products and travel services.

3. The mechanism of networking platform to the tourism industrial cluster

As an information-intensive and information-depending type of tourism industrial cluster, the transfer of information has to go through intermediaries. In the process, a variety of issues caused by information asymmetry are not conducive to the development of the cluster. Yet these problems can be solved by the network platform exactly. Network platform can replace the trading platform of the traditional tourism industrial cluster, avoid fussy transaction intermediary, streamline the internal structure of the industrial cluster and promote the close ties between clusters, so that bring greater economic benefits for the cluster and promote the upgrade of the entire tourism industrial cluster. Now tourism industrial cluster based on network platform is still in the early stages of development and the utilization rate of the network is not very high. Chinese denizens reached 538 million by the end of June 2012, in which 4258 people were travel reservation and the utilization rate was only 7.9% [9]. Then it has major significance to explore how the network platform acts on the traditional tourism industrial cluster and bring the great conveniences to the supply and demand sides. As you can see, in Figure 1, its mechanism chart of the tourism industry is based on network platform. Industrial clusters around the tourist information that is to say network platform goes on sharing and trading of the information. It can supply demanding information and find necessary resources to tourists and also to the businesses or individuals inside and outside. The mechanisms of the tourism industrial cluster that network platform bring to mainly is across time and space mechanism, point-to-point mechanism and dynamic chain mechanism.

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**Fig.1 Network platform for the tourism industrial cluster mechanism diagram**

**3.1 Across time and space mechanism**

Non-metastatic of tourism resources and regional characteristics of industrial clusters lead that the development of traditional tourism industrial cluster is based on regional development as its main features. This development model brings extremely inconvenient to exchanges between cluster internal and external and takes expensive costs to the cluster. But network platform can avoid these problems. Through internet tourist information center, server, and use side are linked up and supply information service of access, filtering, communication, decision-making, the whole industry chain for both supplying and demanding. These make tourism industrial cluster can break through the limitations of time and space, and achieve the globalization of tourism cluster.

**3.2 Point-to-point mechanism**

The trading patterns of the traditional tourism industrial cluster are usually B2B and B2C. They usually produce a variety of trading commissions during the process and demanders’ demand is not easy to be satisfied at last. While the network platform omit the middle layers of middlemen, and demand-side and supply-side can be directly updated information on the network to facilitate the exchange, keep abreast of changes in customer demand, and thus solve the user's needs and achieve peer-to-peer transactions.

**3.3 Dynamic chain mechanism**

The tourism industrial cluster’s formation based production and value-added of the tourism product as the core and main line [10]. The tourist route is the most basic and important form of tourism products. Traditional tourism industrial cluster usually conducts clustering by the form of near tourist resources link into a chain. Yet the resources of the chain have geographically dispersed, and enterprises of the cluster basically follow the traditional artisanal, which can not achieve the dynamic exchange trading. Network platform can break through this malaise
by integrated analysis and updated the dynamic on time of cluster resources and trade with different chains through the network platform, enhance the dynamic ability of the tourism industrial cluster and form a chain of the tourism cluster.

4. Development proposals of the tourism industrial cluster under networking platform

The emergency of network platform brings new opportunities to the tourism industrial cluster and will change the shape and the competitive landscape of the worldwide tourism industrial cluster. Now the network platform is not widely used in the entire tourism industry and a variety of clusters have many problems. First of all, the whole development level of the network is very low, and the awareness of the industry is not high. Secondly, the network of the industry is lack of a strict and uniform standard which leads to a lot of costs to the construction and maintenance of the day-to-day database. Thirdly, network platform in tourism is still at the primary stage and need a lot of capital and professional to support. Then, increasing capital investment and training of specialized personnel is imminent. All of these is to ensure the healthy and sustainable development of tourism industrial cluster under networking platform. The following measures are needed to solve these problems.

4.1 Enhancing the industry network level and deepening the awareness of the industry

The awareness of the network in the tourism is not high and is not widely applied and the whole construction is low. The platform mainly distributed in hotels, scenic spots and the construction of these sites are mostly static type-based lack of dynamic management maintenance. The tourism cluster should strengthen the research and development of related technologies, enhance the overall level of the industry and break through the traditional disadvantages of the application. The government should play an exemplary role which drives networking platform application in the tourism industrial cluster, achieves high levels of industry-wide network era and promotes upgrading of tourism industrial cluster.

4.2 Enacting tourism information technology standards and establishing of professional management departments

The unified travel information standard is in shortage and travel resources are also widely distributed in each cluster elements of enterprise, which causes great difficulties in the collection, processing and production of tourist information and led to the part database construction and maintenance of the travel network is difficult. In fact, a unified standard must be developed for constraint. At the same time, it needs to establish a professional management department for the implementation and supervision so that the tourism industrial cluster can form a virtuous cycle mechanism.

4.3 Increasing the capital investment of the information technology and training professional personnel

The government and related institutions should understand the importance of the network and respond that network platform in tourism is still at the primary stage and need a lot of money for the construction of the network. They should be effectively communication and cooperation with the enterprise and let the enterprise no worries. At the same time, in order to ensure that the network platform is in operation and maintenance is well, clusters should rich and innovative business model, even develop a large number of high-tech and complex talent span upgrade and then realize span promotion to the tourism industrial cluster.
References