

Research on Quality Improvement and Upgrading for Tradition Chinese Medicine Tourism Industry in Shandong Province Based on RMP Analysis

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Abstract. In the post-pandemic era, Chinese tourism industry is faced with unprecedented and profound adjustments. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has not only played a vital role in treatment, and prevention and control of COVID-19, but also played a significant role in the development of TCM health tourism industry. Although Shandong has advantaged resources of traditional medicine materials, there are still problems and shortcomings in the development of TCM tourism industry. In this paper, based on RMP Analysis (Resource Analysis; Market Analysis; Product Analysis), the author analyzes the development status of TCM tourism products by questionnaire survey, and on this basis, puts forward questions and countermeasures to promote the upgrading and transformation of TCM health tourism in Shandong Province.

Keywords: TCM tourism; RMP Analysis; tourism industry.

In the context of “Healthy China Initiative”, a number of important documents have been issued, such as the “Outline of the Strategic Planning for the Development of Traditional Chinese Medicine (2016-2030)” and the “Guidance on Promoting the Development of TCM Health Tourism Industry”, which have offered a better guide for the development of TCM health tourism industry. Since then, the development of TCM health tourism has entered a new journey and China’s TCM health tourism is ushering in a period of rapid development.

The concept of TCM tourism was firstly put forward by Jingming and other experts¹. They believe that TCM tourism, as a comprehensive development industry integrating medicine, health and tourism, is based on its rich resources and extensive and profound traditional national culture. Guangzeng Tian² suggests that TCM tourism is a tourist activity which is aimed at medical treatment, rehabilitation, health preservation and health care, relies on various TCM resources in tourist destinations, and takes certain TCM equipment or professional knowledge reserve as conditions.

Nowadays, with the growth of social economy, people care more about their physical and mental health and the diversified ways of travelling. The launch of the new industry mode of “TCM + Health + Culture and Tourism” follows the market trend which is characterized by the growth of people’s consumption level and people’s higher demand for a healthy life, and conforms to the trend of the times for the inheritance and development of TCM culture. At the same time, driven by “Healthy China Initiative” and large medicine industries, the traditional TCM health tourism, an emerging industry, is undertaking a rapid development, which indicates that new forms and modes of TCM tourism with distinctive features are gradually taking shape.

1. RMP Analysis of TCM Tourism Industry in Shandong Province

It is necessary to comprehensively consider TCM resources, market, product and service to integrate “industrial chain, innovation chain, human resources chain, capital chain and policy chain”

so as to realize a sound development of TCM tourism industry. At present, a number of high-quality TCM health tourism demonstration sites have been built in fourteen cities including Qingdao, and three TCM health demonstration zones, fourteen demonstration bases and nine demonstration projects have been recommended to the state. Therefore, the TCM health tourism industry has a strong foundation for development and broad prospects. In view of this, this paper is going to analyze Shandong TCM tourism industry by adopting RMP Analysis. As shown in Figure 1, RMP Analysis is a theory which takes tourism products as the core to analyze and evaluate resources and markets.

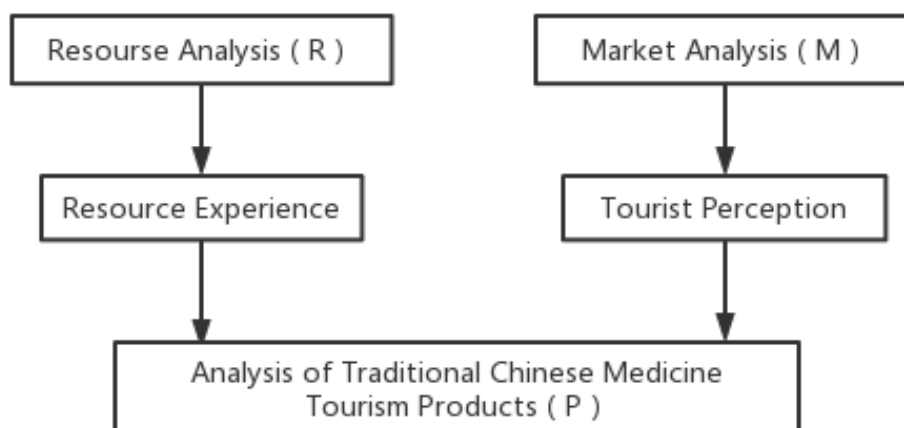


Figure 1. RMP Analysis

1.1 Resource Analysis of TCM Tourism Industry in Shandong Province

“R” refers to tourism resources, which indicates natural functions and values for tourists to appreciate, perceive, experience and enjoy, and an environmental landscape developed and utilized by tourism industry in a natural setting or in a place that blends with culture³. According to “Guidelines for China’s Tourism Resources Census (Draft)”, and the definition of tourism resources and the characteristics of TCM tourism, it is considered that those adhering to the purpose of TCM health care and recuperation and allowing tourists to experience TCM recuperation technology, TCM diagnoses and tourism recuperation environment under the concept of tourism culture integration are all important factors of TCM tourism resources. In view of the characteristics of coexistence, integration and overlapping of TCM tourism resources, they can be divided into TCM resources, natural landscape and human resources, and industrial resources.

