

Industry Clustering Intensity for Rural Tourism and its Related Factors

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Abstract

The concept of industrial cluster refers to geographic concentration, which emphasizes the influences of geographic distribution on industrial cluster (Porter, 1998). This kind of cluster effect can be found in the rural tourist spots. This study used township as the analytic unit, and three center cities of the three regions as customer source markets to investigate the tourism attraction of a township tourist spot, as well as the relationship between the economic development and rural tourism industrial cluster. The suppliers of rural tourism industry included suppliers of leisure farm, recreational agriculture zones, and relevant local industries. In this study, the so-called “the clustering intensity of rural tourism industry” referred to the sum of the incomes from “major suppliers of rural tourism” and the number of stores and output values from “relevant suppliers of rural tourism.” The clustering intensity of rural tourism industry was investigated by using number clustering and output clustering. The economic development of each township was measured by the township economic development scale developed by Li (2000). Li (2000) divided the 309 townships in Taiwan into five grades of each township. Since Grade E townships are considered highly urbanized regions, these townships were not included as samples of rural tourist spots in this research. Grade A indicates the highest extent of economic development, followed by Grade B, Grade C, and Grade D. The empirical results showed that the clustering intensity of rural tourism industry in central and northern Taiwan is stronger, and the townships of stronger clustering intensity concentrate around center cities. It was also found that the townships with stronger attraction have higher economic development and stronger clustering intensity of rural tourism industry. The empirical results indicated the regions and townships with obvious rural tourism industrial cluster, as well as those with low tourism attraction and economic development, which resulted in inefficient tourism development. This research also found significant regional differences in rural tourism industrial cluster in Taiwan.

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