

## ANALYSIS OF PROMOTION AND USP IN BEIJING CULTURAL TOURISM MARKET

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*The aim of this paper is to analyze promotion and USP in Beijing cultural tourism market. The USP of Beijing cultural tourism is suggested to be the cultural heritages and “Peking” elements, which represent the unique identity of Beijing and differentiate it from other destinations.*

**Key Words:** *promotion, Beijing, cultural tourism, USP*

**JEL Classification:** *M 31, L83*

**I. ANALYSIS OF PROMOTION IN BEIJING CULTURAL TOURISM MARKET**

Promotion is intended to inform the customers about the products, create an image about the product and position it in the market. Beijing city invested 30 million RMB to continuously promote its tourism through the external publicity efforts, internal innovation means of publicity.

- *Social Media Promotion.* “Visit Beijing” travel website has ranked the first among the national government tourism public service official website. It is under the administration of Beijing Municipal Commission of Tourism Development. The website has 9 different languages and offers general information about the routes, attractions, Beijing culture and accommodation recommendations, but not selling any package for visitors. Acting as an introducing platform, “Visiting Beijing” travel website also has its Wechat and Microblog platforms, which are the two main social platforms in China, similar to Facebook and Twitter. Apart from this, “Visiting Beijing” also has its official Facebook page, making it easier for people outside China to know about Beijing tourism information better.

Beijing Tourism continued to expand its overseas promotion channels to maintain the visibility and influence of “Beijing Tourism” in international mainstream social media. For example, in 2015 ABC Television Station broadcasted a series of Beijing Tourism Promotional videos--- *Discovering Beijing*. With help of video network launched the micro-film “Love Beijing”, “Beijing story” travel documentaries, and promotional films and so on. Taking advantage of Microblog, WeChat and other new media, Beijing Tourism official Microblog fans and “Beijing Leisure Tour” APP page views have achieved the new breakthrough.

- *Large-scale Events Promotion.* Beijing Tourism has continued to innovate its overseas promotion methods, and has frequently exposed in many influential large-scale events. On the New Year's Day in 2012, in the last 10 seconds of the New York Times Square countdown event in New York, the Plaza LED screen played a Beijing tourism promotion film; in Barcelona, Spain, the Beijing Municipal Commission of Tourism Development also used the La Liga as a platform for Beijing tourism promotion. Positive achievements are represented by a series of activities such as “Magic Beijing Tour for Pandas” shows in London and Dublin, the Beijing tourism team leads the Cologne Carnival, travel promotion in Taiwan and Hong Kong and so on.

- *Organizing Promoting Events and Conferences.* Beijing Municipal Commission of Tourism Development together with the foreign local public and some tourism stakeholders organized and participated lots of oversea promotional events and conferences. Since 2016, Beijing Tourism Commission has actively expanded the overseas influence of “Charming Beijing” brand with different types of activities, such as cultural exhibitions, shows, photo shows, promotional conferences, cultural tourism festivals, tourism fairs and so on. It has already made success in Canada, the U.S.A, Vietnam, Greece, Finland, Serbia, Australia, etc., combining the “One Belt and One Road” initiative, the tourism theme year and the friendship city exchanges to strengthen Beijing’s overseas tourism promotion.

Another important promotional activity for Beijing cultural tourism is the Beijing International Tourism Expo (BITE), which has been successfully held for 14 sessions since 2004. The 15th Beijing International Tourism Expo has been held on June 15-17, 2018 at the Beijing National Convention Center. Beijing International Tourism Expo has become one of the world’s leading exhibitions. It is an important exchange and

trading platform for the global tourism industry to promote tourism resources and tourism products, enhance regional tourism development, and promote tourism consumption. International and domestic Participating tourism organizations and tourism companies participate in BITE each year to achieve a rich harvest that meets or exceeds expectations.



Fig 1 Logo of Beijing International Tourism Expo  
Source: Beijing International Tourism Expo 2018

• *Mobile and Online Travel Websites Promotion.* The data released by the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) shows that by the end of 2017, there were 772 million Internet users in China and 753 million mobile Internet users (Techsina, 2018). Mobile news websites, mobile phone novels, mobile newspapers and other services have become one of the most important applications affecting mobile Internet users. With the completion of the layout of WIFI points and 4G services on smart phones, the position of mobile phones as a mobile marketing platform will become increasingly prominent.

In China, the development of apps based on mobile phones is mainly those well-known online travel websites, which provide tourists tourism packages, hotels, tickets for destination attractions, transportation, tour plan, tour comments, insurance and even Visa services. Some time to time, the travel websites offer discount or voucher, cooperating with banks and Alipay (the most often used online pay in China). For example, the world’s largest Chinese online travel website---Qunar, launched the domestic trip management software Trip Planner and travel products search travel assistant. Besides, another important travel website---Ctrip allow tourists to comment on their website about all the serviced related to Beijing cultural tourism destinations.





Fig 2 Logos of Chinese Travel Websites

• *Collaborative Promotion with Other Institutions or Departments.* With the help of overseas Chinese cultural centers, Confucius Institutes and other institutional venues, Beijing cultural tourism also built its marketing platform. Beijing is also one of the members in the World Federation of Tourist Cities, which continued to grow and expand last year. The total number of members of the Federation reached 193, of which 128 were urban members, accounting for 66.3%, covering 62 countries and regions in the world. Apart from this, with the development of the high-speed train and airlines, Beijing cultural tourism public and private sectors also promote Beijing cultural tourism for the passengers on the airplanes and high-speed trains in the forms of tour magazines and tour videos. Even in the off-season, cultural and artistic performance teams of the Beijing tourism also give live performances to enhance the effect of high-speed rail tourism marketing.

