Research on the Attention Degree of A-grade Tourist Attractions in Guilin: A Comparative Analysis of Online Travel Notes and Official Propaganda Texts

Luan Guo¹, Yuting Feng², Weiwei Ai³, Jin Fan⁴

Abstract Do tourists and destination governments have the same perception of tourist attractions? Taking 55 A-grade tourist attractions in Guilin for example, based on travel notes and official propaganda texts, this study first count occurrence frequency of tourist attractions in these web texts with the help of software ROST CM6. Then, tourists’ attention degree and official attention degree are compared. Results reveal that government and tourists have distinct perceptions of tourist attractions, and there are differences in attention degree for attractions of different groups and grades. Findings contribute to the literature on network attention degree and destination marketing. A number of tourism marketing suggestions are put forward from popularity, groups and grades aspects accordingly.

Keywords network attention; occurrence frequency; tourism marketing; content analysis; web texts

1 Introduction

With the rapid development of information and communication technology, Internet is widely used in tourism industry. Tourists can share their travel experiences on the Internet, and tourism destination governments can use the Internet to afford services and deliver tourist attraction information. However, different groups’ perceptions of tourist attractions are not exactly the same, causing the contradictions between official top-down management measures and tourists’ actual demand. Understanding the differences between tourists’ attention and official attention of Guilin tourist attractions is important particularly because Guilin is building international tourism destination, and the number of A-grade tourist attractions is in the front rank of China. It’s really necessary that government adjust marketing strategy to meet the demand of tourists. Tourism propaganda effect would be improved, thus helping Guilin to create a world-class tourist destination.

In view of this, this paper uses the Web Crawler Technology to collect Guilin’s online travel notes and official propaganda texts, compares the attention degree of tourist attractions in both samples and further puts forward marketing suggestions

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based on analysis.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Web texts and tourism marketing

Tourist and official web texts are important data sources for tourism marketing research. At present, relying on big data from the Internet, scholars have carried out a great deal of research about the rules of travelers’ spatial-temporal behavior. Girardin (2008), Vaccari et al. (2009) successively took the Florence, Roman, and New York City as examples to study the spatial-temporal characteristics of tourist flow of each case. Pietro, Virgilio and Pantano (2012) studied network word-of-mouth effect on destination image and behavioral intention by constructing the structural equation model.

Travel notes analysis is an effective way to judge the advantages and disadvantages of destination tourism marketing (Pan. Betal, 2007). Tussyadiah. I and Feserunaier. D (2008) analyzed the four factors needed considering to make online travel notes become marketing tools, identified meaningful sentence structures in travel notes and suggested the form of storytelling to launch tourism marketing. Online travel notes and official propaganda texts can be analyzed comparatively. By comparing tourist-generated content and national tourism organization generated content, Athena (2017) explored the differences between perceived and projected online destination image of Eastern Taiwan. Yang(2017) used web texts data to determine the cooperation profiles of Shanghai tourist attractions from government perspective and tourist’s perspective.

2.2 Network Attention Degree

Attention Degree refers to the degree that public concerns to something. It reflects the close degree of relationship between things and public behavior in a sense (Jacob Ratliwiczetal, 2010). From the point of data sources, the research on network attention degree of tourist attractions mainly uses Baidu Index, Google Trends and other alternative indicators. From the point of research contents, it can be divided into following aspects: the research on the spatial-temporal distribution characteristics of network attention; the comparative study on network attention and actual tourist flow; the analysis on related factors of network attention. Lin, Ma, Liu and Gao (2012) used geographical segments and hotspot trend of Baidu Index to analyze the spatial-temporal distribution characteristics of tourist attraction attention degree, understanding the change rules of network attention degree. Lee et al. (2008) and Long et al. (2011) took Baidu Index as network attention of tourist attractions and compared it with the actual tourist flow of official statistics. The result demonstrated that there was a positive correlation between network attention degree and tourist flow, and network attention degree was more advanced. Jing (2015) found that the tourist network attention degree was mainly influenced by resource endowment status of tourism destination, tourism infrastructure and leisure time.
Above all, this paper uses online travel notes to represent the network attention degree of tourist attraction, resolving the problem that Baidu Index couldn’t distinguish actual tourists from potential tourists. Moreover, web texts are analyzed from official and tourist perspectives, which changes the situation that scholars regard tourists as a single subject and take travel notes as the sample source unilaterally when studying attention degree.

