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## **ID 1507 | TOURISM IDENTITY IN SOCIAL MEDIA: THE CASE OF A CHINESE HISTORIC CITY, SUZHOU**

Joon Sik Kim<sup>1</sup>; Yi-Wen Wang<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University  
[joon.kim@xjtlu.edu.cn](mailto:joon.kim@xjtlu.edu.cn) ; [yiweng.wang@xjtlu.edu.cn](mailto:yiweng.wang@xjtlu.edu.cn)

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

The city's tourism identity has been emphasized in a contemporary tourism planning practice. Many studies on tourism planning and promotion have addressed that the investigation on local identities and tourism potentials in the development of the city's tourism strategy must go beyond the aspects of geographical space. With emerging social media communication and increasing crowd-sourced data, there is a great potential for engaging social media studies with tourism planning practice in order to reflect visitor's perceptions and subjective views onto the city's tourism strategies. This research seeks for a new approach of relating sense of 'spatial' place with 'digitally-presented' sense of place.

#### **1.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND**

Tourism ecosystem has become increasingly globalized and extremely competitive. The development of global tourism identity and international reputation has been noticeable in the current tourism agenda in many cities across the world. The recent studies show that tourism in small and medium cities is in fact

often driven by standardized solutions for mass tourism with a greater emphasis on the city’s major tourism attractions. In the context of tourism planning and promotion, the city’s local tourism identity has been studied primarily based on geographical space and tangible tourism designations. Meanwhile, there is a wider acknowledgement that conceptualizations of tourism identity cannot be grounded in physical place anymore – for example, interpersonal relations, tourist activities, social networking. It is evident that uniformed tourist information and standardised tourism strategy can no longer closely connect to diverse interests of tourists and lead to an improvement in the quality of tourism environments. There are opportunities in late modern society, at least for people who are accessible to relevant communication technologies, for relating the identity of the city’s tourism with digitally-presented tourists’ perceptions and activities.

Many tourism designations across the world have employed the concept of ‘smart tourism’ and developed smart tourism solutions in various ways in order to facilitate the promotion of their tourism identity and provide an innovative information platform for tourists. In 2008, the State Council in China announced the importance of tourism industry in the strategic development of national economy. The words of professional tourism, digital tourism and smart tourism have been widely used in Chinese tourism industries (Huang, 2014). Prior study situated in China suggests that governments have played a primary role in building and regulating smart tourism instruments in the Chinese context. Many smart tourism projects in China provide similar functions and information, such as tourist information on scenic spots, ticketing, accommodations, public transport, and tourism facilities. However, key failures of smart tourism apps are due to listing fragments of tourist information without concerning diverse needs and interests of users. It is evident that uniformed tourist information and standardized tourism strategy can no longer connect well with diverse interests of tourists and lead to an improvement in the quality of tourism environments. However, there are opportunities in late modern society, at least for people who can access relevant technologies of electronically mediated communication, for relating the identity of the city’s tourism with digitally-presented tourists’ perceptions and activities.

## 1.2 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this research is to investigate the digital identity of the city’s tourist designations as presented in online user-generated contents, and to explore possible uses of social media research in the tourism planning practice. It investigates the interplay between the city’s digital tourism identity and the current tourism development strategy of the government. Key research questions include: where do the visitors of the city go to; what contents do they post in social media in relation to experiences and activities within the places they visited; how can we analyse the images and meanings of the city’s tourism identity posted in social media; and, in what aspects of the captured digital tourism identity can be better informed to the tourism planning practice? The overall aims of the research are twofold:

1. To develop a possible evaluation framework to measure the digital tourism identity represented in social media ; and,
2. To outline possible recommendations to link a unique tourism identity perceived from social media data analysis to the tourism planning practice.

This research will employ a case study methodology. This is because the research is to investigate a ‘contemporary phenomenon’ in a ‘real-life context’ that can be only be satisfied by a case study methodology (Yin, 2013). To answer the above research questions, the city’s tourism identity has been evaluated in four aspects: spatial analysis, temporal analysis, popularity analysis, and corpus analysis. The research framework is illustrated in Figure 1.

