

# The management innovation of tourism enterprises under the eco-tourism model

Ziyan Zhang <sup>1,a</sup>, Zhe Yang <sup>\*2,b</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Creative Design Hainan Tropical Ocean University Sanya, China

<sup>2</sup>School of Tourism Management Hainan Tropical Ocean University Sanya, China

**Abstract.** Eco-tourism is a major trend in the development of the world's tourism industry and a crucial part of Chinese tourism industrial restructuring. The development of eco-tourism should start with the management of eco-tourism. This article mainly discusses the management innovation of tourism enterprises under the eco-tourism model, summarizes the current situation of eco-tourism development, puts forward the problems in the management of tourism enterprises under the eco-tourism model, and finally puts forward suggestions about that, in order to promote the development of tourism enterprise management.

## 1 Introduction

Tourism is a crucial component of Chinese industrial restructuring. In the past 10 years, Chinese tourism industry went through a significant increase. The market scale of Chinese tourism industry is 6.52 trillion in 2019. From the research of World Tourism Federation (WTF), because of the epidemic situation in 2020, Chinese tourism industry has been stopped completely for a period. However, accompanied by the control of the epidemic, it has active recovered until the end of 2020. It shows the power and potential of Chinese tourism industry. As a vital support of Chinese Dream, eco-tourism management is also the government focus at all levels. The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) issued the national development plan for Eco-tourism (2016-2025) in 2016, which determined the guiding ideology, basic principles, development objectives, overall layout and key tasks for Chinese ecotourism development. It covered six aspects including cultivating 20 ecotourism cooperation zones, building 200 key ecotourism destinations, establishing 50 high-quality ecotourism routes and developing 25 national eco-scenic routes etc. Besides, the plan emphasized the construction of supporting system for ecological tourism, such as resource protection system, public service system, environmental education system, community participation system, marketing system and scientific and technological innovation system. At present, the construction of ecological civilization and the management of ecotourism must be guided by the philosophy about scientific sustainable development, which should learn from the advanced theoretical results, explore and improve the management awareness of tourism enterprises, establish the concept of circular economy development, in order to promote the sustainable development of ecotourism[1].

<sup>a</sup>Mrzhangziyan@163.com

<sup>\*b</sup>zyang20202020@163.com@163.com

## 2 The concept of eco-tourism

### 2.1 The eco-tourism model

The development of eco-tourism started from 1970s, an increasing number of countries and regions attempted to improve their eco-tourism layout because of its huge economic efficiency and capacity. Accounting to the statistics, various Eco-tourism forms and its related products have brought out more than \$40 billion in revenue worldwide. Eco-tourism respect the heterogeneity of nature and culture, emphasize the combination of ecological environment protection and local economic development, advocate people's understanding, enjoyment and protection of nature. It has been considered as one of the best model of tourism sustainable development. The eco-tourism model is guided by the scientific theories of ecological values, ecological science, circular economy, and sustainable development, and takes the natural and cultural environment of the tourist destination as the practical object to experience. With the goal to understand or research the natural, cultural and biological diversity of tourist destinations by following the principle of protecting and caring for resources, Eco-tourism is seek to the coordinated development of tourists and tourists destinations[2].

### 2.2 Ecotourism management

In the 1970s, a new management concept-"ecological management" first appeared in the United States. This concept advocates the close integration of ecological thinking and organization management, and fully reflects ecological knowledge in all aspects of organization management. It not only cover the protection of human

resources and ecological environment by ecotourism destinations, but also include the monitoring and evaluation, operation management and service management related to ecotourism. The main context of ecotourism management are: 1. scientific planning of ecotourism. For example: making possible strategies of ecotourism to implement, design responsible system to restrain employees' behavior, establish short-term and long-term plan on ecotourism, create ecotourism programme for employee interaction and communication. 2. evaluate the ecotourism environment. For example: build comprehensive evaluation system for enterprise, including the behavior of all stakeholders. 3. manage and serve ecotourism visitors. Ecotourists are the core in the innovation process of tourism enterprises, their consciousness about ecotourism will significantly influence the effect of enterprises innovation based on ecotourism. Therefore, try to supervise ecotourists' behavior and increase their ecological awareness is another main point for tourism enterprises. In reality, introducing ecotourism concept into the tourism industry has effectively promoted the development of the tourism industry. In the past, the tourism industry did not pay enough attention to the sustainability of society, economy and environment, and blindly emphasized the unlimited development and utilization of tourism resources, which is not conducive to the sustainable development of tourism and the ecological environment[2]. Under the eco-tourism business philosophy, tourism companies will focus on sustainable development, minimize damage to the environment, and prevent the degradation of tourism resources.