3 Research Design

3.1 Research Sample

This study chose 55 A-grade tourist attractions in Guilin as research objects and the relevant web texts were selected for analysis. For the convenience of subsequent research, only large tourist attractions were included in samples and the small tourist attractions (spots) were not included. According to the tourism spatial structure of “one center ”(Guilin City) and “two subcenters ”(Yangshuo and Xing’an) in the Overall Planning for Tourism Development in Guilin(2001-2020), we divided A-grade tourist attractions into three tourist attractions groups: Urban Tourist Attractions Group, namely the tourist attractions of Guilin City and Lingchuan County; Yangshuo Tourist Attractions Group, including the tourist attractions of Yangshuo, Pingle, Yongfu and Gongcheng; Xing’an Tourist Attractions, referring to the tourist attractions of Xing’an, Quanzhou, Longsheng, Ziyuan and Guanyang. Particularly, Lijiang Scenic Area in this paper referred to its Yangshuo section. Research samples could be divided into two parts:

Online travel note samples are articles that tourists have published on web platforms about their travel experiences, description and evaluation of tourist attractions (spots) during the course of tourist activities or after the trips. For the large market share and high Internet users’ attention of Ctrip, this research selected its guide community as the source of online travel note samples. First, keywords of the tourist attractions were determined. Second, enter the keywords in “travel notes” section of Ctrip and search relevant travel notes. Third, the collected travel notes were selected, with prose, poetry and other genres removed. Besides, pure pictures record, travel agency advertisements and travel notes not related to the tourist attractions were also eliminated. To ensure the timeliness, accuracy and reliability of study samples, only travel notes from January 2014 to January 2016 with complete content and fixed genre were what we needed. Finally, 3351 online travel texts were obtained.

Official propaganda text samples are the reports that the government of Guilin have posted about the development of tourist attractions on the Internet and official microblogs of relevant tourism bureau. On the one hand, they cover the web texts of “Spot News” “Industry Dynamics” “Attention of Guilin” and “Media Focus” sections on Guilin municipal tourism government website of www.gltour.gov.cn and corresponding content on each county’s tourism government website. On the other hand, they conclude “Langjibagui”, “Guangxi Tourism Administration”, “Guilin Tourism Administration” and the official microblogs of county governments.
Although Sina is not a travel website, considering its influence in China, Sina Microblog partly contains some promotional samples. The collection process of official propaganda texts is basically as same as the travel notes. We only chose texts about festival exhibition, promotion information and policy measures except for the chicken soup and life information. Finally, 2217 effective articles were obtained.

3.2 Method

This study used ROST CM6 software to count occurrence frequency of each tourist attraction in the web texts. When the software counted occurrence frequency of tourist attractions, each tourist attraction was only counted once in the same text regardless of how many times it appeared. That is to say, if a tourist attraction occurred in the sample, the occurrence frequency of this tourist attraction was 1, and the reverse was 0. The occurrence frequency, namely attention degree of tourist attractions, reflects the extent to which tourists or government prefer the attractions. In other words, for a tourist attraction, the more times it appears in travel notes or official propaganda texts, the more attention it gets. Accordingly, higher the attention degree.