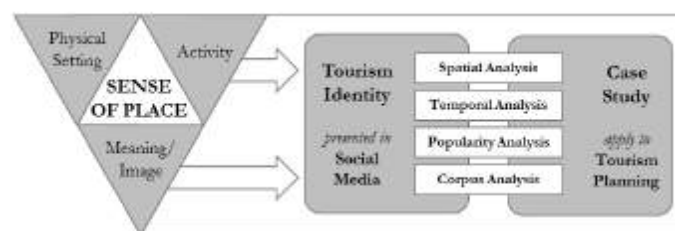


Figure 1 – Research Framework

## 2 CASE STUDY: CHINESE HISTORIC CITY, SUZHOU

### 2.1 SUZHOU TOURISM CHARACTERISTICS

The research follows a case study approach and conducts an empirical study on Suzhou, a historic city in China. Suzhou is located in Jiangsu Province in China (Figure 2), and has over 2,500 years of history. As one of important commercial centres of China since the 10th-century Song Dynasty, Suzhou has rich heritage resources and one of most famous historic water towns in China with the city's canals, stone bridges, and traditional gardens that were listed as the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 1997 and 2000. There are 492 protected heritages in Suzhou, including 12 national heritages. Due to its water town image created by inner city canal networks, Suzhou is often titled as the 'Venice of the East' or 'Venice of China' (Pereira, 2004). Suzhou government also see the tourism potentials in association with the city's socio-economic development, as it stated in the 13th Plenary Session of the Eight Communist Party of the City. Suzhou's tourism strategies can be summarised in six headings:

1. International Strategy: promoting Suzhou's tourism globally to make Suzhou as an 'international first-class travel destination';
2. Branding Strategy: encouraging the revisit to Suzhou and improving the city's tourism reputations by enhancing the three brand image of the city, 'cultural tourism in an ancient town', 'romantic trip to a new town', and 'ecological leisure in Tai Lake'.
3. Integration Strategy: integrating tourism development with urban regeneration to improve the quality of life and revitalise the city's economy;
4. Information Strategy: facilitating tourism using ICT technologies, and promoting 'Smart Tourism' to develop a comprehensive tourism information platform;
5. Low-carbon Strategy: promoting the concept of green GDP with the development of low-carbon tourism and eco-tourism; and,
6. Marketing Strategy: structuring the market development mechanism with collaboration between government and enterprises.

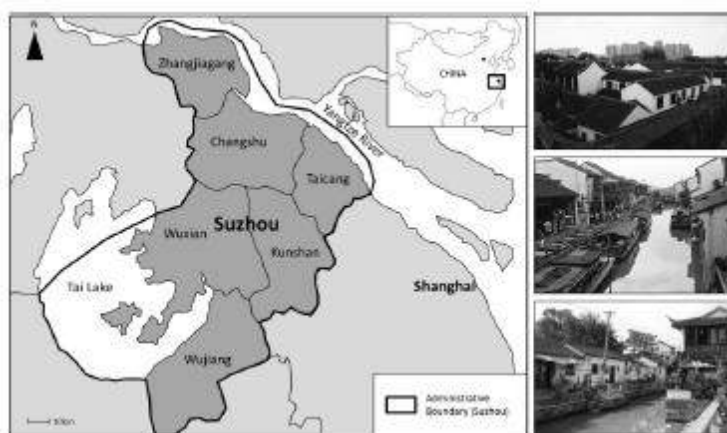


Figure 2 – Location of Suzhou, China

Generally accepted criticisms on Suzhou's tourism practice are the monotonous tourism attractions and limited activities for tourists. Suzhou is well-known for its classical gardens. Although this dominant image of Suzhou brings a significant number of tourists to the city, this also restricts tourists to explore Suzhou beyond the gardens and experience diverse localities and culture. Suzhou has faced a challenge to rethink its tourism development approaches and strategies to diversify the tourism attractions and promote cultural tourism.