### 3 Current Status of Ecotourism in China

#### 3.1 The eco-tourism model

Chinese tourism industry was a late starter but experienced high speed development. The concept about ecotourism has been brought out when the government and related scholars found the problem about destroying of resources and ecological environment in tourist attraction. The state council started to strengthen the management on scenic spots and historic sites, which prompted the rise of ecotourism in China. The China Ecotourism Association (CETA) was founded in 1994 while the first national symposium on Eco-tourism was hold in 1995. After around 20 years development, China has about 3000 ecotourism sites of all levels and types, which is accounted for about 10% of the land area. And the number of people receiving on ecotourism is also increasing year by year. The annual growth rate of visitors to all kinds of forest parks in China is more than 20%. In fact, China has abundant eco-tourism resources and it is one of the countries with the greatest potential for ecotourism development in the world. According to statistics, China has established 2,588 nature reserves of various levels and types, 28 of which have joined the "World Man and Biosphere Reserve Network"; 30 nature reserves have been included in the "List of Internationally Important

Wetlands", and 20 nature reserves have listed as a world natural heritage [3].

**Table 1** No. of Chinese Natural Reserve

Classification of Natural Reserve	NO.
World Man and Biosphere Reserve Network	28
List of Internationally Important Wetlands	30
World Natural Heritage Destination	20

Source from:

<http://www.xwlunwen.com/shzxlunwen/53881.html>

#### 3.2 Resource distribution and types of ecotourism

At present, Chinese eco-tourism areas mainly include forest parks, scenic spots, and nature reserves. The resources are distributed in a wide range. Among them, the more mature areas are Xinjiang Shangri-La, Zhongdian, Xishuangbanna, Changbai Mountain, Hanas and other places. According to the tourism resources of different regions, it can be divided into the following points, as shown in Table 2. On the basis of eight ecological tourism areas, China has built 20 ecotourism co-production areas for representative ecotourism destinations. The goal is to build 200 key ecotourism destinations, for example, ecological tourism area in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River, northern desert and grassland ecotourism area etc, establish 50 high-quality ecotourism routes including cross-provincial ecotourism routes and provincial ecotourism routes, develop 25 national eco-scenic routes covering Taihang Mountain scenic path, Great Hinggan Mountain scenic byway, Loess Plateau scenic path etc. for adopting to the diverse needs of ecological tourism development pattern.

**Table 2** Eco-tourism types and representatives of China, Source from: China Report Hall

Types of Eco-tourism	Main Representatives
Mountain ecological scenic spot	The five mountains, Taoist mountain
Lake ecological scenic spot	The Changbaishan Tianchi, Zhaoqing Xinghu
Forest ecological scenic spot	Changbaishan Mountain, Shennongjia
Grassland ecological scenic spot	Hulunbuir Pasture Land
Marine ecological scenic spot	Hainan Mangrove Coast
Bird watching ecological scenic spot	Jiangxi Panyanghu Wintering Migratory bird Nnature Reserve
Water and snow ecological scenic spot	Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, Jilin Changbai Mountain
Trek ecological scenic spot	Qomolangma, Lop Nur Desert

### 3.3 Market capacity

As early as the end of the "Eleventh Five-Year Plan" period, China's eco-tourism development has entered into a period of rapid development. Large and small eco-tourism attractions have been established throughout the country, with an annual reception volume of more than 500 million people and tourism revenue of more than 6000 Multi-billion yuan. According to the survey data of the Foresight Industry Institute, China's eco-tourism scenic spots have huge operating income. Among them, Scenic spots with an income of 5 million accounted for about 43%, and scenic spots with 100-500 income accounted for 22%, which is enough to show the market capacity of China's ecological scenic spots.

