
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Challenges and Coping Strategies Brought by Digital Media to the Development of B&B Industry under the Perspective of Field Theory

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ABSTRACT

Based on Bourdieu's field theory, the article discusses the challenges and coping strategies of digital media in the development of the B&B industry. In the Internet field, the power struggle between B&B operators and consumers becomes the main focus. By utilizing the Internet platform, B&B operators compete to increase brand awareness and influence and attract consumers' attention. Meanwhile, consumers also influence B&B brands through the Internet field, forming a complex, competitive network. In the competition for symbolic capital, B&Bs gain social recognition through the Netflix effect and celebrity recommendations to further enhance their image and competitiveness, and through self-media accounts and matrix content marketing, B&B content is widely disseminated to enhance their exposure in the Internet arena. However, the B&B industry is also facing the problem of homogenization and needs to maintain its personalized characteristics in competition. Combining local characteristics and innovative models, B&B operators can achieve sustainable development and promote rural revitalization.

KEYWORDS

Bed and breakfast; digital media; field theory; symbolic capital.

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1. Introduction

Rural B&B refers to the use of rural dwellings and other related resources; the hosts participate in the operation of the service to provide tourists with small accommodation facilities to experience local nature, culture, production and lifestyle. With the advent of the digital age, the B&B industry is facing an important period of transformation and development. Bourdieu's field theory provides us with a new perspective on this transformation. The rise of digital media has redefined the way the market consumes, profoundly affecting the supply and demand pattern of the B&B industry. In the traditional tourism and accommodation industry, except for the chain hotels operated by well-known brands with word-of-mouth effect, other individual operators operate independently and can only passively wait for consumers to visit through limited information transfer and one-way communication with consumers, so the phenomenon of "ripping off" will also occur when consumers visit. However, with the intervention of new digital media, this power structure is undergoing a fundamental change.

Digital media, such as the Internet and social media platforms, have not only changed the way consumers access information but also given them more voice and choice. Bourdieu's field theory points out that different social spaces have different capital distributions, and digital media provide consumers with a new field to participate in the B&B market. Consumers are able to participate more directly in the operation of the B&B market through online reviews and social sharing, influencing the brand image and market position of B&Bs. B&B operators have been forced to transform from doing a "one-time business of ripping off customers" to thinking about the long term, establishing brand image, focusing on the Internet field through the binding of the

collective management, the use of online marketing to take the initiative to establish the brand image, and through the digital media to take the initiative to launch promotional campaigns to consumers.

In May 2022, the Implementation Plan for Rural Construction Actions was announced, calling for Xi Jinping's Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era to be the guide, adhering to the priority development of agriculture and rural areas, placing the construction of the countryside in an important position in the construction of socialist modernization, responding to the aspirations of the peasant masses for a better life, focusing on the construction of universal, basic, and bottom-up livelihoods, and striving to make the countryside equipped with better living conditions, and constructing a beautiful countryside that is pleasant to live and work in. According to the "China Online Accommodation Booking Market Monitoring and Analysis Q2 2020" released by Econometrics, the transaction scale of China's online accommodation booking market reached RMB 16.394 billion in Q2 2020, up 54.8% YoY. Between 2012 and 2019, the number of trips to rural areas nationwide jumped from nearly 800 million to 3 billion, with an average annual growth rate of more than 20%.

Relying on digital media, rural lodging drives the rural economy and has become a new engine for rural revitalization and an important pillar industry for the development of some villages. The purpose of this paper is to reveal the role of digital media in changing the relationship between supply and demand by analyzing the impact of digital media on the B&B industry and exploring the impact and challenges of this change on the transformation and development of the B&B industry, as well as its possible solution strategies. By sorting out the field structure of the B&B industry, combining the impact of digital media on the way of interaction between the supply side and consumers, and the change of the market structure, this paper will analyze the challenges and transformation paths faced by the B&B industry in depth, and provide references and suggestions for the sustainable development of the B&B industry.