### 2.2 RESEARCH METHODS

This research analyses the city's digital tourism identity from crowd-sourced social media database. The research relates the analysis outcomes to enhance the city's tourism performance by employing innovative bottom-up forms of data collection and mapping of existing tourist's activities. This method supports the

involvement of international and domestic tourists in: mapping their own interests and resources; raising the visibility on existing place-based tourist activities; and, identifying potential local, cultural and symbolic resources, which normally are excluded from mainstream tourism routes. To support the case study, the research can be divided into four distinct parts: (1) conceptualisation; (2) social media survey; (3) data analysis; and (4) evaluation.

The first part of this research is to conceptualize the digital tourism identity based on theories of place identity and tourism planning through literature reviews. As there has been little analysis or evaluation on the use of social media study in tourism planning, the research has developed a possible evaluation framework to categorise diverse tourism identities represented in social media. Secondly, social media survey has been conducted based on evaluation framework developed. In this stage, the research employs a series of interviews to identify widely used social media sites in China, and a novel form of bottom-up data collection methods by using crowd-sourced social media database. The 20 most popular local tourism designations in Suzhou are selected as case studies, and much of survey data has been collected from representative social media sites in China. In total, 640 social media postings, which contain 3960 samples of text comments and images, have been analysed in order to understand the tourism identity spatially and temporally. Thirdly, with social media data collected, tourism identity has been analysed in four aspects: (1) spatial analysis to investigate the spatial relations between tourism designations; (2) temporal analysis to examine the temporal change of digital tourism identities; (3) popularity analysis to review digital tourism identities in 20 tourism designations, and, (4) corpus analysis to explore linguistic landscape of the user's comments posted in social media. Finally, the research findings have been analysed and articulated to investigate how social media research can be applied to the practice of tourism planning and management. To evaluate the Suzhou's tourism practice and activities, the research also uses the participant observation research methods to reflect the insights from the authors' own experiences of living in Suzhou and visiting the city's tourism designations.

### **3 CONCEPTUALISING DIGITAL TOURISM IDENTITY**

The greatest concern over the disadvantages of social media study is perhaps the lack of theoretical framework that may provide little basis for systematic evaluation. This section explores how the tourism development has been engaged with social media research, and how the digital tourism identities can be evaluated in the basis of the place identity measurement framework.

#### **3.1 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

In modern society, people can access to more information and use the information in their everyday life, and this is often described as 'Smart' (Du and Yang, 2013). New patterns of interaction between tourism and technology shift the tourism trend towards a sharing of information and experiences through digital communications. Smart tourism is now firmly on the agenda of tourism development across the world. This enables self-organised tourism more feasible and manageable, as individual tourists are able to collect comprehensive tourism information, services, and experiences from diverse online resources (Fu and Zheng, 2013). According to the Chinese government report, Advice on Accelerating Development of Tourism Industry (State Council), emerging smart tourism has greatly promoted the socio-economic and cultural development. In recent years, the development of the tourism-related mobile apps is vast. Many cities in China including Jinan, Wuhan, Chun'an, Tianjin and Nanjing have also launched 'smart tourism' projects in order to provide integrated tourism resources to tourists.

Another significant influence of smart technology into tourism is social media. Social media can provide direct services instantly to individual tourists with latest tourism information. Social media, as a new type of online media, creates interactive relations between users, and forms personal or business networks.

Once this relationship is formed, users tend to maintain the online relations and communications for a longer period of time (Zhang and Zhang, 2013). Social media communication in tourism includes not only information on tourism designations and its surrounding environments, but also their personal experiences and satisfactions. Online user-generated content has transformed the tourism markets and industries to be more interactive. This new media has also provided an opportunity for tourism industries to understand and respond to the needs and demands of tourists more quickly and systematically. Analysing user-

generated data can help understanding how the real-world works and finding patterns in human behaviours (Krumm et al, 2008). As social media is one of popular user-generated contents, data collected from social media could be a valuable asset to evaluate the place identity and overall image of places perceived from tourists (Zhu and Liu, 2011). There is a widely held view that social media study can contribute to investigating tourism identity of particular tourism designation from the tourist's experiences and understanding their behaviour.