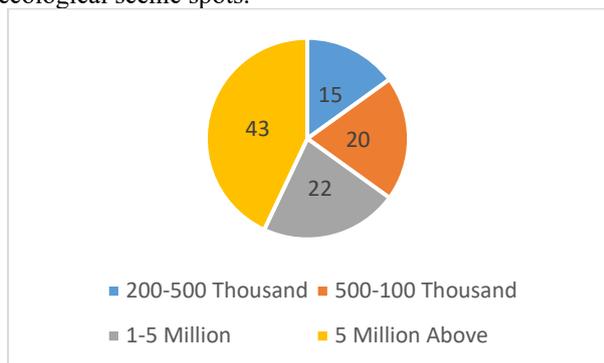


Figure 1 Income of conservation ecotourism

### 3.4 Problems in the development of ecological scenic spots

Natural tourism resources have attracted a large number of domestic and foreign tourists, and some nature reserves have officially launched eco-tourism. However, China's eco-tourism started relatively late. According to survey data from relevant departments, more than 23% of nature reserves have been destroyed due to the development of tourism, and even the natural environment has been degraded, such as water pollution, noise pollution, air pollution, etc. The current problems on Chinese ecotourism can be concluded as: 1. Serious environment damage in the process of tourism development. Except the environmental damage and pollution, tourists' activities in scenic area, especially during the peak tourist season, also caused negative influence on environment. 2. Economic interests as the core. Lots of scenic spots take ecotourism as competitive advantage for profit but ignore the core value of ecotourism. Ecotourism is becoming a way for tourism companies to attract tourists. 3. Unprofessional ecotourists. There is a gap for talents who have professional knowledge and skill on ecotourism. For example: tour guide in scenic spots cannot explain about ecotourism to increase tourists' awareness. 4. Lacking of complete set of resource protection and environmental protection measures. Most tourism enterprises emphasize development but neglect management, which makes it difficult to effectively protect tourism resources[4]. Therefore, it is urgent to establish a scientific eco-tourism management system to realize the sustainable development of eco-tourism with practical and feasible schemes.

## 4 Strategies related to the new model of tourism enterprise management under the concept of eco-tourism management

### 4.1 Establish a scientific management concept

With the close integration of ecotourism and sustainable development strategy, the ranks of ecotourists are also growing. As the theme of ecotourism activities, their ecological consciousness is the key factor affecting the effect of ecotourism[5]. In 1990s, Chinese scholar Yu Diechang defined ecological consciousness as a kind of new value which reflects the harmonious development of human being and nature, a new independent ideology. Because of the existing problems in ecotourism scenic spots, most Chinese tourists cannot be defined as ecotourist. In fact, Zhang (2011) has done the research on Chinese ecotourists' ecological consciousness with the sample of ecotourists in Zhengzhou Yellow River ecological tourism scenic area. The result showed that 48.8% ecotourists have desire to understand and learn ecotourism[6]. Chinese government and tourism industry should provide a systematized management to satisfy tourists' demand and realize the new transformation on ecotourism. First, adjust the original management method. Under eco-tourism management, the management of tourism enterprises not only pays attention to meeting the needs of tourists, but also takes scenic spots as the main body, attaches importance to the maintenance of scenic spots, puts forward corresponding protection requirements for tourists, and promptly stops tourists from damaging the environment. Scenic spots should also increase maintenance efforts to protect existing tourism resources.[7] Second, formulate reward and punishment measures. There should be a integrated reward and punishment system in each scenic spot to supervise tourists' behavior. For example, the ecological behavior can be rewards (riding horse, pedestrian, bicycling etc.) while unecological behavior can be punished (drop garbage everywhere, scribble on scenic spot etc.) Third, carry out ecological education. The scenic spots can promote ecological consciousness by printing it on ticket or special booklet. Tourists can get the special booklet for free with ticket. This booklet will describe the details about ecological consciousness and behavior in this specific scenic spot, which will guide tourists' behavior more targeted.