2. Field Theory

"Field" is a concept from physics that refers to the space around an object that transmits gravitational or electromagnetic forces. Levin gave field theory the status of a metatheory, arguing that it is best understood "as a method of research: a method of analyzing causality and establishing the structure of science." Levin introduced field theory into social psychology, while French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, through his long-term philosophical, anthropological, and sociological research, gradually moved away from the structuralism that was prevalent in the intellectual world at that time and developed a set of monistic theories that bridged the dichotomies between structural/energetic (objectivism/subjectivism) and macroscopic/microcosmic, in the form of the "field theory of social psychology". After a long period of empirical research in anthropology and criticism of structuralism, he proposed the concept of field on the basis of the concepts of habitus and capital.

Bourdieu's social theory of culture consists of three main parts: "field", "habitus", and "capital". Field theory is an important concept in the social sciences, aiming to explain the interrelationship between the concepts of power, status and symbolic capital in social phenomena. Field theory suggests that social life can be viewed as consisting of a number of relatively independent "fields", each of which has its own specific rules, power structures and competitive relationships. In these arenas, individuals and groups compete for various forms of capital, such as economic capital, cultural capital and social capital, to gain positions of dominance or recognition.

In 1996, Bourdieu introduced the concept of "media field". The term "media field" refers to mass media produced on a large scale. Due to the limitations of the time, when Bourdieu proposed the concept of the "media field", the discussion of the "media field" only focused on the television field and the news field. Today, the concept of the "media field" can be extended to the Internet social media platform. Similar to the TV field, the "Internet field" has also lowered the barriers to entry to certain fields. As early as the 1980s, when television broadcasting was growing rapidly, politicians discovered that the television and news arenas had a greater influence on the public than other arenas and that the news arena was more susceptible to control by external forces than other arenas, and that the rigor and autonomy inherent in the news arena (autonomous forces) conflicted with external expectations, resulting in the creation of "self-reliance" and "self-reliance". The contest between "autonomous forces" and "other forces" (Liu, 2016) resulted in the reshaping of the field. Thus, Bourdieu (2005) emphasizes that the field struggle triggered by the rise of commercial television intensifies the "symbolic violence exercised by political and economic power against citizens through the field of the press". Such an analysis shows another characteristic of field analysis, which is to focus on the intricate social forces in the field and to explain the social significance of field struggles. Bourdieu puts forward the concept of "symbolic violence" (symbolic violence) as the formation mechanism of this kind of competition; that is, power or capital can become symbolic and exert a special dominant influence. Symbolic violence is a kind of complicity that participants are not aware of Liu (2005).

In the study of the lodging industry, Bourdieu's field theory can be applied to analyze the power relationship and market structure between the supply side and consumers. In the traditional lodging market, the supply side often includes local operators who dominate the market through their own resources and social status. This power structure allows operators to dominate the market by controlling information and resources, and consumers' choices are relatively limited. However, the digital medium has broken

the traditional way of delivering information, enabling consumers to access and share information more freely. Consumers are able to evaluate and provide feedback on the quality and services of B&Bs through online reviews and social sharing, thus influencing the market position and reputation of B&Bs. B&B operators can also use the digital medium to proactively publicize and build their brand image, helping them to better stabilize their clientele.

Therefore, Bourdieu's field theory in the study of the B&B industry can not only help to understand the power structure and status differences in the traditional market but also analyze the impact of the digital media on the power relationship between the supply side and the consumers, and reveal how the digital media has changed the structure and operation of the B&B market. A deeper understanding of such changes can provide theoretical support and practical guidance for the transformation and development of the B&B industry.

3. Data Sources

Field visits to Moganshan and Anji in Huzhou, adopting a variety of ways to investigate and study the situation of typical B&B villages in these two places. First, the literature research method, reading relevant policy documents, different literature on B&B on CNKI, and macro understanding of B&B development characteristics and prospects in different places. The second is field interviews, semi-structured interviews with village chiefs and B&B operators in different B&B villages in Huzhou to understand the development of B&Bs in the microcosm, and in-depth interviews with B&B occupants to understand their considerations in choosing B&Bs.

