

Nighttime tourism activities of domestic tourists in Beijing: an exploratory study

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Abstract: This paper examined the most popular nighttime tourism activities of domestic tourists in Beijing and the relationship between characteristics of domestic tourists and their activities choices. The primary data was collected through the distribution of a questionnaire research method. The relationship of tourism behaviors were analyzed using variables such as age, gender, area of origin, and sate of marriage. The results of this study indicated that leisure and recreation, watching the night scenery, and experience the night life in Beijing were the highest ranked favorite nighttime tourism behaviors for the domestic tourists in Beijing.

Keywords: Nighttime tourism activities, Domestic tourists, Beijing

1. Introduction

Beijing has a long history of being capital of one country since Yan Dynasty, and is full of royal buildings that offer varied experience for tourists. The travel industry developed rapidly over the last fifty years of the 20th century and presents a prominent status in the national economic development in Beijing. In 2009, the domestic tourists to Beijing got to 160 million, and revenue from domestic tourism was 214.45 billion.

Under the achievement of domestic tourism, we have to recognize that there are lots of tourism products for domestic tourists to choose in daytime, but there are few activities specialized for nighttime. Take www.visitbeijing.com.cn as the example, there are 20 tourism routes recommended by the website but there is zero route which plans activities at night for tourists, to say nothing about a special night tourism route.

There are three types of nighttime tourism products, which are performance, participation, attraction. Performance is one of popular nighttime tourism products, and many tourism cities exploited performances to rich the tourism products in nighttime, such as <Impression Liu SanJie> in Guilin, <Impression Hainan> in Hainan, <Show in Soncheng> in Hangzhou and so on. KTVs, bars, and night markets are classified to participation nighttime tourism products, which are universal to tourism cities. Attraction nighttime tourism product means the sceneries which can only experience at night, such as seeing the sunrise in Mountain Tai, night tour in Zhujiang River, and watching the scenery of Victoria Harbor. To Beijing, there are plenty of nighttime tourism resources. Sanlitun Street, Shichahai Street, Guijie Street, and Night Market in Donghуamen are the representative products for tourists to experience the night life in Beijing. At the mean time, Beijing National Stadium (Birds' Nest/Olympic Stadium), Water Cube, more and more museums and theatres are open in the evening. In a word, there are plenty of nighttime tourism resources, but there is few mature nighttime tourism products in Beijing, which means nighttime tourism products' organization has not been received enough attention by tourism planners and administrators in Beijing. In fact, tourism behaviors happening at night such as shopping, going to pubs, visiting museums and other activities can bring tourists a fresher and livelier knowledge about the destination.

2. Literature Review

2.1. English Literature Overview

Tourism scholars have researched tourism behaviours for many years since the 1980s. Physical activities are very popular among tourists; Roberts (1996) claimed that gender differences in sports had also lessened. Within his sample of tourists in a resort in Southwest England, Carr (1999) found very few gender differences, in terms of the tourism behaviours of young tourists. Age differences exist among the choices of various tourism behaviours, and Carr (1999) claimed that younger tourists preferred the exciting, outdoor tourism behaviours no matter where they were visiting. Hsieh and Chang (2006) considered that young people choose the tourism behaviours according to the quality of the services and the condition of the tourism behaviours. Meer (2007) indicated the elder's participation in tourism behaviours has been rapidly increasing over the past recent years. The participation of outdoor activities

among elders in the urban areas demonstrated lower participation than elders in the rural areas (Meer, 2007).

2.2. Chinese Literature Overview

Chinese scholars have produced minimal research studies in tourists' activities. Liang, Ma, and Li (2006) and Ma, Bai, and Li (2006) mentioned that oriental tourists paid great attention to their feelings and performed more careful and calm activities, while western tourists preferred adventure activities. Visitors from western countries had strong communication preferences, presented actively and preferred exciting tourism behaviours. Liang, Ma, and Li (2006) reported that the oriental tourists' length of stay was 7 to 12 days on average while that of western tourists was 10 to 20 days. Due to the length of stay, the way they choose a leisure activity would be different. In addition, Ma, Bai, and Li (2006) considered the distance between their place of residence and destination along with the reputation of the destination would also influence the tourists' activities. The more positive the impression of the destination was, the more expenditures exist, and the more tourism behaviours would be chosen.