4 Results

4.1 Preference of Tourist Attractions

As the sample sizes of travel notes and official propaganda texts were different, “relative occurrence frequency” was chosen to understand the preference of tourists and government better. It means that attention degree is equal to the occurrence frequency of tourist attraction divided by the total number of travel note samples or official propaganda samples. The attention degree of official propaganda texts and tourist online travel notes are called Official Attention Degree (OAD) and Tourist Attention Degree (TAD) respectively. If a tourist attraction has high OAD, it implied that this attraction has gotten much government attention. Similarly, a tourist attraction with higher TAD is more popular among tourists.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Tourist Attraction</th>
<th>Online Travel Notes</th>
<th>Official Propaganda Texts</th>
<th>Difference of Attention Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Occurrence Frequency</td>
<td>TAD</td>
<td>Occurrence Frequency</td>
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<td>---------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Occurrence Frequency</td>
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<td>Occurrence Frequency</td>
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<td>Gudong Waterfall</td>
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<td>Lingqu Canal Scenic Area</td>
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<td>Longsheng Hot Spring</td>
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<td>Yaoshan Mountain</td>
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<td>Longji Terraced Fields Scenic Area</td>
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<td>1216</td>
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<td>Qianjiadong National Nature Reserve Scenic Area</td>
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<td>308</td>
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<td>Nanxi Hill Park Scenic Area</td>
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<td>Yanshan Park</td>
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<td>Liu Sanjie Grand View Garden</td>
<td>360</td>
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<td>A29</td>
<td>Tianlai Butterfly Spring</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>0.1492</td>
<td>212</td>
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<tr>
<td>A30</td>
<td>West Hill Scenic Area</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>0.0257</td>
<td>128</td>
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<tr>
<td>A31</td>
<td>Xiaoyao Lake</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.0018</td>
<td>116</td>
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<tr>
<td>A32</td>
<td>Roshan Lake Water Park</td>
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<td>396</td>
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<tr>
<td>A33</td>
<td>Mao’er Mountain</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0.0266</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A34</td>
<td>Yangshuo Cultural Monuments Landscape Garden</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.0116</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A35</td>
<td>Zijiang River</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.0072</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A36</td>
<td>Twelve Shoals Rafting Scenic Area</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A37</td>
<td>Jianshan Temple</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>0.0874</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A38</td>
<td>Nine Horses Painting Hill Bajiao Village</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>0.2089</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A39</td>
<td>Hongyan Village Scenic Area, Gongcheng County Three Temples and A Guild Hall Scenic Area, Gongcheng County Jinyin Village-Shewang Li Scenic Area</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.0036</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A40</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0.0143</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>0.0415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A41</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.0015</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.0014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A42</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.0015</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.0014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Arranging the attention degree of tourist attractions in the samples with a descending order, we defined the top five as “popular tourist attractions”. The popular tourist attractions in online travel notes were Lijiang River (A01), Elephant Hill Scenic Area (A07), Silver Cave Scenic Area (A11), Longji Terraced Fields Scenic Area (A23) and Guilin Two Rivers and Four Lakes Scenic Area (A10); while the popular tourist attractions in official propaganda texts were Lijiang River (A01), Longji Terraced Fields Scenic Area (A23), Elephant Hill Scenic Area (A07), Solitary Beauty Peak • Prince City Scenic Area (A03), and Guilin Merryland Resort (A02). Among these, Lijiang River, Elephant Hill Scenic Area and Longji Terraced Fields Scenic Area were popular attractions in both travel note and official propaganda samples. It demonstrated that these three tourist attractions were not only highly valued by the government, but also the focus of tourists. Undoubtedly, Lijiang River is the central tourist belt of Guilin. And as the logo of Guilin tourism, Elephant Hill Scenic Area and Guilin Two Rivers and Four Lakes Scenic Area are the core tourist attractions of Guilin. Longji Terraced Fields Scenic Area has a monopoly of world significance for its unique landscape and strong ethnic customs.

Popular tourist attractions in official samples like Solitary Beauty Peak • Prince City Scenic Area and Guilin Merryland Resort had not been listed as popular tourist attractions in online travel notes. It indicated that in the process of external advertising, besides natural landscape tourist attractions, the government also paid attention to historical and cultural tourist attractions and recreational tourist attractions. Historical and cultural tourist attractions present the urban development to tourists vividly,
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playing an important role in inheriting local culture. Recreational tourist attractions lack deep historical accumulation and unique natural landscape, so the substitutability is strong. This requires the government to play a role of public salesman, advertising continuously and comprehensively to promote their popularity and influence rapidly.

4.2 Differences of Network Attention Degree

4.2.1 General differences

Line chart was drew in order to visually compare TAD and OAD. As reported in Fig.1, there were some differences as well as similarities between TAD and OAD. As for neither hot nor unpopular tourist attractions, such as Liu Sanjie Grand View Garden (A28), Chuanshan Park (A16), Yaoshan Mountain (A17), Nanxishan Hill (A25), Mao'er Mountain (A33) and so on, TAD and OAD were almost the same. Meanwhile, non-popular tourist attractions ranked bottom half of the attention degree list, like Yongfu Golden Bell Hill Resort (A22), Twelve Shoals Rafting Scenic Area (A36), Three Temples and A Guild Hall Scenic Area (A41), Jiangtou Scenic Area (A43) and Hongyan Village Scenic Area (A40), showed strong similarity in travel notes and official propaganda texts. Because of worse accessibility, poorer tourism resources, or weaker tourism infrastructure, this kind of tourist attractions couldn’t catch tourists’ attention. And official propaganda was also not enough.

![Fig. 1. Attention degree of tourist attractions in two type samples](image)

The significant difference between TAD and OAD was mainly reflected in popular tourist attractions, such as Lijiang River Scenic Area (A01), Merryland Resort (A02), Solitary Beauty Peak • Prince City Scenic Area (A03), Reed Flute Cave (A05), Silver Cave (A11) and Longji Terraced Fields (A23). Tourists preferred Lijiang River, Reed Flute Cave and Silver Cave because in their eyes, Guilin scenery with hills and waters had become a symbol of the City. Just as the well-known saying goes, “The Scenery of Gulin is the Finest under the Heaven.” In this way, many tourists
equaled Guilin to hills and waters to some extent. Thus, this kind of tourist attractions had strongest popularity and importance among them.

