

Impacts of High-speed Trains on International Tourism Arrival to China

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Abstract

In the last decades, high-speed train is an crucial innovation of transport infrastructure from the traditional railway thanks to its time-saving, comfortable and cost-effective features. Nowadays, establishment of high speed train system has become one of important policies of China. It is not only can meet the requirements of the goal Energy conservation and emission reduction but also an important component of the One Belt One Road policies. However, the impact of high-speed train system is not clear now. From the previous literature, Chen and Haynes (2012), Pagliara et al(2017) and Zhou and Li (2018) conclude that positive impact results from high-speed train network service while Bazin et al. (2006) and Albalade and Fageda (2016) demonstrate that high speed trains cannot bring beneficial result to a national tourism economy. Therefore, it is necessary to study the accurate relationship between CRH and China tourism industry to help alleviate the Chinese public's doubts about the investment of high-speed trains and fill this gap.

This paper aims to analyse the importance of China Railway High-speed (CRH) train in determining the China inbound tourism attractiveness of destinations. A gravity model has been employed using the annual provincial panel data of China during the 2007-2016 to analyse this topic. In this paper, we analyse the effects of CRH in different economic development levels regions on its foreign tourist arrivals by dividing the database into China's four major economic areas. The main results found in this study demonstrate that in general CRH can help attracting international tourists to travel in China. However, it has different roles in different regions, it can promote international tourism industry of northeast area, middle area and west area of China but it cannot bring significant beneficial impact on east area. Moreover, according to lagged effect study, we found that the hysteresis effects of CRH are often much greater than the immediate direct effects.

Keywords: China, gravity model, high-speed train, regional tourism economy

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