

Research on Regional Tourism Cooperation in the Chengdu-Chongqing Twin City Economic Circle

Zhang Long, Du Ling

Chongqing Business Vocational College, School of Intelligent Health, Chongqing, China
zhanglong80312@126.com

Abstract: Chongqing and Chengdu are excellent tourist cities in China with abundant tourism resources. Since geographical proximity and cultural history, Chengdu and Chongqing's regional tourism development has substantial cooperation advantages and opportunities. This paper introduces the current situation and trend of tourism development in Chengdu and Chongqing, discusses the advantages of cooperation between these two cities, and analyzes the prospects and fields of regional tourism cooperation.

Keywords: Chengyu region; Regional tourism; Tourism cooperation

1. Introduction

Regional tourism cooperation is one of the objective needs for China's tourism development at the present stage, and it is the only way for tourism to achieve sustainable development and avoid vicious competition. China's Yangtze River Delta tourism area, Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao tourism area, Beijing- and Tianjin-Hebei have already started regional tourism cooperation, joint development of tourism resources. Moreover, these places have enhanced the tourism area's overall image and achieved the advantages of cooperation.

As the two most significant tourism cities in southwest China, Chengdu and Chongqing belong to the region with dense tourism resources^[1]. However, the degree of tourism resource development is still deficient at this stage^[2]. If the two cities implement complementary and sharing resources, it can create a strong impact and comprehensively improve tourism's overall scale. Therefore, the resonant effect led by the regional cooperation in tourism by Chengdu and Chongqing, not only in the significant development of international tourism in the current era but also in achieving a win-win and mutual benefit of regional tourism. Besides, play a vital radiation-driven function to Chengyu and other economic industries in the West. As a result of that, achieve the two cities' economic circle's national strategic objectives in the Chengyu region as soon as possible.

2. The current situation and trends of tourism development in Chengdu and Chongqing

Chongqing is a city rich in tourism resources^[3], such as magnificent natural scenery, unique mountain city-style, profound historical and cultural accumulation, and rich national folk customs. These all provided unique resources for the development of tourism in Chongqing. As of 2019, there is one World Cultural Heritage (Dazu Rock Carving), two World Natural Heritage (Chongqing Wulong karst tourist area, Chongqing Jinfoshan Karst), six national key scenic spots, twenty-four national forest parks, six national geological parks, four national nature reserves, twenty national critical cultural relics protection units in Chongqing. The Three Gorges of the Yangtze River, the Dazu Rock Carving, the modern mountain city's urban style, the Anti-Japanese War culture, and the Red Rock Revolution's history have all given Chongqing's tourism resources distinctive personality characteristics and high visibility.

Chengdu and its surrounding areas are also rich in tourism resources in both historical and natural aspects. Chengdu is one of China's oldest cultural cities, has many precious cultural relics, places of interest, religious temples, and national cultural heritage in its 2500-year history. Also, Chengdu and its surrounding areas have a stunning natural ecological landscape. Its mountains, stones, forests, caves, springs, waterfalls, rivers are pleasing to the eye. Many tourism resources have world-class brand advantages, such as Wolong Giant Panda Base, Leshan Buddha, Mount Emei, Dujiangyan, Jiuzhaigou,

and Huanglong. The Chengdu-centric region is one of the largest in China for the United Nations natural, cultural heritage project, second only after Beijing. Chengdu area tourism resources are characterized by integrating cultural landscape advantages and ecological landscape advantages.(see table 1)

Table 1: Tourism statistics of Chengdu and Chongqing (as of 2018)

city	A level scenic spots	5A level scenic spots	4A level scenic spots	five-star hotel	four-star hotel
Chengdu	90	1	44	18	33
Chongqing	224	8	85	28	54

3. Analysis of the advantages of regional tourism cooperation between Chengdu and Chongqing

3.1. Advantages of regional economic integration

Jinping Xi, the president of China, presided over the Central Committee on Finance and Economics's sixth meeting^[4]. He pointed out that promoting the construction of the two-city economic circle in the Chengyu region is conducive to forming a significant growth pole for high-quality development in the West, and creating an inland open strategic highland. It made a great significance for promoting high-quality development^[5]. We should respect the objective laws, give full play to comparative advantages, enhance the Chengyu region's overall development. In particular, promote the logical flow and efficient gathering of industry, population, and strengthen the central city driving role of Chongqing and Chengdu. Make Chengyu region become an important economic center with national influence, scientific and technological innovation center, new high-quality place of reform and opening-up, high-quality living livable place, and promote high-quality development.