Although Lijiang River (A01), Reed Flute Cave (A05) and Silver Cave (A11) were paid great attention in official propaganda texts, the government concerned more about Solitary Beauty Peak • Prince City Scenic Area (A03), Lingqu Canal(A13), Longji Terraced Fields (A23) and Yijiangyuan Scenic Area (A19). This finding could be attributed to these tourist attractions had rich history and ethnic culture. Besides, the government focused on promoting tourist attractions of recreation, which caused the distinct difference between TAD and OAD. As shown in Fig.1, OAD of Yuzi Paradise (A09), Roshan Lake Water Park (A32), especially Merryland Resort (A02), was rather high. In general, these tourist attractions have much value in appreciation, artistry and integrity, affording tourists ideal places for entertainment and representing tourism resources developing direction at the same time. Therefore, the government strengthens publicity.

4.2.2 Differences among tourist attraction groups

Using research method in Regional Tourism Economy for reference, we raised mean ratio of Guilin A-grade tourist attractions. The occurrence frequency of each region’s tourist attractions was divided by the mean occurrence frequency of all religions’ tourist attractions in travel notes or official propaganda texts. Then, the mean ratio was obtained. The larger one region’s mean ratio was, the higher its attention degree would be.

Table 2. Mean ratio of Guilin A-grade tourist attractions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tourist Attraction Group</th>
<th>Tourist Attraction Quantity</th>
<th>Proportion of the whole city (%)</th>
<th>Online Travel Notes Occurrence Frequency</th>
<th>Mean ratio</th>
<th>Official Propaganda Texts Occurrence Frequency</th>
<th>Mean ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yangshuo Group</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>45.45</td>
<td>7259</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1054</td>
<td>0.86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban Group</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27.27</td>
<td>6556</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>1657</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xing’an Group</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27.27</td>
<td>1678</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>968</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: the average value of occurrence frequency among three tourist attraction groups in online travel notes and official propaganda texts were 5164 and 1226 respectively.

We had already divided Guilin into three tourist attraction groups before. TAD of Yangshuo Group was the highest, higher than Guilin City’s average level (Table 2). This resulted from Yangshuo’s possession of the essence of Lijiang River, since Karst landscape represented by Lijiang River was Guilin’s core tourism resources. Furthermore, TAD of Urban Group is also above average, just lower than Yangshuo Group. Urban Group owned abundant and well-combined tourism resources, among which Elephant Trunk Hill and Two Rivers and Four Lakes Scenic Area contributed most to TAD. Xing’an Group had the lowest TAD, below average, with a mean ratio less than 1 and an occurrence frequency accounted for 10.83% of the whole city. Despite that Xing’an County was the heart of this tourist attraction group, poor accessibility and bad combination weakened tourists’ attention.
Urban Group appeared 1657 times in official propaganda texts and its mean ratio was 1.35 (see Table 2). It indicated that the government shared more policy information about Urban Group than any other groups. This was primarily caused by the popularity of Elephant Trunk Hill among tourists. As an emblem of Guilin, Elephant Trunk Hill attracted a mass of tourists. By devoting effort to Urban Group in official propaganda texts, government could drive tourists to travel more frequently around the group, hence promoting the agglomeration and integration of tourist attractions. Mean ratio of Xing’an group was the lowest, only 0.79, slightly less than Yangshuo Group numerically, however. Actually, the government pays a certain attention to Xing’an in external publicity process due to the group’s rich cultural relics. Lingqu Canal is the first canal in the world to connect two river valleys, displaying water conservancy culture of ancient China. Memorial Park of Xiangjiang Battle presents revolutionary culture in modern times. And people can get a glimpse of religious culture through Xiangjiang Temple. All these tourist attractions are a window showing Guilin’s history and culture, which would help city culture construction a lot.

4.2.3 Differences among tourist attractions at different grades

Taking into account the impact of tourist attraction grade when choosing destination, a correlation analysis between grade and occurrence frequency were made. The correlation coefficient, 0.630 in travel notes and 0.501 in official propaganda texts, meant that occurrence frequency was positive correlated with tourist attraction grade. Then, we used extreme value, average value, and standard deviation for deeper analysis (Table 3 and Table 4).