4. The Internet Field: A Site of Power Struggle between B&B Operators and Consumers

In Bourdieu's field theory, society is viewed as a space of capital distribution, whose core dimensions include the total amount of capital and the contrast between economic and cultural capital. The delineation of various specific fields is based on the distribution of capital, in which different field members occupy different positions and constantly reconfigure and integrate the field in the process of power struggle (Swartz, 1997). Two points are particularly important in Bucher's explanation of field struggles: first, fields both determine the shape of power struggles and are reconfigured in the struggles (Martin, 2003); second, struggles are the sum of interlocking interactions of various social forces inside and outside the field (Couldry, 2003).

In the traditional tourism and accommodation industry, operators control the pricing power, which leads to many "rip-off" phenomena. With the rise of the Internet, the power struggle between B&B operators and consumers has begun to unfold in a new space. B&B operators use the Internet to attract more consumers and attention, as well as to weigh brand awareness and influence. At the same time, consumers also provide feedback through the Internet arena, influencing the B&B brand. Many consumers and operators on an individual basis are engaged in power struggles in the Internet arena, competing for various kinds of capital; operators who fail in their struggles withdraw from the market, and those who have transformed and upgraded in time during the struggles use the struggles to re-maintain or even upgrade their positions in the B&B arena, completing the legitimacy of "occupying a position".

After the scale and rate of urbanization have increased, more and more consumers are eager to return to nature, and various kinds of primary lodging, "Nongjiale", have been created. The backward environment of the countryside and high-end consumers' desire for a comfortable environment, there is a natural contradiction; Deqing Moganshan, Huzhou, the first high-end B&B transformation, catering to the needs of consumers in the field of B&B, and therefore the Moganshan B&B has become a national B&B leader. Since then, Anji and other places have studied in Deqing, according to local conditions, and also in the B&B field to find a B&B model suitable for the development of their own region.

4.1 Deqing B&B

Deqing Moganshan B&B industry is mainly divided into resort hotel mode and art residence mode. The resort hotel mode takes the high-end luxury route, i.e., the "foreign house" mode, represented by brands such as Naked Heart Castle, French Mountain Residence, and Backwoods Life etc. The art resident mode is represented by brands such as Dale's Wild, Yu Village, and Qingjing Original House. The art resident mode is represented by brands such as Dale's Wild, Yu Village, Qingjing Original House, etc. Among them, there are foreign investors designing and operating, as well as local residents rebuilding their old houses for development (even in the form of "Nongjiale"), which is characterized by the preservation of the original ecology of the environment of the Moganshan Mountains and the combination of the countryside culture.

Different types of lodgings in the grade positioning, operational concepts, and business models have a big difference. Moganshan high-end B&B, represented by "Naked Heart Fort", has huge investment and unique marketing means, but it is also the most outstanding gold card of Moganshan B&B. Naked Heart Fort is a resort under the "Naked Heart" brand and is also the first high-end resort in China, integrating the local natural characteristics of Moganshan and the primitive interest of South Africa, adhering to the insistence on sustainable development, combining the concept of green environmental protection and advanced technology

to build and operate. Naked Heart Valley is the first high-end resort in China to be awarded the highest honor in the construction industry - LEED Platinum certification, pioneering a series of sustainable and personalized travel methods. Naked Heart Valley has become the first choice for vacationers in Moganshan with its unique market positioning, green and natural sustainable development concepts, and rich and colorful activity experiences. As the pioneer of high-end B&B in Deqing, Naked Heart Valley has become the first choice for vacationers in Moganshan. Domestic B&B As a pioneer of high-end B&B in Deqing, Naked Heart Valley has a colorful history in the domestic B&B industry. Moganshan, one of the four major summer resorts in the Republic of China, is located in the Hangzhou-Shanghai triangle, and it has convenient transportation. 40% of the clients come from Shanghai, 30% from Suzhou and Hangzhou, and 30% from other regions of the country. The price of a single night in a Naked Valley room is usually above 3,000, and on holidays, it can be higher than 5,000, and you have to book weeks in advance to get a room. It is this kind of niche and high price marketing that makes bare heart valley become a "net red B&B originator"; it is driven by "a lifetime always have to go to sleep once in Moganshan" of the B&B consumer boom. Some data show that Moganshan bare heart valley annual profit is 1 million per room.

