RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESORT LIFE CYCLE AND RESIDENTS' PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDE
—A Case Study of Putuo Mountain

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ABSTRACT: The change in residents’ perception and attitude and resort life cycle are the basic problems in the course of resort evolution. This thesis sets up the dynamic model of residents’ perception and attitude, analyzes the linkage between residents’ perception and attitude and the influential factors of resort life cycle, and finally, with a case study of Putuo Mountain, preliminarily discusses the relationship between resort life cycle and residents’ perception and attitude. The research findings show that, although within development stage of life cycle, Putuo Mountain has already presented some signs of mature stage. The on-the-spot survey also indicates that, the local residents’ positive perception is stronger than their negative perception. But compared with residents in some other coastal resorts such as Haikou and Sanya, negative perception of residents in Putuo Mountain is more evident, as the result of the smaller tourism carrying capacity in Putuo Mountain. There are some influential factors that have great impact on tourism carrying capacity in Putuo Mountain: tourist-resident number ratio, residents’ benefit-cost ratio and characteristics of tourism resources. And the less influential factors are residents’ demographic character, tourist behavioral character and cultural differences between local residents and tourists. Therefore, effective measures should be taken to adjust the structure of tourism product for the purpose of expanding tourism carrying capacity, lowering its pressure, lessening residents’ environmental cost and enhancing their positive perception, which is the most essential prerequisite for the maturation of life cycle in Putuo Mountain.

KEY WORDS: residents’ perception and attitude; resort life cycle; Putuo Mountain; Sanya

Residents' perception and attitude towards tourism are essential to the resort development. It has become the important fields of study in foreign tourism geography and tourism sociology, whose research has produced some satisfactory results (DOGAN, 1989; JOHN and JOHN, 1993; BRUNT et al., 1999; ELIZABETH and BILL, 2000; DAVID and LAURA, 2001). Recently, related research in China has been under way. The life cycle, as the basic evolving law of resort, has attracted much attention of scholars at home and abroad. Research shows that residents’ perception and attitude varies with the different stages of tourism development (DOGAN, 1989; LU, 1996), and that there is a certain connection between residents’ perception and attitude and the resort life cycle, but little research has been conducted on the relationship deeply. This paper, based on the analysis of life cycle of Putuo Mountain, and the questionnaire about residents' perception and attitude, attempts to discuss and explore the characteristics, the causes of residents’ perception and attitude, and the relationships between the resort life cycle and residents’ perception and attitude.

1 MOTIVE MECHANISM OF RESIDENTS’ PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDE AND RESORT LIFE CYCLE

The research on the motive factors of residents’ perception and attitude has always been the main object attracting foreign scholars’ attention and has produced some results. The dynamic model of residents’ perception and attitude can be illustrated in Fig. 1. The main
factor influencing residents’ perception and attitude is tourist-resident ratio, while the auxiliary factors are residents’ demographic character, tourists’ behavioral character and characteristics of tourism resources.

![Diagram of residents' perception and attitude model](image)

The cultural difference and the benefit-cost ratio are the hidden internal factors of the tourist-resident number ratio. Characteristics of tourism resources include secondary factors like type, size and seasonal features of tourism. Both the main and auxiliary factors work on residents' perception, which influences their attitude, and further influences their initiative in participation in tourism. Because of the low initiation, fewer tourists will re-visit the resort. Thus the resort image will be harmed. The research on the motive factors of resort life cycle has also been progressing, which indicates that, the direct factors that influence resort life cycle are demand, effect and environment. The effect factor is composed of economic, environmental and social elements. The environmental effect consists of internal organizational condition, external operating condition and the outer social atmosphere (XIE, 1995).

Comparatively speaking, there are more and more complicated factors that influence resort life cycle. The change of residents’ perception and attitude can be regarded as an important part of social effect of life cycle motive factors. Resort life cycle reflects the relation between resort evolution and tourist number. The change of residents' perception and attitude is a dynamic changing mechanism between tourists and residents. Both resort life cycle and the change of residents' perception and attitude are caused by the change of the number of tourists. So, to a certain extent, the change of residents' perception and attitude can illustrate the law of resort life cycle, and the combined research on both will help probe into the law of the resort evolution. This paper, based on the case study of Putuo Mountain, and its comparison with some other coastal resorts such as Haikou and Sanya, analyses the relationship between the change in residents' perception and attitude and life cycle.

2 CASE ANALYSIS OF PUTUO MOUNTAIN

Putuo Mountain is located in Zhoushan Islands, outside Hangzhou Bay in Zhejiang Province, which is one of the four great Buddhist Mountains in China. Putuo Mountain has been among the major national sites of historical and cultural interest since being authorized firstly in 1982, and the only island tourist resort at that time. It presents the harmonious combination of mountain scenery and sea scenery, historically known as "Kingdom of Buddhism Between Sea and Sky". From 1979 to 2001, Putuo Mountain has received $23.1 \times 10^6$ arrivals from home and abroad, with an average annual increase of 13.2%, by which, it has been among the relatively mature coastal resorts in domestic tourism development.

2.1 Life Cycle of Putuo Mountain

The research on resort life cycle has been attached much importance to both scientists at home and abroad. It is typical in BUTLER’s (1980) research, in which, he held that, the destination, generally speaking, experiences successively in the stages of exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, decline or rejuvenation, and summarized the characteristics of each stage. Compared with BUTLER's phased characteristics, and with reference to the domestic research results (LU, 1997), the life cycle of Putuo Mountain is divided. It has been discovered that tourism development of Putuo Mountain is closely related to Buddhism. Since "Unwilling-to-leave Guanyin Temple" was built, early in the Tang Dynasty, the devoted Buddhists have pilgrimaged to Putuo Mountain. Besides, many celebrities and scholars also have traveled to Putuo Mountain, which marked the beginning of the exploration stage. In the 13th year of the founding of the Republic of China (in 1924) the provincial government of Zhejiang Province issued a public announcement that Putuo Mountain would be planned as one of the scenic areas within the province. This marked the governmental involvement in the tourism development and also labeled the ending of the explo-