Results revealed that occurrence frequency regular pattern for different grades in travel notes was closely akin to which in official propaganda texts. With the decrease of grade, overall differences among groups for different grade tourist attractions were shrinking. Interestingly, it was found that some lower grade tourist attractions had significantly higher attention degree. For instance, Nine Horses Painting Hill (A38) and Jianshan Temple (A37) are 3A-grade tourist attractions along Lijiang River. They occurred 700 times and 293 times in travel notes respectively, more than most 4A-grade tourist attractions. While Memorial Park of Xiangjiang Battle (A44) occurred 160 times in official propaganda texts. Owing to its patriotic culture, it was the focus of government, getting more official attention compared to some 4A-grade tourist attractions like Chuanshan Mountain(132 times), Xishan Mountain (128 times), Nanxishan Hill (128 times).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Occurrence frequency</th>
<th>Maximal Value</th>
<th>Least Value</th>
<th>Average Value</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
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Table 4. Occurrence frequency for different grade tourist attractions in official samples

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Occurrence frequency</th>
<th>Maximal Value</th>
<th>Least Value</th>
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<td>22</td>
<td>1604</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 Conclusions

We undertake the present study to make sure whether tourists and government have the same tourist attractions perceptions, and if not, find out what the differences are. By analyzing differences between online tourist notes and official propaganda texts of 55 A-grade tourist attractions in Guilin, the following conclusions are drawn:

Firstly, tourists’ preferences of tourist attractions are inconsistent with the perspectives of government policies, which may probably cause these policies to fail to attain desired market results. In detail, Karst landscape tourism resources is the centrality of tourist preference. But for government, historic cultural sites and recreational tourist attractions are core concern. As regards non-popular tourist attractions, tourists and government are quite the same on network attention degree. Secondly, there are differences among the network attention degree of three tourist attraction groups. Yangshuo Group has the top TAD, whereas Urban Group is the government’s main concern. Thirdly, different grade tourist attractions have different network attention degree. The higher the grade, the higher the degree of attention. As grade decreases, overall differences among groups for different grade tourist attractions shrink. Moreover, a few low grade tourist attractions draw more attention than high grade ones.

5.1 Implications for Practice

5.1.1 Marketing for tourist attractions of different popularity

Taking full advantage of tourist attractions with a high public profile and great appeal, popularity unbalance can be improved under tourist attraction cooperation and co-marketing. Popular tourist attractions have remarkable superiority in traffic condition and infrastructure. If cooperation mechanism with other tourist attractions established, tourists can flow reasonably and smoothly in Guilin. It’s time to realize the importance of tourist attraction cooperation and actively adopt linkage propaganda strategy. Government is supposed to play a leading role in this process. Much can be done, making popular and unpopular sites occur in the same official propaganda text, posting travel routes linking the two kinds and suchlike. With the help of Lijiang River, Longji Terraced Fields, Two Rivers and Four Lakes Scenic Area and Elephant Trunk Hill, tourist attractions of high OAD and low TAD like Merryland Resort, Yuzi Paradise, Shenlong Water World would get noticed among tourists in a short time.

5.1.2 Marketing for tourist attractions of different groups

Different tourist attraction groups require for different strategies. That is to say, focus on Urban Group marketing, actively promote Xing’an Group marketing, and gradually improve the marketing of Yangshuo Group. Our findings show that Urban
Group and Yangshuo Group keep ahead in high grade tourism resources, tourists’
preference, and well-combined tourist attractions. They have already formed some
marketing foundation. Accordingly, government should make full use of popular
attractions in the groups to bring along others. By one unit guiding a whole area, the
overall balance of tourist attraction popularity can be achieved. However, Xing’an
Group has low TAD as a result of lack in tour value and accessibility. Government can
work with portal sites (e.g. Sina; Souhu) and tourism network community (e.g. www.ctrip.com; www.ly.com) to organize various activities aimed at attracting tourists’ attention.

5.1.3 Marketing for tourist attractions of different grades
Due to distinct tourism resources endowment and development level, government
needs to adopt diverse marketing measures for each grade of tourist attractions. 5A-grade and 4A-grade attractions have a high attention degree both in travel notes
and official propaganda texts, suggesting that publicity resources on such attractions
are in line with the tourist preferences. During daily propaganda work, government
ought to help tourists understand the culture and history behind relics. Only in this
way, can these attractions develop sustainably. As to 3A-grade attractions,
in addition to the large number , most of them get little attention from tourists and the
government. In order to avoid unnecessary waste of propaganda resources, the
government should cultivate characteristic tourism growth points and strengthen their
publicity, so that tourists can obtain relative information through more channels, so as
to improve the popularity among tourists.

5.2 Future Directions
Further study could improve on several limitations of this study. As far as data
sources are concerned, we only selected representative websites, which limited the
completeness of the samples to some extent. Future research should expand data
sources. In addition, this study focused on word frequency and didn’t consider
sentiment of the words . We suggest further research to analyze web texts semantically
for understanding emotional attitude towards tourist attractions.

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