

Abstract

Hiking is a potential market for tourism industry in Yunnan. Bing Zhong Luo is an upcoming hiking destination and therefore has academic and commercial interest to investigate.

This study tries to understand hiking tourists' motivation and behavior on their visit, and then to examine the importance of the hiking related tourism products based on age, gender and previous hiking experience in Bing Zhong Luo. The study also focuses on common travel associated ailments experienced by hikers in Bing Zhong Luo. Four hundred and fifty questionnaires were given out during July and August in 2011, of which 382 completed usable questionnaires were returned giving an 84.8% response rate.

The results show that tourists visit Bing Zhong Luo for hiking mainly with friends and families; they prefer views of gorges and views of streams, lakes, waterfall and rivers along hiking trails; and to appreciate beautiful landscape and to be close to nature as their main hiking motivation. It was further revealed that significant differences exist in the availability of hiking related tourism products and the incidence of common travel associated ailments with regard to hikers' age, gender and previous hiking experience. The findings indicate that the tourists above 40 years feel the level of importance in hiking related tourism products are higher than those below 40 years; and the old aged groups are more vulnerable to common travel ailments. In addition, the results imply that the tourists who have no or two to three times of previous hiking experience feel the availability of hiking related tourism products is

more important than those who have four or more times of previous hiking experience; and the chances of ailments are decrease with well versed previous hiking experience.

This study proposes in light of the findings that for high altitude hiking destination as Bing Zhong Luo, to set up some hiking tourism service to provide hiking trail consulting service, hiking equipment supplement or replacement and necessary transportation be provided to the tourists. To prevent tourists suffering from some form of health ailments in the study area, basic guidelines on hiking, especially relevant knowledge and training course to impart hiking skills along with first aid, be given to both potential tourists and locals.

Keywords: hiking tourism, hiking tourism product, health ailment, high altitude

