

# Research on the Connotation, Function and Crisis Management of Tourism Virtual Community

Jun Liu\*

Business School, Northwest University of Political Science and Law, Xi'an 710122, China

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**Abstract.** The improvement and upgrading of information and communication technology is changing tourists' consumption concept and behavior mode. The constant emergence of tourism virtual communities has greatly promoted the upgrading of tourism business model and created an interactive platform for better improving tourists' consumption experience and service marketing. Therefore, it is of vital importance to clarify the concept and characteristics of tourism virtual community, as well as the role embodied by different related parties, and discuss the challenges in different development stages, for optimizing the operation and management of tourism virtual community.

## 1. Introduction

The upgrade of communication technology and the development of Internet platforms have not only changed the path for tourists to obtain information and the consumption mode of purchasing tourism products and services, but also greatly promoted the transformation of the tourism industry service model, shaping the image of tourism destinations and tourism Corporate branding provides technical support. The tourism virtual community is formed by an online group with rich travel experiences or strong travel hobbies using virtual space aggregation. There are significant differences in the values, lifestyles, and tourism concepts of emerging tourists relying on Internet technology and traditional and group tourists. Emerging tourists can effectively use the online travel service providers, tourism virtual communities, to obtain the required travel information, and they are also happy to share and share travel experiences with like-minded tourists through the Internet. Therefore, researching the concerns and needs of emerging tourists based on the tourism virtual community platform helps to clearly grasp the tourism needs of young and middle-aged tourists, and is conducive to the management of tourism destinations and the management of tourism enterprises.

## 2. Definition of Tourism Virtual Community

In recent years, the vigorous development of tourism industry at home and abroad has promoted the optimization and upgrading of the operation mode and service concept of tourism enterprises, and the emergence and development of tourism virtual community is very representative. In recent years, the academic community has paid more and more attention to the research in this field. At first, it started with the basic theoretical research of the concept, characteristics and types of tourism virtual community. Different scholars put forward the concept interpretation of tourism virtual community. Representative opinions are as follows: Y.C. Wang et al (2002) believed that the tourism virtual community, represented by the tourism forum, is an important source for tourists to obtain information [1], to achieve the purposes of sharing tourism experience, seeking fellow travelers, interactive communication and exchange, thus forming a new social relationship network. L.L. Song (2009) proposed that tourism virtual community refers to the Internet social group with computer and Internet as the media, relatively fixed members and mutual perception, and tourism related activities as the discussion content [2]. Y.F. Yu (2012) pointed out that tourism virtual community is a kind of virtual social network constructed online by computer media with tourists or potential tourists as the main body, which has the essential characteristics of general

virtual community[3].According to the different definitions of tourism virtual community, scholars at home and abroad are in the process of deepening the cognition of this concept, and there is no consensus on this issue.

This paper points out that tourism virtual community is a kind of social aggregation which takes tourists or potential tourists as the main body, has similar needs and hobbies, and establishes contact, shares experience, enjoys pleasure or conducts transactions by means of interactive communication in cyberspace.Through the observation of the practice of tourism virtual community, it can be seen that the members of the community include not only strangers who have similar tourism hobbies, but also people who have known each other before. They travel together and exchange experiences through the community platform.

### **3. Analysis of the Characteristics of Tourism Virtual Community**

Based on the previous understanding of the concept of tourism virtual community, this paper further analyzes the characteristics of tourism virtual community.

**Partners with Common or Similar Needs and Interests are the Driving Force for Members to Join the Community.**The emergence and continuous development of tourism virtual community lies in the gathering of tourists or potential tourists who have interests and hobbies in tourism activities. They need to participate in the social interaction space of interactive communication. The interaction of tourism virtual community, the advantage of transcending time and space, and the experience sharing of tourism activities can meet people's needs and interests in tourism.

**Close Interaction, Exchange and Sharing among Members, Deepen Emotional Ties and Form a Sense of Community Belonging.**Different types of members of tourism virtual community play different roles in the community. Generally speaking, the members initially query and pay attention to the community information as a browser. Once the community can meet its own needs, it gradually strengthens the interaction and exchange with other members. After a period of active participation and information sharing, it gradually deepens the emotional connection with the community, thus forming a sense of belonging to the tourism virtual community.

**Members Should Follow the Rules of Resource Use and Contribute their Talents to Community Resource Sharing.**The biggest difference between tourism virtual community and general tourism websites is that many shared resources come from the creation and generation of community members themselves. They can ask questions, publish travel notes, buy online products and travel together through the community platform. The rich shared resources provided by communities and members can provide different perspectives of reference and suggestions for tourists' travel planning and tourism decision-making.