1.1.1 TCM Resources

After thousands of years of research, inheritance and development, the unique holistic concept, syndrome differentiation and treatment, principle of homology of medicine and food and the idea of “prevention of diseases” of TCM have become effective means of preventing chronic diseases. In the long process of exploring health preservation, Shandong has gradually accumulated characteristic experience in medicine, and in some places has established a systematic theory system of TCM with regional characteristics, which is indispensable for the development of TCM and has become an important resource for the development of TCM health tourism.

With the development of agritainment and rural tourism, the base of agricultural products with the homology of medicine and food has become an excellent resource of TCM health tourism. According to “Compendium of Materia Medica” and other materials, some agricultural products are not only ideal vegetables and condiments, but also high-quality medicinal materials with outstanding efficacy. And the combination of agricultural demonstration gardens in these production bases and TCM health tourism will play a positive role in promoting the industry.

At the same time, Shandong has established a collaboration mechanism of industry-academia-research-application among local governments, universities, scientific research institutes and enterprises, which promoted the implementation a number of TCM innovation and development

projects, including thirty-one standardized planting science and technology demonstration zones for medicinal materials, four TCM health care service demonstration zones, six experimental units combining TCM and elderly services, one global internet trading center for TCM materials, one world center for quality inspection of TCM materials, and one world digital TCM research institute.

1.1.2 Natural Landscape and Human Resources

There are more than fifteen hundred varieties of TCM materials in Shandong with a total output of more than nine billion yuan. Honeysuckle, ginkgo, salvia, sorb, platycodon grandiflorum, semen trichosanthes kirilowii and other main authentic medicinal materials are far ahead in the production and quality in China. In addition, there are many well-known ecological health resources matching with cultural resources, such as waterfront forests and hot springs and mountains.

Shandong is rich in mountain resources, with an average altitude of more than eight hundred meters. Abundant TCM resources like locust, forsythia, pistacia and other medicinal plants growing on the mountains have good auxiliary effects for treating many diseases. Besides, Shandong is rich in forest resources, such as ginkgo, locust trees, camphor, hibiscus, platycladus and dogwood, which have many functions such as anti-cancer and moistening the lungs, clearing away heat and toxic materials, dissipating heat, and promoting “qi”. Hot spring resources are also abundant, and it has been confirmed by modern medical research that various chemical substances rich in hot springs have the functions of activating collaterals and tendons, invigorating blood circulation and sterilizing bacteria. Shandong’s rich cultural deposits have given birth to the longevity culture represented by Rushan Wendeng. As the support of health tourism industry, the Confucian culture represented by Qufu and the Fairy Taoist culture represented by Penglai’s Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea have formed rich TCM cultural tourism resources by combining traditional culture with TCM industry, which has laid a solid foundation for the development of TCM health tourism.

1.1.3 Industrial Resources

So far, Shandong has developed the TCM planting and processing industry based on salvia and Honeysuckle, and has become a national production base of high-quality TCM materials. Relying on the advantaged geographical and TCM cultural resources, and under the unified leadership of the state and the municipal government, Shandong has cultivated more than seventy kinds of TCM materials, among which twenty kinds have been cultivated on a large scale. At present, Shandong embraces a large number of professional TCM hospitals and TCM markets.

Lunan Pharmaceutical Group, Shandong Hongjitang Pharmaceutical Group Co., Ltd., etc. are the most influential in terms of authentic medicinal materials and production areas in Shandong. These enterprises focus on TCM inheritance and promotion, develop and promote health technology with new concepts, and has invested a large amount of capital to build a national TCM health demonstration base integrating research and development, cultivation, planting, production, processing, TCM pharmaceutical manufacturing, biopharming and tourism. Through TCM health tourism services, TCM culture is promoted to bring greater vitality to the local TCM industry and tourism.

1.2 Market Analysis of TCM Tourism Industry in Shandong Province

“M” refers to demand market or customer market of tourism, indicating consumption elasticity of tourism products and choice tendency of tourists.

