

Study on the Differential Development of Ice-Snow Economy in Shenyang, Harbin and Changchun

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Abstract

Against the background that China's ice-snow economy has entered the trillion-yuan track and the three northeastern provinces have become the core leading area of the national ice-snow economy, Harbin takes the lead with an international ice-snow cultural tourism IP + a full industrial chain, and Changchun deeply plows the segmented market with ski training + ice-snow parks. Shenyang is faced with challenges such as resource homogenization, insufficient brand recognition and low industrial collaboration. How to expand the advantages of Shenyang's ice-snow tourism and reshape its past glory is an urgent subject to be studied. In order to conduct a more objective and clear self-evaluation, this paper selects Changchun, a provincial capital city with highly similar geographical location, ice-snow tourism resources and tourist source market to Harbin, and whose ice-snow tourism has made remarkable achievements in recent years, as a reference for a comparative study in the northeast sector with the strongest strength in China's ice-snow tourism. It strives to make the conclusions more convincing and the countermeasures more targeted and operable.

Keywords

Ice-snow economy, differential development, dislocation competition, industrial integration, Shenyang, Northeast China Revitalization.

1. Comparison of Ice-Snow Tourism Development in Harbin, Changchun and Shenyang

1.1. Data Comparison and Analysis

The data in Table 1 clearly shows that Harbin, Changchun and Shenyang, as the provincial capitals of the three northeastern provinces, constitute the core triangle of the ice-snow economy. Relying on a century of ice-snow culture, Ice and Snow World and Yabuli ski cluster, Harbin has built itself into an international ice-snow tourism destination. Relying on Ice and Snow New World and high-quality powder snow resources, Changchun deeply plows the ski training + parent-child ice-snow market. As the regional central city of Northeast China and the main venue of the 15th National Winter Games, Shenyang has unique advantages such as industrial culture, Shengjing culture, hot spring recuperation and transportation hub. However, it has long been trapped in the development dilemma of "inferior ice-snow resources to Harbin and inferior ski quality to Changchun", with prominent problems of homogenization competition, low-end supply and fragmented operation. It is urgent to reshape its core competitiveness through differential development and promote the coordinated development of ice-snow industry in northeast urban agglomerations[1]

1.2. Overview of the Development History of Harbin Ice-Snow Festival

The first Ice Lantern Fair held by Harbin Municipal Party Committee and Municipal Government in Zhaolin Park in 1963 marked the official launch of China's ice-snow tourism,

making Harbin the birthplace of China's ice-snow tourism. To further expand ice-snow tourism by relying on its own advantages, Harbin founded China's first ice-snow-themed tourism festival in 1985. In 1988, the industrious people of Sun Island pioneered snow sculptures, and since then snow sculptures and ice lanterns have jointly supported Harbin's ice-snow tourism, making ice and snow sculptures well-known throughout China. In 1996, the successful hosting of the Asian Winter Games in Yabuli officially started the ski tourism in Harbin. In 1999, the large-scale ice-snow theme park - Ice and Snow World came into being to welcome the new century, and has always been the flagship product of Harbin's ice-snow tourism since its establishment. After 2000, the leading ice and snow sculptures and the rapidly developing ski tourism made Harbin's ice-snow tourism prosperous. In 2001, Harbin Ice-Snow Festival was upgraded to China Harbin International Ice-Snow Festival. Driven by diversified tourism products and the continuously expanding ice-snow tourism market, Harbin's ice-snow tourism prospered and became the leader of China's ice-snow tourism industry. In 2009, the successful hosting of the 24th Winter Universiade in Yabuli realized the overall upgrading of ski tourism in terms of scale, quality, environment and services. On June 30, 2017, the world's largest indoor ski resort officially opened in Songbei District, extending ski tourism from single winter operation to four-season experience. In the winter of 2018, Harbin Modern Group launched the public welfare and interesting River Ice-Snow Carnival by utilizing the wide Songhua River and river banks, becoming a leading project for ice and snow entertainment. By the 2020-2021 snow season, Harbin had held 37 ice-snow festivals.