Moganshan B&B advantages are obvious, but its shortcomings are also very prominent. Moganshan is mountainous and chaotic, which not only leads to the B&B having difficulty gathering development and distribution of scattered but also leads to large amusement facilities being difficult to land in Moganshan molding. The lack of large amusement facilities leads to Moganshan's secondary consumption power being insufficient; many tourists can only be in the Moganshan B&B within a few days of shallow residence on leave. Moganshan prairie village of Yu village square Republic of China characteristics of the town although slightly famous, but the site area is small, the number of stores, although attractive, far from achieving the effect of siphoning, so far not built into a well-known landmark card place. When publicizing on the Internet, the operators will pay more attention to the quality of Moganshan B&B itself for the accumulation of symbolic capital, linking Moganshan B&B with petty life and selectively ignoring the unfavorable publicity points.

4.2 Anji B&B

The topography of Anji County is characterized by high southwest and low northeast, with mountains and secluded environments. Anji benefits from a relatively continuous flat land, so the B&B is more in the shape of a cluster development, such as the small addiction half-day village is the "national cluster B&B village and the new generation of B&B model area" of the country's first B&B cluster village. Little Addiction Half-Day Village was formerly a hollow village, based on remodeling and upgrading of the original houses, with assets owned by the collective, and the introduction of social investment in the industrial and commercial capital, integrating high-end leisure and tourism, art, culture and creativity into one integrated community, with the aim of creating a "peach blossom garden of the new era" and "the future of China's countryside". All houses unified design, unified operation, and unified publicity. After Little Addiction Half Day Village, there are many cluster B&Bs that want to follow suit but fail; the key lies in the O end of the EPC+O model, i.e., the operation link, including the market positioning and layout, product layout and planning are not done well, resulting in insufficient power in the later stage. The pricing of B&Bs in Little Addiction Half Day Village ranges from a few hundred to a few thousand, and the appearance and design style of B&Bs are unified but different; the cluster effect of the village plays a role in complementing each other's strengths and resisting risks together, and the non-standardized development of B&Bs realizes the differentiation of the O-end of the EPC+O model. 2022, Hengshanwu Village, where the Little Addiction Half Day Village is located, received a total of 610,000 tourists throughout the year, and the tourism industry earned 108 million yuan, with the village operating income amounting to 708 million yuan. Village operating income reached 7.52 million yuan, and the per capita income of farmers reached 55,000 yuan.

Unlike Moganshan, Anji has been building the Grassland on the Clouds International Mountain Tourism Resort since 2018, and now it has become a net red place in the Yangtze River Delta. The boutique B&B industry in Anji stimulates the secondary consumption of the surrounding amusement facilities, and the perfect amusement facilities promote the sustainability of the B&B industry in Anji. The head of the organizer of the SMART Summit, Wang Xu, proposed that rural tourism must not only solve the bedpan problem, and the rural tourism destinations should be entertaining and conducive to dissemination and cultural, and these need to be supported by diversified cultural and creative content. For them, the ultimate answer is, first of all, the acquisition of talent. In other business forms, the same is done for B&Bs, nature education, handicrafts, outdoor activities or various cultural and creative small stores, and creative people will make very compelling results. Differentiation is the core of tourism. The ability to attract creators and stay in Anji, combined with Anji's own tea and bamboo and other characteristics derived from Anji's unique cultural and creative products, to form a full chain of all-round visitor experience is their goal. Really let the tourists fascinated, many times back and actively spread, often the "nature + humanities" experience.

Innovation and differentiation are the core objectives pursued by B&B operators in Anji. By attracting creative talents and combining local characteristics, Anji's B&B operators have successfully created B&B brands with their own distinctive features, realizing the transformation from bed economy to experience economy. This differentiated business strategy has enabled Anji's B&B industry to achieve a significant competitive advantage in the Internet arena.