II. ANALYSIS OF USP IN BEIJING CULTURAL TOURISM MARKET

Before we can successfully reach the customers and sell the tourism products, we need to identify what makes the cultural tourism market different than others. In other word, what are the unique selling points? As described by Dr. James Blythe, the USP “Contains the one feature of product that most stands out as different from the competition and is usually a feature that conveys unique benefits to the consumer” (Blythe, 2005).

According to the statistics collected from the oversea internet users’ hot topics about Beijing Tourism, the cultural heritage sites are the hottest, for which 26,175 people voted.

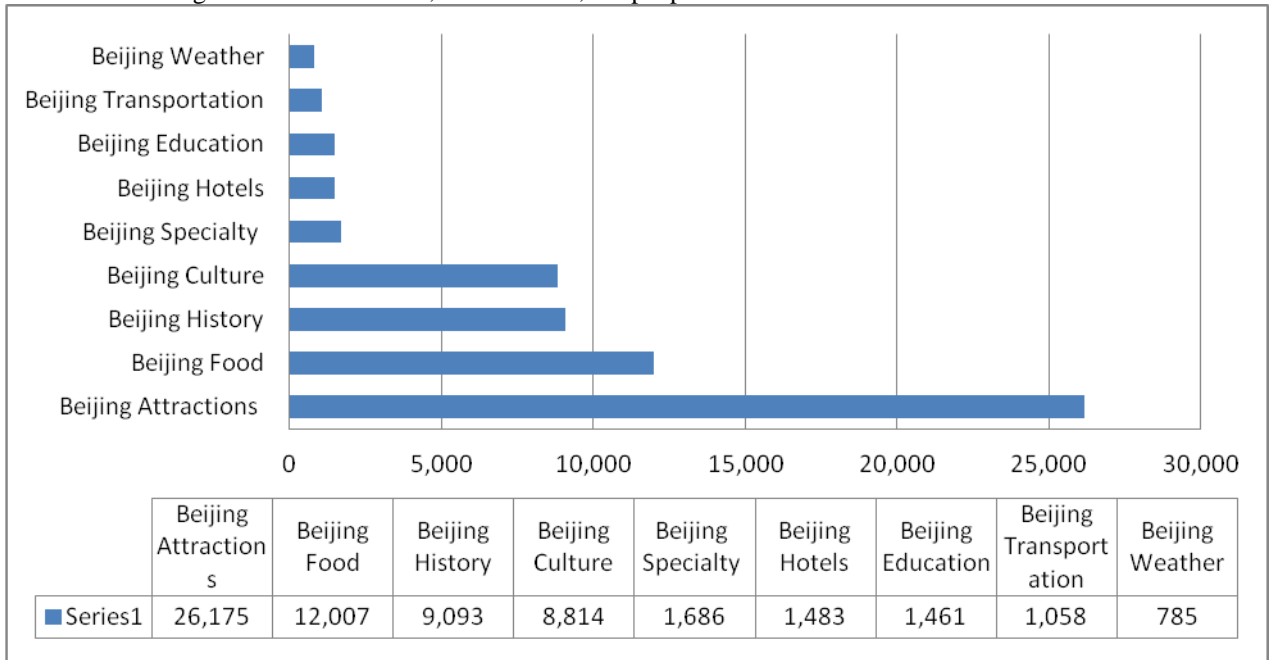


Fig 3 Distribution of overseas Internet users’ hot topics on Beijing tourism (01.01.2016-31.07.2016)  
Source: Raincent.com

According to Xinhua News, visitors believe that Beijing’s “architecture” is the most characteristic element of Beijing’s tourism. The “Forbidden City” (especially the “Tiananmen Square” section) and the “Great Wall” (especially the “Badaling” Great Wall) are still representatives of the Beijing cultural tourism. Judging from the market acceptance and demand analysis, traditional scenic spots such as “Royal Building”, “Old Beijing Siheyuan and Hutong”, “Grand Government Palace Sites”, “Celebrity Former Residence” and “Temple

Churches” are still the core of Beijing tourism. Tourists generally believe that these cultural relics are well-preserved and are worth visiting. What’s more, for these scenic “tickets”, visitors’ feedback is “cheap”.

In addition to the traditional cultural and scenic spots, visiting major famous universities, important museums and Olympic-related tourist attractions, tasting of Beijing “special snacks”, “bar nightclub” leisure and Beijing’s “Metro Experience” have also received increasing attention. The rise of these new cultural tourism activities represents the needs of the new generation of tourism market players. They will jointly build a complete Beijing cultural tourism activity system with traditional scenic spots.

Therefore, cultural heritages and “Peking” things might be the unique selling points of Beijing’s cultural tourism. As Bruce Prideaux and Dallen J. Timothy pointed out, although culture and heritage may be ordinary and familiar to local people, they may be unique and special for to foreign visitors, and cultural heritage has become a significant selling point of tourism. (Bruce, 2008) The Great wall, the Forbidden City, the Tian’anmen Square and some other Peking cultural attractions are unique for Beijing. Even the new developing Hutong travel and Siheyuan travel, which are the traditional Beijing architectures and streets, also belong to the unique Beijing elements. All these cultural heritages and Peking things people cannot find in any other places, which differentiate Beijing from other cultural tourism destinations.

### **III. CONCLUSIONS**

Through the analysis of the market mix, especially the products and promotion components, we can notice that Beijing’s cultural tourism provide tourists with cultural attractions, events, big quantity of accommodation choices and quite well-built infrastructures with different means of promotion, such as social media, large-scale event (mostly for overseas promotion), online websites and mobile, collaborating with other institutions and organizations, etc. The USP of Beijing cultural tourism is suggested to be the cultural heritages and “Peking” elements, which represent the unique identity of Beijing and differentiate it from other destinations.

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