### **4. The Function of Tourism Virtual Community**

Under the background of Internet technology upgrading and new media application, the emergence of tourism virtual community is the product of the development of the times, which not only means the change of people's life style and travel style, but also promotes the change of management and marketing mode of tourism destinations and tourism enterprises. Therefore, the role of tourism virtual community on related subjects is different:

**the Role of Tourism Destination Development.**In the past, tourism destination marketing has always depended on the release and transmission of official information. The marketing method mainly relies on traditional media for tourism destination image dissemination and information release. However, with the general development of Internet technology, more and more people are more inclined to obtain information through the Internet and purchase online tourism products and services. Therefore, as a tourist destination, we need to consider how to effectively attract consumers in the Internet marketing environment, and more effectively carry out image publicity and product promotion. The member comments and tourism experience in the tourism virtual community platform can help the relevant personnel of tourism administration department better understand the needs of tourism consumers, launch tourism products and services with tourism

destination characteristics, and actively communicate with potential tourists with the help of the tourism virtual community platform, and carry out image publicity and product promotion.

**Promote the Development of Tourism Enterprises.**With the rapid development of online travel agents, many small and medium-sized traditional tourism enterprises are facing competition and challenges. Therefore, many traditional business model tourism enterprises are faced with breakthrough difficulties, transformation and upgrading, or through cooperation with other tourism enterprises to enhance competitiveness, or by means of emerging technology to improve business processes, in order to reduce costs and improve input-output efficiency. At the same time, the competition among online travel agents is becoming increasingly fierce. However, no matter how the times and technology change and develop, as a tourism enterprise, it is always based on effectively meeting the needs of tourism consumers. Most of the participants in the tourism virtual community are tourists or potential tourists. Through the Research on the user generated content (UGC) released by them, it is helpful to Further understand the consumption habits of tourists, and clarify the tourism needs and behaviors of emerging tourists after the 1980s and 1990s.

**the Role of Tourism Virtual Community Members.**Its role is developing from single to compound, and runs through the development of tourism activities. Before tourism decision-making, tourism virtual community can ask questions for members and consult others' tourism strategies to optimize tourism routes. After the travel itinerary is determined, we can choose the tour route, scenic spot, hotel and other all-inclusive or single tour products according to the tour products and services provided by the virtual community. During or after the tourism activities, travel notes can be uploaded to record the unforgettable experience and experience of the journey, in-depth interaction with other members, answering questions or participating in discussions according to topics of common concern, and members can gradually establish and form a social network community based on the tourism virtual community by focusing on and interacting with others' tourism experience.

## 5. Crisis Management in the Development Stage of Tourism Virtual Community

Based on the practical observation of tourism virtual community, it can be seen that in recent years, tourism virtual community is booming in the integration of Internet technology and tourism. However, its business activities and marketing management are also facing many crises.

**In the Initial Stage of Tourism Virtual Community, Attract Members to Enhance Popularity and Base on the Market.**At present, many tourism websites and enterprise brand websites have realized that only relying on one-way information output can not meet the information demand of consumers for products and services before purchase decision-making. Therefore, it has become a development trend to establish a business and marketing community for stakeholders such as tourism enterprises, tourism consumers and cooperative enterprises. In this stage of development, the construction of tourism virtual community can better build a bridge for stakeholders. At the early stage of community development, the community attaches great importance to the scale of members. How to transform browsing tourists into registered members, and how to strengthen the communication between members? To a certain extent, the number and scale of members in the initial stage of community establishment are very important to enhance its influence and communication. The number of members absorbed indicates the scale of potential consumers. Therefore, from the perspective of the practical development of tourism virtual community, some communities are affected by factors such as the lack of distinct product service features and low identification degree in the initial stage of community establishment, which leads to the popularity of the community Lack of cohesion.

In view of the crisis faced by the community in the initial stage, the community operators only have to strive to realize the service concept of "no one has me, no one has me excellent", investigate and clarify the change of consumer demand, make clear the basic services and value-added services that their own community platform can bring to them, strive to improve the attraction of the community to consumers, actively absorb them to join the community and participate in relevant activities. For example, Ctrip Travel Network can attract members of enterprises and institutions

and individual registration, which depends on its diversified services to meet the needs in business and individual travel activities, service options based on different levels of accommodation facilities in the travel destination, and preferential measures in ticketing, products and services based on different levels of members.

