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## The Staged-Authentication on Shenghsing Station Shopping Area in Sanyi, Miaoli, Taiwan

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### 1. Introduction

The Industrial Revolution has brought manufacturing machines to replace labor powers and to shorten working hours. With the change of industrial structure, the improvement of life and income promote the development of the recreation industry. Internet marketing always dominates imaginations and cognitions of tourism fields, so tourists can obtain information from them. In tourism fields, in order to satisfy tourists' imaginations, it easily makes a conspiracy between insiders and outsiders.

The author selected Shenghsing Station as the object of the case study, tried to find out the process of constructing the shopping area, investigated the development of the shopping area in Shenghsing Station. The concept of staged-authentication could be brought into the study. Based on the concerned, the author explored the differences and forms between "front stage" and "back stage" in the shopping area in Shenghsing Station. The study truly records the process of staged-authentication to seek for the possibility of developing tourism.

### 2. Approach and Methods

The case study area is at Shenghsing Station in Sanyi, Miaoli, and there are three aspects which will be involved in, (1) geographic spatial entity, (2) time frame, and (3) insiders and outsiders. As mentioned above, the study wants to explore the process of developing the shopping area at Shenghsing Station, and deals with the questions as follows,

1. to understand the developing process of the shopping area at Shenghsing Station, and to investigate strategies of local tourism.
2. to realize the process of staged-authentication in the shopping area at Shenghsing Station, and its Tourist-oriented development.
3. to explore the stage-setting of the shopping area and its staged-authenticity recognized by local business owners.

On staged-authenticity, MacCannell adopts *Goffman's Dramaturgical Theory* and proposes six scenes and stages. Cohen takes MacCannell's concept to construct four types in tourism, (1) authenticity, which is objectively real to be accepted by tourists, (2) stage authenticity, tourists do not notice it is staging and accept it as reality, (3) denial of authenticity, which is objectively real but tourists suspect its reality, and (4) contrived tourism situation,

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which scenes are contrived, and tourists recognize it is staging, so-called a public space for recreation.

The authenticity that tourists perceived is not an objective reality. Different groups of tourists have different cultures, aesthetics, travelling experiences, and backgrounds, so they may undergo different levels of authentication. As an outsider, it is hard to discover the relationship between the authenticity and the local region; thus, the author focuses on an insider, who has been directly influenced. Both local business owners and recreation providers play a medium between authenticity and reality in an environment of the recreation. They should decide how to model stages and place them in a real place. The process is named staged-authentication.

The study used a qualitative method to collect data, focusing on the local residents' views toward constructed stages on the process of developing tourism at Shenghsing Station. The author observed and collected those data as the variation of constantly constructing local scenery, images, and cultures; based on the data, the author constructed a research frame in the shopping area at Shengsin Station. The author stated historical background, the origin and stories of Shengshing Station, and interpreted the existential meanings of the station.

### **3. Insider's Cognition types in Staged-authentication**

Taking a case study as a research method, the author collected data at Shenghsing Station to understand its history context, geography context, and sociality context. The author re-explained Cohen's staged-authentication matrix to construct the concept of staged-authentication from the views of insiders.

Table 1. Insider's Cognition types in Staged-authentication

|                 |          | Insider's Impression of Scene |                   |
|-----------------|----------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
|                 |          | Real                          | Staged            |
| Nature of scene | (real)   | (1) Real-reality              | (2) Real-staged   |
|                 | (staged) | (3) Staged-reality            | (4) Staged-staged |

#### **(1) Real-reality**

In perceptions of real-reality and media, real-reality is authenticity. In the tourism and recreation fields, the stage of real-reality is hardly discovered and accepted by tourists since it does not equip with recreational features and services, and is not easily reachable...etc. When tourists with different authenticity get into the stage, they may have different perceptions. In the surrounding area in Shenghsing Station, tourists hardly experience the atmosphere of the local culture, and only few local residents live here, but those who move here for sightseeing and recreational activities.

#### **(2) Real-stage**

The stage of real-stage is the living field for local residents without any man-made decorations. However, due to other scenic spots invite tourists' joining, the field has become an attractive and catching place. Take Shenghsing Station as an example, based on the Cultural

Heritage Preservation Act, the station, platforms, and railways has not been significantly decorated and rebuilt, but has still been well-maintained .

### (3) Staged-reality

Staged-reality is often observed in the tourism field in Taiwan, which means most staged-reality is man-made, and is even decorated into a consuming stage purposely. It creates authentic products to attract consumers, and also adds enchanted stories and nostalgic scenes.

In this case , the local residents hope that the façade of Shenghsing Station, the front station and the circus can be handled without destroying its original landscape. However, the design and construction parts did not cooperate well, so establishing authenticity in the landscape is unable to be presented as local residents wish.

### (4) Staged-stage

Staged-stage is the authenticity stage that even local residents can not believe its reality, and hugely sells unauthentic products on purpose. It is the result of catering to insiders' benefits. Thus, the place loses its cultural essence, but its make-up scenes attract tourists to visit here and to accept the local unauthentic culture. The study divides the virtual stage of Shenghsing Station into three parts (see Fig.1-3) ,

- A) sell products not belonging to the local place
- B) make up local scenes - exaggerated decoration and replacement marketing
- C) bring in exotic activities - buskers ( top king performance, art portraits)



Fig.1 products not belonging to the local place



Fig.2 local scenes be made-up



Fig.3 exotic activities

## 4. The Staged-authentication Process of the Shopping Area

Normally, tourism fields are usually developed in the way described in the matrix; of course, in this case, the process of development also follows at the same way, with prototype construction phase, development phase, transmission phase, and remodeling phase, namely.