5. Field Analysis: Jockeying for Symbolic Capital and Reinventing Practice

Bourdieu's field theory provides a useful perspective for understanding the development of the B&B industry in the Internet era. In the Internet arena, a struggle for symbolic capital and practice reshaping is taking place between B&B operators and consumers. Whether on OTA platforms such as Ctrip and Flying Pig or on social media such as Xiaohongshu and Shake Voice, Moganshan B&B and Anji B&B are the most popular symbols of B&B in China as long as the keyword "B&B" is searched. The exposure of B&Bs on the Internet platform is closely related to the accumulation of their symbolic capital. Through various social media and online travel platforms, B&B operators compete to display their own characteristics and advantages and strive to create an eye-catching brand image. At the same time, local governments also regard the B&B industry as an important economic industry and actively participate in publicizing it, promoting local B&Bs as a whole and emphasizing various advantages from site selection to design concepts to the natural environment. This competition for symbolic capital is not only limited to competition between B&B operators but also involves governmental publicity and social media participation, forming a complex network of fields.

In the Internet field, the symbolic capital of the B&B is weighted in two main ways.

First, with the help of channels such as the Netflix effect and star recommendations, B&Bs have become a symbol of social recognition and taste. The spread of this influence is often not only because of the quality of the B&B itself but also because it is more often built on the recommendation of netroots or stars. From 2017 onwards, the four first-tier satellite TVs of Oriental, Hunan, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang have also become a popular phenomenon with the simultaneous layout of the B&B variety show. 2016 onwards, Hunan TV's "Longing for Life" variety show drove the shooting location to the explosion of B&Bs in places such as Hainan and Tonglu, etc. 2017 onwards, Oriental TV opened its original variety show "Youth Hostel", which integrates entrepreneurship and socialization with "youth hostels". In 2017, Oriental TV opened the original variety show "Youth Hostel", which integrates entrepreneurship and socialization and uses the form of "youth hostel" to promote the B&B. 2023, Hunan TV and Mango TV jointly introduced the "Our Beautiful Life" variety show, which creates "the most beautiful countryside B&B" with the help of popular stars. The publicity of "the most beautiful countryside B&B" has triggered people's desire for B&Bs. With the help of the original symbolic capital of variety shows, celebrities, and Netflix, B&B is packaged as a symbol of class and taste and has become the new symbolic capital.

Under the influence of symbolic capital represented by the celebrity Netflix effect, self-published media accounts spontaneously share B&B hits with the intention of using social media leverage to expand their reach. In the everyday conventions of the cult of the work of art, the literati's or socialite's reference game serves no function other than to bring the work into the cycle of mutual recognition of legitimacy (Bourdieu, 2016, p. 86), the sharing of upscale B&Bs by self-media accounts once again weights the symbolic capital of the B&Bs, just as, in another context, references to the latter can be used to accentuate the former because they are less common. The insinuations and analogies of erudition push infinitely towards other analogies, which are never able to justify themselves by articulating the basis of their associations, and so this game of insinuations and analogies weaves around the work a tightly knit network of mutually echoing and reinforcing artificial experiences, a network that creates the fascination of the artistic stasis: this is what Proust called the "idolatry": the "idolatry of the world". This is the root of what Proust called "idolatry", which causes people who browse the Internet to believe that "staying at a B&B" can increase their social acceptance, not because they think it is good value for money, but because it is recommended by famous Internet celebrities or famous stars who have stayed at or recommended it (Bourdieu, 2016, p. 87).

Second, through self-media accounts and matrix content marketing, B&B content is widely disseminated to expand its exposure and influence in the Internet arena. B&B operators in the Internet arena also, through the "casting a wide net" type of matrix content marketing pry operation leverage, sharing B&B content account itself does not necessarily have a huge fan flow, but through multiple accounts to publish similar content matrix method, the same platform algorithms can be favored, thus increasing the flow.