**Tourism Virtual Community Development Stage, Building a Community of Interests Based on Trust.** After the initial operation stage, the tourism virtual community has entered the stage of rapid expansion, which still needs to deal with many crises in the operation and management. First of all, the concept of community products and services has attracted the attention of many members. Next, how to realize the development of members' cognition and understanding of the community to trust and identity is the key to the survival and development of each virtual community. X.Y. Zeng(2011) pointed out that customer trust is an important prerequisite for the effectiveness of marketing activities, and for consumers who join the virtual community, they can gradually build trust after the stage of cognition and familiarity [4]. Secondly, community operation managers need to organize online activities to promote the interaction between members and keep the community in an active state. L. Zhao et al(2009) showed that trust generated by interaction among community members will significantly affect the trust of members to the community service provider [5]. Many community operations do not meet the needs of consumers, and the interaction between members is gradually weakened. In addition, the community administrator's response to the questions about the products and services concerned by consumers is not timely, especially the responsibility of after-sales service, such as shuffle, delay and so on. As a result, after a short period of lively community development, the loss of members has become a serious network empty city. Thirdly, when members reach a certain scale, how to transform their resource advantages into operation advantages and marketing platform advantages is also a challenge for community operation managers.

Based on the challenges faced by the tourism virtual community in this stage, we should solve them from the following two aspects: first, the integration of big data resources based on the background of the community should do a good job in the hierarchical management of registered members, and based on the indicators of participation, influence ability and consumption level, we should select the opinion leaders among the members of the community, and divide the customers into core members, important members and general members relationship management. With the help of the word-of-mouth communication effect of opinion leaders on other members, we can promote the establishment of familiarity and trust among community members. The community needs to ensure that the incentive opinion leaders can participate in the organization and management of community activities through the system, and enjoy preferential quota for the products and services provided by the community.

Secondly, the tourism virtual community must establish a set of audit mechanism when choosing the cooperative enterprises. After the cooperative enterprises with qualified qualifications reach the intention of cooperation, they must sign a cooperation agreement to clarify their rights and obligations, as well as standardize the principles of dealing with quality price discrepancy and breach of contract. In particular, community managers need to strengthen the dynamic supervision of consumers' online word-of-mouth, set up special posts for continuous follow-up management, aiming at the spread of positive word-of-mouth, which can help community managers to clarify the brand image and customer relationship of cooperative enterprises. The negative word-of-mouth evaluation is objectively analyzed as a monitoring mechanism for the service quality of community platform and cooperative enterprises.

**In the Stage of Brand Upgrading and Transformation, Multi Financing Improves the Service Supply Chain.** Only after coping with the crisis of the first two stages, can tourism virtual community enter a new stage of building supply chain relying on multiple rounds of financing to enhance brand. At this stage, the core problem that the community needs to solve is to realize the enterprise brand expansion needs financial support, and select the appropriate target market for precision marketing, to provide consumers with a composite service industry chain. However, in the process of rapid market expansion, tourism enterprises try to innovate their business methods,

which may result in revenue growth or potential crisis. Both traditional tourism enterprises and online travel agents need to improve or innovate their business management on the basis of the original business model. For example, in 2006, Ma beehive tourism network began to establish a community dominated by tourism strategy. After 2010, Ma beehive began to operate as a company. From 2010 to 2012, Ma beehive made great efforts to grow into a more influential tourism virtual community in China. After 2012, facing the internal and external challenges of community development, Ma beehive tried to gradually transform from a social platform to a big data platform[6]. With the increasing trend of self-help travel of tourists in recent years, it has seized the market opportunity and established a service supply chain of cognition, decision-making, consumption and sharing with the support of tourism strategy 2.0 system.

## Conclusions

In conclusion, with the rapid integration of new technologies and traditional industries, the service industry driven by tourism will face a huge development space and the test of transformation and upgrading. Under this trend, it will promote the optimization of the supply chain of online travel service providers, and rely on the tourism virtual community as a platform, build the interaction and sharing of tourism enterprises, relevant cooperative enterprises and tourism consumers community of interests. Therefore, the discussion of the connotation and function of tourism virtual community, and the in-depth analysis of the crisis faced by different development stages in combination with management practice, will help tourism enterprises to improve service quality guided by consumer demand, and help tourism destinations to carry out integrated marketing with the help of virtual community platform.

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