The development of the tourism field is gradually developed, like the study conducted. The study collected and analyzed Shenghsing Station's history. When New Mountain Line start using, there are some local groups proposed to preserve Old Mountain Line, so Shenghsing Station was successfully preserved. Since it faced the managerial challenges, it set up foundations, and Old Mountain Line Association to take over the difficult task, and started to develop a series of plans and activities for the tourism development.

The case study has developed a process of the Staged-authentication, listed as follows, it includes four phase on Shenghsing Station Shopping Area in Sanyi :

- (1) stage constructed development phase ..... (1994-1998: Fig.5)
- (2) reality stage development phase ..... (1998-2002: Fig.6)
- (3) stage transition phase ..... (2002-2005: Fig.7)
- (4) stage remodeling phase ..... (2006-2012.07: Fig.8)

## 5. Conclusion

External force plays an important role in the process of developing the shopping area at Shenghsing Station. A shopping area can be developed only by supports from the central government and local governments. To explore the developing progress of staged-authentication in a local region, the results of the study show that the closer to the first section it is, the more authentic it has; otherwise, the closer to the third section, the more staging it has. Besides, the results also indicate that it will have more dedicated results, if the study can connect to tourists' feelings from the aspect of an insider. The four-stage process matrix is designed for perceptions and construction in local environment, including (1) an insider's authentic perceptions (authentic cognition of cultures) --- an insider's local memories, environmental cognitions, and individual cultivation...etc, and (2) the process of authentication (ways of development and construction) --- external force, construction levels, and materials...etc.

Understanding the process of authentication, the author finds out when tourists visit a tourism spot, they may have different reality / stages determinations and performances in every step of stage-reality in the process of local authentic perceptions and authentication.

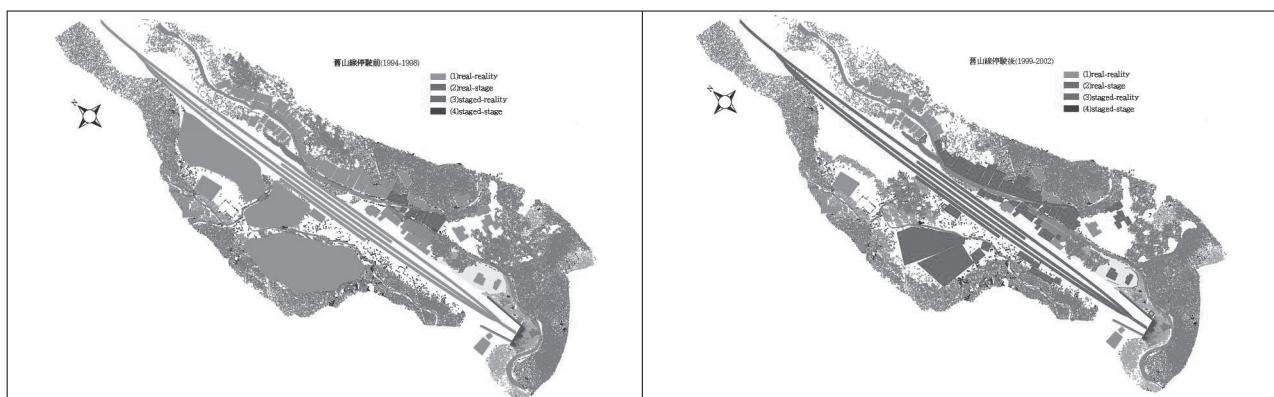


Fig.5 1994-1998 stage constructed development phase

Fig.6 1998-2002 reality stage development phase

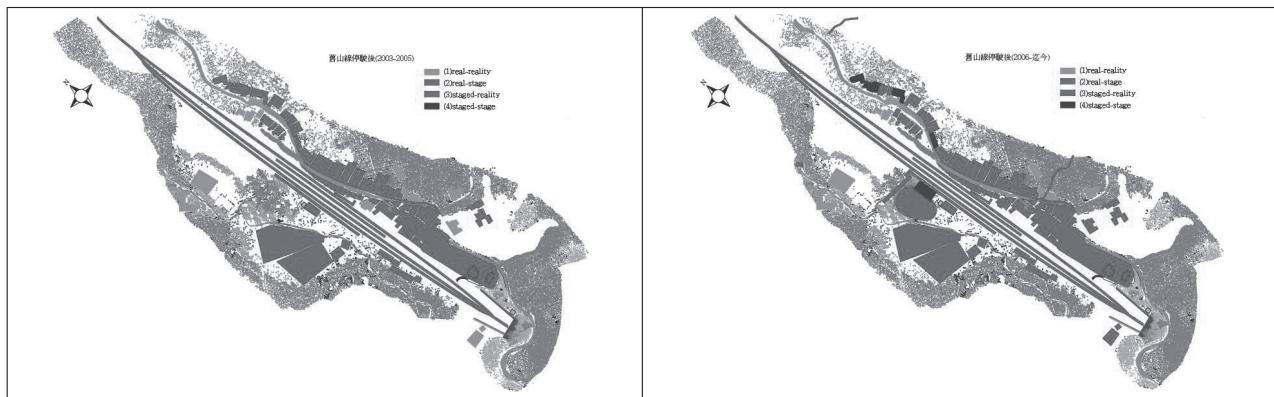


Fig.7 2002-2005 stage transition phase

Fig.8 2006-2012.07 stage remodeling phase