TCM health tourism can not only achieve the purpose of sightseeing, but also take recuperation and health care into account. Tourists can not only comprehend the traditional culture and knowledge of TCM, but also experience the health tourism. At present, the market of health tourism is mainly composed of health preservation, mind nourishing and invocation. Consumers of health preservation tend to enjoy a high-quality of life and sensory experience. Consumers of mind nourishing pay more attention to enriching their spiritual life, and their travel purpose is more inclined to knowledge accumulation and the pleasure of body and mind. And customers of invocation have higher demand in improving the somatic function and adjusting the physical state.

According to the interview for administrative staff of Shandong tourist attractions, the questionnaire survey named “Research on the Behavior and Preference of TCM Tourists in Shandong Province”, and online travel portals such as Tuniu, Ctrip and Meituan, it is found that, at present, Shandong tourism market is concentrated in coastal areas, it relies on comfortable accommodation environment, and combines landscape scenery, TCM resources and health preservation to provide high-quality services for tourists. As shown in Table 1, Tiantai Hot Spring Resort has rich geothermal resources, and the hot spring contains a variety of trace elements such as metasilic acid, metaborate acid, strontium, bromine and fluorine, which are of high value in medical care and can meet the needs of short-distance tourists in the province in health preservation. Qingdao Rose Holy Land TCM Health Tourism Base is an ecological sightseeing park which focuses on the sales of rose products, and integrates rose planting and production and research, recreation, accommodation, education and scientific research of rose related products, which can meet the needs of TCM scholars and students in acquiring knowledge. Rizhao Sino-Canada International Health Management Center provides comprehensive projects of health preservation and care and supporting services for high-end customers, which can meet their demand for tourism quality.

By 2020, the income of Shandong TCM health tourism has reached RMB two hundred and sixty-four point five billion yuan, and is expected to reach five hundred billion to 2025. Besides, the number of TCM health tourists accounted for forty-seven percent of the total by 2020, and is expected to increase by six percent by 2025, which will provide infrastructure and support for the development of TCM tourism industry. At present, Shandong has three national TCM tourism bases, one national ecotourism area and one national pension industry base, which provides theoretical basis of the measures and support for the development of Shandong TCM tourism industry.

Table 1. Market Analysis of TCM Tourist Attractions in Shandong Province

Name	Confucius Family Mansion, Confucian temple, Cemetery of Confucius and His Descendants (Qufu, Jinan)	Tiantai Hot Spring Resort	TCM Bases	Rizhao Sino-Canada International Health Management Center
Market	Health Preservation	Invocation	Mind Nourishing	Health Preservation
Target Customer	Tourist from Home and Abroad	Short-distance Tourists in the Province	Scholars and Students	High-end Customers
Feature	World Cultural Heritage Sites	Rare Seawater Hot Springs	Shandong Authentic Medicinal Materials	Sports at High-end Hotels
Category	Sightseeing	Tourism	Knowledge	Vocation

1.3 Product Analysis of TCM Tourism Industry in Shandong Province

“P” refers to tourism products which indicate the sum of services produced or developed by tourism producers and operators in a certain region for sale in order to meet the needs of tourists⁴.

At present, under the context of the strategy of “strengthening the province by TCM” and the strong demand for health preservation, cultural and creative products of TCM museum and tourism products of TCM treatment have appeared in the tourism market. In TCM museum, service staff would introduce the development of local TCM, TCM classics and medical prescriptions, and guide tourists to visit or experience special TCM treatment and to participate in cultural activities such as lectures on TCM knowledge. For example, Shandong TCM Museum, jointly built with universities and colleges, takes three Qilu calling cards of Confucian culture, hometown of Bian Que and birthplace of acupuncture as the core, highlighting the distinctive characteristics of Qilu TCM culture and practice, and launching a series of TCM cultural and creative IP products. TCM treatment tourism refers to the tourism activities developed by combining health preservation services with tourism

services, mainly including TCM ecological park, TCM recuperation hall, TCM treatment products, etc., such as one of the TCM health care bases located in the Ancient City of Jimo, Jimo District, Qingdao City.

However, at present, Shandong tourism market is still dominated by tourism service projects such as tourism of “coastal cities and their ancient towns” and the cultivation of Chinese medicinal materials. And there is little research on the planning and development of TCM recuperation and cultural tourism, and no relevant leading products have been launched. Therefore, in the research and design of tourism products, Shandong should combine the services with TCM characteristics, such as acupuncture, massage, massotherapy, scraping therapy and cupping therapy according to the regional characteristics of recuperation, medical therapy and rehabilitation, Confucian culture, hometown of Bian Que and the birthplace of acupuncture, and give full consideration to market, region, national tradition, cultural and historical accumulation, economic and social development and so on to launch TCM tourism products with unique characteristics of Shandong.