1.3. Overview of the Development of Changchun Ice-Snow Festival

Changchun Ice-Snow Festival was founded in 1998. The Swedish National Orienteering Organization investigated in China and believed that the environment of Changchun Jingyuetan was extremely suitable for skiing. In 2003, the famous Swedish Vasaloppet International Cross-Country Skiing Festival settled in Changchun. In 2005, Changchun Jingyuetan Ice-Snow Tourism Festival was renamed "China · Changchun Ice-Snow Tourism Festival", and ice-snow events became the main driving force for the development of ice-snow tourism. By 2010, Changchun ski competitions expanded from a single cross-country ski competition to a comprehensive competition combining professional and mass ski competitions. In the winter of 2019, China · Changchun Ice-Snow Tourism Festival was officially renamed Changchun Ice-Snow Festival. After years of unremitting exploration and practical accumulation, Changchun's ice-snow tourism products are diverse and experiential, with ski resorts, ice-snow hot springs and ice-snow theme parks available. In the 2019-2020 snow season, Changchun Ice and Snow World, invested and constructed by Jilin Construction Group and aligned with world-class ice-snow theme parks, filled the gap of Changchun's lack of ice-snow tourism theme scenic spots. By the 2020-2021 snow season, Changchun had held 24 ice-snow festivals. It is worth mentioning that Changchun carefully considered how to better integrate ice-snow tourism into the development strategy of Changchun's modern metropolitan area, and proposed to develop the "urban ice-snow" brand in the 24th Ice-Snow Festival, focusing on the two major characteristics of ice-snow experience and urban culture.

1.4. Overview of the Development of Shenyang Ice-Snow Festival

Shenyang Ice-Snow Festival started early. The Qipanshan ice-snow project began operation in 1994, and Shenyang International Ice-Snow Festival was officially founded in 2011. After more than 30 years of cultivation, it has formed a winter festival system with multi-point distribution across the region and integration of culture, sports, business and tourism, with the theme positioning of "Clear Wind and Manchu Charm, Ice and Snow Shenyang". It is an important part of the ice-snow economy in Northeast China. Adopting the "East, West, South, North and Central" regional layout model, the Ice-Snow Festival links 13 districts and counties of the city, takes Qipanshan Ice and Snow World as the core carrier, integrates Baiqingzhai, Northeast Asia,

Guaipo and other ski resorts, and simultaneously creates Olympic Sports Ice-Snow Carnival, Dingxiang Lake Urban Ice Rink, Beiling Park snow-playing venues, superimposes characteristic activities such as Laobeishi Folk Lantern Fair and Kangping Wolong Lake Winter Fishing. It has constructed a pattern of large-scale suburban ice-snow parks, mini urban park ice-snow scenes and folk ice-snow activities. It has continuously carried out the mass ice-snow action of "Millions of Citizens on Ice and Snow". Relying on Shengjing culture, industrial heritage and hot spring resources, Shenyang Ice-Snow Festival focuses on creating diversified formats of "ice-snow + culture, ice-snow + recuperation, ice-snow + sports, ice-snow + commerce", and launches a number of ice-snow hot spring and ice-snow study tourism routes, which is different from the product model of Harbin and Changchun dominated by large-scale ice and snow sculptures and alpine skiing. In recent years, the market scale of the Ice-Snow Festival has grown steadily. In the 2024-2025 ice-snow season, the city received 45 million tourists related to ice and snow, achieving a tourism income of 55 billion yuan. The local citizen market is stable, the number of tourists from other provinces continues to grow, and Shenyang was once rated as one of the top ten ice-snow tourism

2. Countermeasures and Suggestions for the Development of Shenyang Ice-Snow Tourism

2.1. Dislocation Competition

Relying on Shenyang's industrial foundation, university scientific research resources and transportation hub advantages, develop a full chain of ice-snow equipment R&D, manufacturing, maintenance and sales, and build a northeast ice-snow equipment distribution center and ice-snow equipment supporting service headquarters. The layout of ice-snow equipment manufacturing enterprises is affected by industrial foundation, traffic accessibility and market demand[2].

Represented by enterprises such as Shenyang Yahao Group and Shenyang Anges Amusement Equipment Co., Ltd., it can independently produce snow machines, ski field magic carpets and water supply systems, and undertake ski field planning and construction, cableway equipment installation and equipment maintenance services. Shenyang Feihang Ice-Snow Equipment focuses on the R&D and manufacturing of speed skating blades and racing roller skating equipment, supplying products to many ice-snow sports teams in China, and some products are exported to Russia and South Korea. Local equipment enterprises such as Deheng Equipment, relying on mechanical processing capacity, produce large-scale snow removal equipment for the urban winter supply market. Emergency rescue equipment enterprises supporting the production of ice-snow scene rescue equipment have formed a small amount of supporting supply. At present, the maintenance business is mainly supporting services, most enterprises adopt the bundled model of "equipment sales + later maintenance". The independent professional ice-snow equipment maintenance market is small in volume, with scattered maintenance outlets and lack of standardized testing, maintenance and renovation centers.