3.2. Tourism resource sharing advantages

Chengdu and Chongqing are located in the Sichuan Basin. The natural tourism resources are known for their alpine canyons and beautiful natural scenery- the same as the breathtaking southwest mountain and water tourism area in China's tourism resources division. Besides, because of the slight difference between the two places, the same cultural region in the folk customs for thousands of years, food culture and other human tourism resources also share some similarities. At this point, Chengdu and Chongqing should not regard the similar tourism resources as a factor of regional competition between them. However, they should analyze from another angle that the same or similar tourism resources can be combined into a complete tourism resources area, break through the human-made interference of the administrative division of the areas, carry out widespread publicity to promote the development of their respective tourism industries with the promotion of their overall image.

3.3. Complementary advantages of tourism resources

Although Chengdu and Chongqing's tourism resources have similar characteristics, it is worth to mention that the two places' tourism resources complement each other's advantages. The tourism resources of Chengdu and Chongqing are very different in general. From the focus of tourism development in the two cities, we can also see the complementary advantages of the two cities regarding tourism resources. Chongqing focuses on developing urban tourism as the center, the Yangtze River Three Gorges as the mainline of the golden tourism line, while Chengdu is to develop the city's surrounding historical culture and natural tourism. Although both cities have natural landscape tourism, the focus on the natural landscape is not the same. Chongqing is famous for its "mountain city" and pays attention to the "water" as the mainline along the Yangtze River, highlighting the realm of mountain and water integration. Differently, Chengdu set "mountain" as the mainline. Highlight the mountain's cultural connotation as a contrasting base on Leshan Buddha, Qingcheng Mountain, and Mount Emei. The above analysis shows that the two cities are highly complementary in the natural landscape tourism resources.

3.4. Advantages of traffic conditions

It is essential to build a fast and convenient transportation network between the two cities because of the tourism exchange and cooperation needs for convenient transportation^[6]. The existing

transportation network of Chengyu Railway, Chengyu Expressway, Highway, Railway, and Aviation between the two places has laid a solid foundation for frequent tourism exchanges and cooperation. They provided a new choice for the residents to have better short-term travel on weekends and tourism products transfer between the two places.

3.5. Advantages of cultural unity

Due to the geographical proximity and historical origin between Chengdu and Chongqing, there is a robust cultural similarity. Ba-Shu Culture is a combination of Ba culture and Shu culture, which refers to Chongqing and Chengdu in ancient China. As Chengdu and Chongqing border each other closely and both live in the Sichuan Basin's geographical environment, with similar languages, production, lifestyle, and habits. The frequent exchanges and communications led to very similar cultures and gradually formed the same cultural community. Therefore, the various kinds of cultural tourism resources have a strong affinity. Whether in opera, religion, or food tourism, cultural resources have a substantial homogeneity. The unity of these tourism resources' cultural heritage is conducive to better linking the two places, an essential prerequisite for forming a large tourism culture circle.

3.6. Advantages of the "growth pole"

Chengdu and Chongqing are two important tourist centers in southwest China and even in China's western region. It already has a relatively complete range of tourist services, service functions, and relatively convenient transportation conditions. The union of two important tourist center cities will undoubtedly become the new "growth pole" of tourism development in the southwest and the West. The "growth pole" can enhance these two tourist cities' radiation, attraction, and total service capacity and promote other tourist cities' joint development in the western region.