In addition to the symbolic capital competition, B&B operators have also carried out all kinds of out B&B + mode of development and innovation. No longer stopping at providing rooms, B&Bs tend to provide more experiences related to local culture and characteristics. Through additional activities such as camps and mountains, B&B operators have added new symbolic capital to B&Bs, further enhancing their competitiveness in the market. At the same time, combining local specialties such as Mogan Yellow Buds and Anji White Tea has also brought new development opportunities for the B&B industry.

However, with the rapid development of the B&B industry, the phenomenon of homogenization has gradually come to the fore. After the tide recedes, some B&Bs close down due to homogenization, and some B&Bs are more red-hot due to homogenization. When asked about homogenization, Huzhou, part of the B&B operators, bluntly does not think that the B&B homogenization is a bad thing. In the development process of Huzhou B&B for many years, Huzhou B&B has been learning advanced management

concepts and management methods to strengthen collective cooperation, forming a collective environment of homogenization. Although the phenomenon of homogenization sometimes leads to fierce competition in the market competition, it also promotes the collective unification and standardization of the B&B group to a certain extent and improves service quality and consumer satisfaction.

On February 3, 2018, at the annual meeting of the Moganshan B&B Industry Association, its member B&Bs signed the Moganshan B&B Industry Autonomy Convention, which is the first B&B industry autonomy convention in the country, and the member B&Bs unified the pricing standard to prevent vicious competition within the industry. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism released the industry standard "Basic Requirements and Evaluation of Tourist B&Bs" in July 2019 (LB/T 065). In July 2019, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism released the industry standard "Basic Requirements and Evaluation of Tourist B&Bs" (LB/T 065), and in February 2021, it released the "Revision No. 1", and changed the grades of tourist B&Bs from three-star, four-star, and five-star to C, B, and A. The release of this industry standard not only regulates and promotes the development of B&Bs but also marks the distinction of B&Bs from the traditional hotel accommodation industry to become an independent industry. On February 1, 2023, the "Basic Requirements and Grade Classification of Tourist B&Bs" (GB/T 41648-2022) began to be implemented. Therefore, it is a challenging task for B&B operators to maintain their individualized characteristics in the competition while being able to gain more advantages in the collective environment. In this arena, the competition for symbolic capital and the reinvention of practice have become important aspects of the power struggle between B&B operators and consumers, and the innovation of the B&B+ model has become one of the key paths for the sustainable development of the B&B industry.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Guided by Bourdieu's field theory, this paper provides an in-depth analysis of the challenges and coping strategies posed by digital media to the development of the B&B industry. Through the exploration of the B&B industry's competition in the Internet field of jockeying and symbolic capital, we find out the many challenges faced by B&B operators as well as the strategies to cope with them. The Internet field has brought a wide space for the B&B industry to develop, but it has also increased the intensity of competition. In this field, B&B operators need to continuously improve their symbolic capital and gain exposure and recognition through various channels to attract more consumers. This requires them to constantly innovate, create a distinctive B&B brand image, and provide experiences with local characteristics and cultural connotations.

In the Internet arena, consumers rely more on online platforms to obtain information and make choices, so B&B operators need to strengthen their publicity and promotion on digital media to enhance their image and recognition in the minds of consumers. At the same time, they need to adapt to the diversified needs of consumers and provide personalized services to win their trust and satisfaction.

While the current B&B economy can certainly drive the development of rural revitalization, it should be noted that not all regions are suitable for the development of the B&B industry. Rural revitalization is the end, and the B&B industry is the means. A mountainous countryside with beautiful water and a tranquil environment, occupying a natural advantage, is the basis for the development of the B&B industry, and good highway facilities are also one of the indispensable conditions for the rise of the B&B economy. Whether it is suitable for the development of the B&B industry requires reasonable positioning and planning based on local factors such as the natural environment, transportation conditions and cultural traditions, and it also requires cooperation with the local government and other relevant institutions to jointly promote rural revitalization and the development of the B&B industry, so as to achieve win-win results in terms of both economic and social benefits.

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