### 4.2 Refine the management measures of tourism enterprises.

Under the ecotourism management concept, the key to transforming the management model of tourism enterprises is to attach importance to environmental protection. Therefore, this article believes that tourism companies should continue to improve their internal organizational structure, starting from the details, and continue to carry out some corporate management measures, such as the implementation of a responsibility

system, to ensure that all issues are responsible by specially-assigned person, so that all issues are resolved. The tourism enterprises should integrate ecotourism into organizational culture by taking it as the core value. It is possible to regularly carry out ecotourism management education within the enterprise, create a good corporate cultural environment, improve the eco-environmental awareness of corporate managers and employees, and gradually popularize eco-environmental awareness among more tourists. Among which, to cultivate high-quality personnel with ecotourism consciousness and comprehensive evaluation system for them are very important. Tour guide having strong ecological consciousness and abundant knowledge on environment protection can spread ecotourism knowledge and standard tourists' behavior directly. Besides, tourism enterprises can also consider the cooperation with government, tourists and local citizens in order to refine their management measures.[8] The government can provide technological and financial support for enterprises to build impeccable measuring system, the local citizens can help tourism enterprises to realize ecotourism measurement and the tourists can get benefit (such as coupons, discount etc.) by their ecotourism behavior.

#### **4.3 Build a circular tourist ecological scenic spot**

Tourism enterprises can change their thinking and regard tourist behavior as part of tourism resources by carrying out some participatory activities, for example, building a circular tourist ecological scenic spot. The circular tourists ecological scenic aims to design a circular ecotourism system that tourists can participate. Through the participation in the whole process, tourists can fully enjoy the fun of traveling. For example, tourism enterprises can design a site in a scenic area, and visitors can participate in planting, picking, stocking, feeding, etc., and better integrate into the natural environment. It can effectively guide the behavior of tourists from the design of tourism links, stimulate their love for nature, let them consciously engage in environmental protection behaviors, and build a circular development of tourist ecological scenic spots.[8] The circular tourists can increase tourists' interest to this scenic spot and spread ecotourism consciousness and behavior. To build this circular tourist ecological scenic spot, an online platform should be designed, which is a place for tourism enterprises, government and other related organizations to spread ecotourism with various formats. Tourists can deeply understand ecotourism when they finish their travel.

### **5 Summary**

Innovation is the driving force of enterprise reform and development and the soul of an enterprise. Tourism enterprises have to carry out management innovation on the basis of ecotourism for their sustainable development. To realize innovation on ecotourism, enterprises should increase employees' ecotourism consciousness, build completed ecotourism system (including strategy,

measurements, evaluation etc.), cooperate with related departments (governments, local citizens etc.). According to the current situation of Chinese ecotourism, tourism enterprises should take this opportunity to formulate their ecotourism strategies based on their self-development, promote ecotourism inside the enterprises by integrate ecotourism into organizational culture, in order to create enterprise competitive advantage. However, in the context of modern social development, tourism companies are facing severe challenges, but their development prospects are also unlimited. Only by recognizing the shortcomings of the traditional management model, tourism companies can integrate the ecotourism management concept into the corporate management model, promote their own healthy development, and contribute to the sustainable development of China's ecological environment. Simultaneously, it also accelerate the innovation of tourism enterprises based on ecotourism, which achieve the win-win situation for tourism enterprises and the whole society.

### **REFERENCE**

1. Lu Xiaobo, Chen Xiaoying, Wang Wanshan, Zhao Mingcheng, Zheng Ying. Research on the focus of ecotourism in China. 2016(10): 41
2. Khanra Sayantan, Dhir Amandeep, Kaur Puneet, Mantymaki Matti, Bibliometric analysis and literature review of ecotourism: Toward sustainable development[J]. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 2020 (12)
3. Zhai Dashun, Research on the Impact of China's Ecotourism on the Sustainable Development of Regional Economy[J]. *Shanxi Agricultural Economics*, 2016(17):6-6.
4. Zhu Xu, China's Ecotourism Status and Development Strategy[J]. *Technology and Enterprise*, 2015,000 (005):8-8.
5. Yin Xiaoyan, Empirical research on tourists' ecological awareness and behavior [J]. *Journal of green science and technology*. 2012 (8): 236-238
6. Zhang Dongyun, Research on Chinese ecotourists' ecological consciousness [J]. *Theoretical Research*. 2011(10): 27.
7. Ye Wen, Discussion on China's Ecotourism Development[C], China Ecological Civilization Research and Promotion Association, 2016.
8. Yang Jinlan, Analysis on current situation of Ecotourism in China [J]. *Research on Tourism management*, 2014 (2):15
9. Qin Xu, Study on The Protection and Development of Wetland Ecotourism Resources [J]. *International Journal of Social Sciences in Universities*, 2020(12).