2.3. Conclusion of Literature Overview

Based on the review of literature above, the following assumptions can be made: knowing more about the demand of tourism behaviours of tourists is important to improve the tourists' overall destination experience and is extremely useful to the management of a destination. Such research in this specific area of China is still in its paucity. This research examines Beijing as a case to analyze the most popular night time tourism behaviours and to determine the diverse leisure choices among domestic tourists.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Questionnaire Methodology

A questionnaire was used to collect the data required for this study. The questionnaire survey instrument consisted of a set of 13 questions given to a sample of 150 domestic tourists. The purpose was to gather information about the tourists' attitudes and thoughts regarding nighttime activities. The researchers compiled the responses of the domestic tourists in the sample in order to understand how the group as a whole thinks or behaves. The ability of the questionnaire to collect data on a wide range of issues in a short period kept

demands on tourists’ time relatively low and conducting the surveys ‘face-to-face’ can often provide a higher response rate.

3.2. The Survey

After pre-testing the survey among 10 students in Beijing Jiaotong University, the survey was carried out on-site at three famous tourism attractions in Beijing including the Forbidden City, Shicha Hai Park, and Beijing Zoo during May 10th-11th, 2009. The survey, which contained 13 questions, was made available in Chinese. For the purpose of this paper ‘nighttime tourism behaviors’ has been defined as “the activities tourists choose to do at night”. The information was gathered from 150 domestic tourists. The survey was conducted using a face-to-face survey method and obtained a response rate of approximately 87.3%, which means that there were 131 effective questionnaires.

The respondents were selected randomly and asked to choose their favorite activities at night in Beijing. Besides the six choices provided, there was an open ended answer section for the respondents to choose and write down the activities they enjoyed at night.

4. The Results

4.1. Sample Characteristics

Table 1 indicates the basic information of the respondents in this survey. The areas of origin are all around China.

Table 1: Basic demographics

Gender	Male		Female	
percentage (%)	44.9%		55.1%	
Age	<18	18-35	35-55	>55
percentage (%)	3.39%	80.5%	12.75%	3.3%
Income(\$/ per month)	<2500	2500-4000	4000-8000	>8000
percentage (%)	57.63%	32.2%	10.17%	0.1%

4.2. Perception of nighttime tourism products in Beijing

The respondents can choose more than one option when they were asked the question “which spot(s) is (are) your choice when you staying in Beijing at night”. The results are shown in Table 2. The result shows that tourists know little about nighttime tourism products in Beijing. As shown in Table 2, the top 3 popularity among tourism spots are Wangfujing Street, Sanlitun Bar Street,

and Cash Box KTV. Jifeng Book Store, Hong Theatre, and Donghuamen Night Market are the last three tourism spots in tourists' perception of nighttime tourism attractions. What can be deduced is that positive activities (like shopping, going to pubs, and KTV) are more popular than passive activities (like watching performance, reading books, and so on).

Table 2: Tourists' perception of nighttime tourism products in Beijing

Tourism spot	responses		Percent of cases
	N	Percent	
Wangfujing Street	76	20.3	67.3
Guije Street	24	6.4	21.2
Sanlitun Bar Street	66	17.6	58.4
Jifeng Book Store	7	1.9	6.2
Donghuamen Night Market	19	5.1	16.8
HuGuang Guild Hall	17	4.5	15
Laoshe Tea House	31	8.3	27.4
Cash Box KTV	54	14.4	47.8
Hong Theatre	10	2.7	8.8
Meilanfang Theatre	34	9.1	30.1
Qianmen	37	9.9	32.7
Total	375	100	331.9

What should be mentioned specially is that most of tourists stated interest to the nighttime tourism behaviors. Figure 1 below shows the conclusion.