2.2. Industrial Upgrading

2.2.1. Brand Positioning Upgrading

Abandon the benchmarking of Harbin and Changchun's "ice-snow sightseeing" brand, and shape an integrated brand image of "event hub, industrial cultural and creative, ice-snow recuperation, equipment manufacturing". Highlight the label of "mild ice-snow, industrial ice-snow" in external communication, and avoid competing with Harbin Ice and Snow World and Changchun Ice and Snow New World in the landscape flow track.

2.2.2. Tourist Source Structure Upgrading

Shift from mainly local tourists in the province to equal emphasis on long-term vacationers from Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei, professional event personnel, study groups and recuperation tourists. Develop cross-regional connected tourism products, link Harbin and Changchun to create a high-quality northeast ice-snow route of "Viewing ice and snow in Harbin, learning skiing in Changchun, watching events + recuperation in Shenyang", and realize mutual tourist sources, so as to realize the symbiotic development of ice-snow industry in northeast urban agglomeration[3]

2.2.3. Market Expansion

Relying on geographical advantages, carry out the export of ice-snow equipment and ice-snow technical services to Northeast Asia, promote the export of snow machines, ice sports equipment and ski field operation and maintenance services to Russia, Mongolia, the DPRK and other Northeast Asian countries, and expand overseas markets.

3. Brand Remodeling Measures for Shenyang Ice-Snow Industry

First, accurately position the brand and anchor the differential track. Abandon benchmarking large-scale ice-snow landscapes, focus on "mild ice-snow, event ice-snow, cultural and creative ice-snow, recuperation ice-snow", strengthen the intimate characteristics of "not too cold, not too far, not too expensive, not too difficult" ice-snow experience, form a clear distinction from Harbin's international ice-snow sightseeing and Changchun's ski training, and establish the core image of northeast ice-snow event hub, industrial ice-snow cultural and creative benchmark, and ice-snow recuperation vacation destination.

Second, build a core IP matrix and strengthen recognition. Take the 15th National Winter Games as the top event IP, link the development of emblems, mascots and licensed goods, and release event flow. Create an industrial ice-snow IP, launch industrial heritage ice-snow shows, machine tool ice sculptures and ice-snow study routes. Deeply cultivate the Shengjing ice-snow IP, integrate the red wall snow scene of the Palace Museum, Laobeishi ice-snow intangible cultural heritage and Manchu ice play culture. Cultivate a hot spring recuperation IP, launch "skiing + hot spring + traditional Chinese medicine health care" vacation products, and form unique brand memory points. The construction of ice-snow tourism brand needs systematic IP development and multi-dimensional marketing[4]

Third, build reputation with services and consolidate the brand foundation. Implement the "customer-friendly service" standard, improve the traffic special line, intelligent reservation, warm stations and price supervision system, and create a "handle complaints immediately" service mechanism. Upgrade ski equipment halls, storage, drying, medical and other supporting facilities, improve tourist satisfaction and repurchase rate with high-quality services, and build a brand moat with word-of-mouth.

Fourth, promote brand industrialization and achieve long-term value-added. Transform brand potential energy into industrial kinetic energy, link ice-snow equipment, cultural and creative, training, exhibitions and other formats, develop brand derivatives and experience scenes, promote cultural and tourism IP with local Shengjing characteristics, and help the high-quality development of the ice-snow industry.

4. Conclusion

This paper systematically compares the ice-snow tourism development process, resource endowments and industrial characteristics of three core northeastern cities: Harbin, Changchun and Shenyang. The research finds that the three cities have formed distinct differentiated development paradigms in the domestic ice-snow economy system. Harbin

dominates the market with international ice-snow landscape tourism and a complete industrial chain, while Changchun gains competitive advantages through professional ski training and parent-child ice-snow segmented markets. In contrast, Shenyang faces prominent developmental bottlenecks including homogeneous product supply, weak brand competitiveness and insufficient industrial coordination, despite its unique strengths in transportation location, industrial culture, Shengjing regional culture and hot spring recuperation resources.

To break through the developmental dilemma, this study proposes a targeted differentiated development strategy for Shenyang's ice-snow economy. Different from the landscape-oriented and ski-training-oriented development modes of Harbin and Changchun, Shenyang should take dislocation competition as the core, rely on its superior industrial foundation and scientific research resources to develop the whole industrial chain of ice-snow equipment R&D, manufacturing and supporting services, and build a characteristic industrial barrier. Meanwhile, through brand positioning upgrading, tourist source structure optimization and cross-border market expansion, Shenyang can reshape its unique brand image of "mild ice-snow, event ice-snow, industrial and cultural ice-snow". By constructing a multi-dimensional IP matrix, optimizing tourism service supporting systems, and promoting the integrated development of "ice-snow + culture, sports, recuperation and commerce", the city can effectively avoid homogeneous low-end competition.

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