2. Problems of the Development of TCM Tourism Industry in Shandong Province

Shandong TCM tourism is in the stage of development, however, there are a series of serious problems restricting this development, mainly in the following three aspects:

2.1 Insufficient Publicity; Tourists’ Lack of Understanding of TCM Tourism

According to the questionnaire results, more than fifty-six percent of the tourists surveyed do not know about Shandong TCM tourism industry. Although a number of TCM tourist attractions have been built, the insufficient publicity makes tourists lack understanding of the concept, development and management principle of TCM tourism, which is not conducive to the development of this industry.

2.2 Poor Integration of TCM and Tourism Industry; Unattractive TCM Tourism Spots

TCM tourism is a new industry emerging in recent years and is still in the stage of practical exploration and pilot development. As Shandong has limited development experience in this field, the concept and integration mode of TCM and tourism industry still need to be explored.

At present, the main problem is that TCM has not been deeply integrated into tourism, and the tourist experience has not been changed greatly due to this integration. Besides, there is a disconnection between tourism and TCM experience due to the insufficient attention to TCM and excessive enthusiasm for “Internet celebrity spots”, which make the tourism spots tend to be homogenized, and lead to the deterioration of the reputation and the reduction of the attraction of tourism spots.

2.3 Difficulty in Introducing High-quality Talents; Management Inefficiency; Poor Experience of Tourists

TCM tourism is a comprehensive industry integrating TCM and pharmacy, health management, tourism management and other disciplines, which has a great demand for high-quality talents. However, currently, TCM tourism industry lacks senior management personnel, which has resulted in low management efficiency. In addition, different qualities of practitioners, the lack of interdisciplinary talents who acquire the knowledge of TCM and tourism management working in TCM exploration halls and TCM culture exploration zones, and the existence of figurehead experts have seriously hindered the development of TCM tourism, and will even make tourists resist this industry by having poor experience, and further influence its reputation.

3. Development Strategies of TCM Tourism Products in Shandong Province

3.1 Strengthening Publicity to Encourage and Guide Tourists to Participate in TCM Tourism

Firstly, expanding information publicity channels. At present, the Internet has become an indispensable part of people's life, and is characterized by the strength and breadth of information dissemination. Based on this characteristic, the concept and development mode of TCM tourism can be publicized through Wechat, Weibo and other Internet channels to enhance public's understanding of TCM tourism. Secondly, building up reputation by giving full play to the role of mass publicity to encourage and guide tourists to participate in the experience of TCM tourism so as to gradually build up a good reputation.

3.2 Promoting the Deep Integration of TCM and Tourism Industry; Building Brand Characteristics

The lack of integration between TCM and traditional tourism industry is the main problem that restricts the development of Shandong TCM tourism. Therefore, the deep integration of these two factors is necessary for the development of Shandong TCM tourism. First of all, to find the correct position to develop TCM tourism products with characteristics. For instance, Pingyi County, Linyi City is known as "home of honeysuckle", and has cultivated honeysuckle for nearly two hundred years. It is suggested to use its name of "home of honeysuckle" to host the national honeysuckle forum, which can not only deepen the social understanding of TCM, but also effectively promote the development of this industry. Secondly, to take advantage of flow effects to create special tourism spots. Nowadays, novel and fashionable things tend to attract the attention of consumers. Therefore, TCM should be combined with modern culture to promote its modernization to create special tourism spots.

3.3 To Cultivate and Introduce Professionals to Promote the Coordinated Development of "Industry-Academia-Research" of TCM Tourism Industry

Firstly, organizing TCM tourism practitioners to participate in national or provincial TCM tourism exchange meetings to strengthen regional exchanges and cooperation. Secondly, establishing a promising talent introduction mechanism to provide intellectual guarantee for the development of Shandong TCM tourism industry. Finally, improving the training mechanism of TCM tourism professionals, promoting the establishment of related majors which should be based on the needs of industrial development, so as to embody the connotation of cultures between TCM and tourism industry.

4. Conclusion

The development of Shandong TCM tourism industry is still in the stage of exploration and there are a series of problems during the development. The questionnaire results show that tourists generally lack understanding of TCM tourism, which displays the problems of insufficient supporting facilities and unattractive tourism spots. Besides, problems such as lack of innovation, incomplete integration of TCM and tourism industry, and the shortage of talents still obvious. Therefore, it is suggested to strengthen the efforts on publicity, improve the supporting system, and promote the integration of TCM and tourism industry to make TCM health tourism industry exert its advantage to a greater extent, respond to public policies through implementations, and benefit the Chinese people.

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