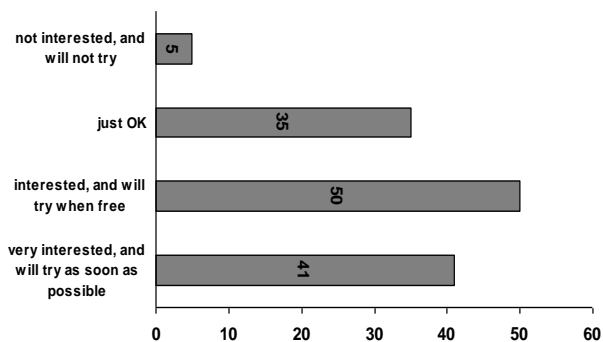


Figure 1: The interest of nighttime tourism behavior

4.3. Tourism Motivation in Nighttime

The tourism motivations in nighttime are different a lot. 'Leisure and recreation' is the first motivation for tourists to choose in nighttime, the second choice is 'experience the night life in Beijing', the third one is 'watch night scenery', and

the last one is ‘taste the special food in Beijing’. The result is shown by figure 2 below.

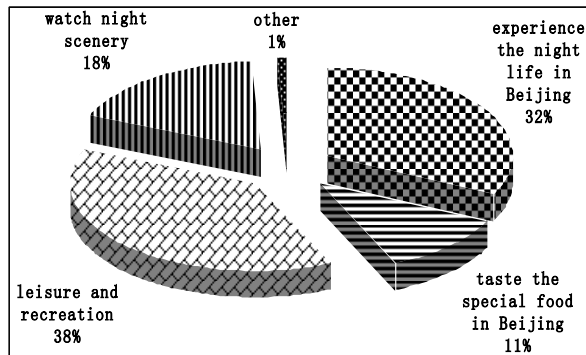


Figure 2: The tourism motivation in nighttime

5. Comparing the Tourism Behaviors of Domestic Tourists

Based on the literature summary, the paper picks up gender, age, state of marriage, area of origin to analyze the relationship between nighttime tourism behaviors and tourists’ character.

5.1. Age Difference and Tourism Activities

The researchers divided the responders into four categories based on age: 18 year-old (teenager), 18 to 35 year-old (young), 36 to 55 year-old (middle age) and above 55 year-old (mature). Figure 3 provides details of the data.

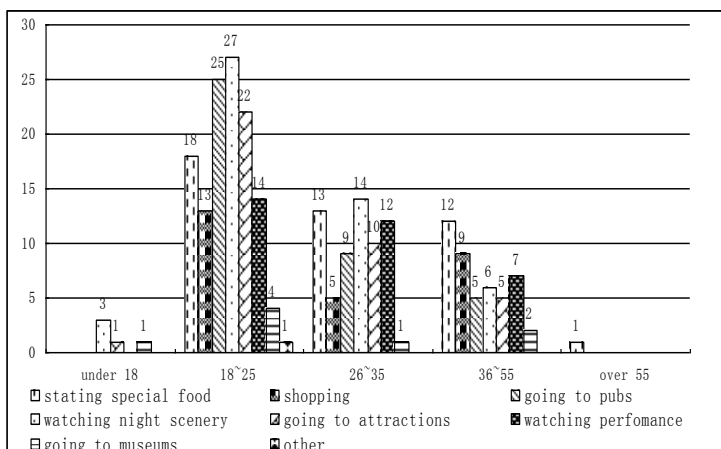


Figure 3 Tourism activities choice categorized by age

The results showed in Figure 3 support the finding that there are significantly different nighttime tourism behaviors due to age differences of the respondents. In the respondents of 18~25, the top three popular tourism behaviors in nighttime are watching the night sceneries, going to attractions. In the group of 26~35, the top 3 popular behaviors are watching night sceneries, tasting special food, and watching performance. In the group of 36~55, tasting special food, shopping and watching performance are the top 3 popular behaviors.

5.2. Gender Difference and Tourism Activities

Roberts (1996) and Carr (1999) argued that there were minimal, if any, differences in choosing the leisure ways between different gender tourists. Table 3 shows the results of this study’s investigation of nighttime leisure choices among the domestic tourists of different gender in Beijing.

The results demonstrated in Table 3 show that leisure options are different between genders, with a striking contrast with most of options except watching night sceneries. Male tourists prefer to tasting special food, going to pubs, watching performance, and going to museums. Female visitors prefer to shopping, going to attractions. Compared with male tourists, the female are more passive when participate the tourism behaviors at night. Presumptively it’s because of limitation of energy and security caution.