4. Prospects and fields of regional tourism cooperation between Chengdu and Chongqing

4.1. Strengthen the complementary advantages of tourism resources and develop new tourism products connecting the two places

Chengdu and Chongqing are extremely rich in tourism resources. Chengdu is known as "the land of heaven," with unique and diverse natural and cultural tourism resources and a long history. Chongqing is renowned for its unique mountain scenery, the beautiful Golden Tourism Line of the Three Gorges of the Yangtze River, and its history as a secondary capital during the Anti-Japanese War. However, due to the historical origin and location, Chengdu and Chongqing have a robust cultural similarity. Therefore, in the design of tourism products, the two places should link the unique natural tourism resources and pay more attention to highlight the origin of the culture. Excavate the connotation of Ba-Shu Culture, and form the fine products of Ba-Shu tourism route.

4.2. Breaking down regional blockades and barriers and building a unified tourism circulation market

First of all, both cities should refuse to "fight in the nest" and open the "city gate" to open the tourism industry. Second, do not engage in regional monopoly. Allow tourism funds, people, services, and tourism products to flow freely between the two places. These purposes require The two places to formulate standard tourism guidelines, achieve open and fair competition, and establish a sound regional tourism market.

4.3. Strengthen cooperation between tourism enterprises

In addition to breaking the regional monopoly, it is more important to establish a perfect tourism market to strengthen inter-regional cooperation. Chengdu and Chongqing's government departments should take the lead in this regard and join the relevant tourism enterprises in the two places to develop tourism resources, build and package boutique tourism routes, and promote the tourism team to each other. Thus, to achieve the goals of sharing of resources, publicity, management, efficiency.

4.4. Establishing a well-organized travel information network

Establish a "highway" of tourism information between Chengdu and Chongqing, which connects tourism management departments, travel agencies, and transportation departments. To be more specific, establishing a good booking network can format tourism information and share it between them. For example, a "Ba-Shu Tourism Website" could be set up, on which tourists and tourism enterprises can learn more about local tourism. At the same time, tourists can enjoy more concessions in the other place after ordering tourism products, enhancing more exchanges and cooperation between the two places.

4.5. Strengthen the training, exchange, and cooperation of tourism talents

Due to the lack of quality and experience of tourism practitioners in the region, low service quality and many other problems result in a complete inability to adapt to tourism development. The cultivation of tourism talents should also cross regional boundaries. For example, tourism schools in the two places should often exchange and learn from their experiences and lessons in tourism talents training. The two places' tourism enterprises and tourism management departments should also allow the free flow of tourism talents in both places and jointly build high-quality tourism personnel.

5. Issues need to be paid attention to in regional tourism cooperation

5.1. Abandon the protectionism and self-marketing thinking of the small farmers as the premise of regional tourism cooperation

Turn the disorderly competition between Chengdu and Chongqing's tourism industry into a coordinated development. Thus, achieving complementary advantages of tourism, joint development, competition, and good cooperation promotes the faster and better development of tourism between the two places.

5.2. It is necessary to establish a mechanism for cooperation between the two sides and establish a tourism cooperation organization

Organize cooperation between tourism enterprises between Chengdu and Chongqing and solve the problems abroad in tourism cooperation between them. Next, develop tourism cooperation plans, coordinate tourism operations, hold regular meetings, exchange tourist information, and publish relevant tourism publications. Besides, to enhance the offices' authority, the cooperative bodies should have greater administrative authority and scope than the local tourism authorities to coordinate all aspects.

5.3. The two governments should play a guiding role

As the main body of regional tourism cooperation, the two places' governments play a significant guiding role in regional cooperation. If there is a cooperation between enterprises in tourism between the two places, the Government should play a guiding and coordinating role in the middle. In introducing policies, formulating and revising local tourism regulations, and implementing rules, the Government should also guide them in favor of regional cooperation.

6. Conclusions

There are many famous tourist cities in China, but few of them jointly develop tourism. Regional tourism cooperation is the development trend at this stage. Therefore, the regional tourism cooperation of Chengdu Chongqing Economic Circle is studied. First of all, it analyzes the development status and trend of the two cities, studies the advantages of the combination of the two cities, and gives tourism cooperation strategies from the aspects of strengthening the complementary advantages of tourism resources, developing new tourism products connecting the two places, breaking regional blockades and barriers, establishing a unified tourism circulation market, and strengthening the training, exchange and cooperation of tourism talents. It is expected to realize the complementation and sharing of tourism resources, comprehensively improve the tourism industry, and achieve win-win and mutual benefit in regional tourism.

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