The results of relationship between gender and tourism behaviors at night indicate that the discrepancy is quite significant. The results of this study found that gender is a key factor which can affect the nighttime tourism behaviors choice of domestic tourists in Beijing.

Table 3: Tourism activity choice categorized by gender (%)

	Tasting special food	shopping	Going to pubs	Watching night sceneries
Male	61.5	24.6	64.6	55.4
Female	38.5	75.4	35.4	44.6
	Going to attractions	Watching performance	Going to museums	other
Male	35.4	70.8	90.8	0
female	64.6	29.2	9.2	0

5.3. Area of Origin Difference and Tourism Activities

The paper divides tourists into seven areas, which are North China, East China, South China, Central China, North-East China, North-West China, and South-West China. Tourists from different areas present discrepant economics, social, and cultural character during tourism consumption because of history and reality. In the survey, tourists from most of areas present strong interesting to nighttime tourism activities, except the South-West China. Table 4 shows the result of survey.

Table 4: Tourism activity choice by area of origin

Area of origin		Are you willing to enjoy the nighttime tourism products?		total
		No	Yes	
North China	Row %	22.6	77.4	100
	Column %	37.5	47.7	44.9
East China	Row %	26.9	73.1	100
	Column %	21.9	22.1	22
South China	Row %	30.0	70.0	100
	Column %	9.4	8.1	8.5
Central China	Row %	33.3	66.7	100
	Column %	9.4	7.0	7.6
North-East China	Row %	20.0	80.0	100
	Column %	3.1	4.7	4.2
North-West China	Row %	57.7	42.3	100
	Column %	9.4	3.5	5.1
South-West China	Row %	35.4	64.6	100
	Column %	9.4	7.0	5.1
total	Row %	27.1	72.9	100
	Column %	100	100	7.6

From table 4, the quantity of tourists approving nighttime tourism products are much more than that of disapproving. There are 72.9 percent of respondents willing to enjoy the nighttime tourism products, and only 27.1 percent of respondents disapprove nighttime tourism products. As for the relationship of tourism behaviors and area of origin, tourists from North-West China are unwilling to join the tourism activities at night, while tourists from other areas like tourism activities at night very much.

5.4. State of Marriage and Tourism Activities

In the influencing factors of tourists' activities, state of marriage is very important. Xie (2003) analyzed how much the indicators of family (if there are children in the family) influence the tourists' leisure behaviors, and the results are: the factors which obstruct male tourists are job, time and environment; the factors which obstruct female tourists are income, physiology and leisure opportunity. In this paper's result from field survey, the author divides tourists

into three groups considering the state of marriage, which are tourists unmarried, tourists married and child-bearing, and tourists married but no children. The relationship between state of marriage and tourism activities is showed in table 5.

Table 5: State of marriage and nighttime tourism activities

State of marriage		Are you interested in nighttime tourism products in Beijing	
		No	Yes
Unmarried	67%	22.8	77.2
Married and children-bearing	8%	44.4	55.6
Married and no children	25%	33.3	66.7

Table 5 illustrates two facts. One is that tourists unmarried are the main group who are interested in nighttime tourism products in Beijing; the other is that most of tourists like to experience the nighttime tourism products in Beijing.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Discussions and Implications

This research examined the most popular nighttime tourism behaviors for domestic tourists in Beijing, and analyzed which key factors influence the tourists' choice. The conclusion is that 'leisure and recreation', 'experience the night life in Beijing', and 'watching night scenery' is the top three nighttime tourism behaviors for domestic tourists to participate in while visiting Beijing. Tourists of different ages, gender, area of origin and state of marriage choose different tourism behaviors.

There are significantly different nighttime tourism behaviors due to age differences of the respondents. Male tourists prefer to tasting special food, going to pubs, watching performance, and going to museums. Female visitors prefer to shopping, going to attractions. Tourists from North China, South China, Central China, North-East China and North- West China are interested in nighttime tourism activities. And unmarried tourists are the main group who like nighttime tourism products.

6.2. Limitations and Future Research

The results from this study should be treated with caution. A limitation of this study is that the sample size is relatively small. In the future, a larger sample size should be completed to possibly enable more details about the relationship between tourism behaviors and different characteristics of domestic tourists, and give suggestion to administrators to plan nighttime tourism products in Beijing.

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