### 3.2 COMPONENTS OF PLACE IDENTITY

In many previous studies, the concept of place identity has been defined as the contribution of place attributes to one's self-identity (Proshansky, 1978; Sabine, 1983; Proshansky et al., 1983; Rivlin, 1987; Korpela, 1989). Place identity is a sense of dependence and belonging of individuals to a certain place psychologically. Individuals experiencing a particular place can generate a certain symbolic meaning or emotional attachment. Place identity is not permanent. When place identity of the self becomes stronger, it will affect to the self-cognition on a place and behaviour of individuals (Zhao and Wu, 2013). A definition of place goes beyond a simple geographic location, and is attached to human activities happening in a place. Human activities include people's perception, lifestyle, diet, transport, events, and habits, to list a few. This human-centric approach of place identity is also closely associated with historical and cultural dimensions of a place. Different geographies, climates and environments influence inhabitants' life, habits, traditions and customs. The unique climate, historic stories and the legacy of the past enrich the cultural attribute of a place (Bernardo and Palma-Oliveira, 1977). While cultural and social aspects of place identity are emphasised in many literatures, there is no doubt that the physical asset of a place is the fundamental element of the place identity. Notably, the geomorphic features, landscapes, architecture styles, and materials are the primary foundation of the place identity. In a systematic approach to explaining the concept of place identity, Montgomery (1998) has applied the notions of physical setting, activities and meaning to the conceptual framework to define sense of place (Figure 3). With an attempt to combine physical and psychological elements of place, the three components of place identity can be summarised as follows:

- Physical Setting: scales, intensity, permeability, landmarks, built form, architecture, and public realm;
- Activity: diversity, vitality, street life, people watching, café culture, events, pedestrian flow, and attractors; and,
- Meaning/Image: legibility, symbolism, memory, sensory experience, knowledgeability, receptivity, psychological access, and fear.



Figure 3 – Three Components of Place Identity (modified from Montgomery, 1998)

### 3.3 EVALUATION FRAMEWORK OF PLACE IDENTITY

Place identity is becoming prominent in the city's tourism development. Tourism development cannot be isolated from the city's locality, such as culture, lifestyle, festivals, local specialties, customs and other tangible and intangible features. Although it is critical reflect place identity in the development of the city's tourism strategies, there are operational difficulties in examining place identities. This is because the

description of place identity, which can be seen as phenomenological perspectives of the self, is almost impossible to communicate with others fully (Proshansky et al, 1983). While few human geographers (Sack, 1997; Duan, 1998) argued that place, as 'space', can be presented accurately in the aspects of geographic location and physical form, Relph (1976) addressed that psychological meaning is more important than physical environment or human activities.

It is clear that a concept of place identity is consistent with that of physical setting, activities and meaning. However, there is difficulty in applying the notion of physical setting, activities and meaning as an analytical framework for evaluating or quantifying place identity. This is mainly because there is considerable duplication between the three. There are also other challenges in terms of geographical scales of place. Place identity can be formed on micro (e.g. indoor environment, architecture, and landmark), meso (e.g. community, and city), and macro (e.g. region, state, and continental) levels of geospatial aggregation. These three components are useful to explain the concept of place identity, but it is difficult to separate each quality as a dependent variable. Therefore, there is the need to simplify the concept of physical setting, activity and meaning in developing an evaluation framework of place identity. In this context, the research has developed a possible evaluation framework of place identity that can be applied to social media research (Table 1).

Main Category	Sub-category	Descriptions
Physical Setting	Scenery	natural landscape, panoramic view, building skyline
	Topography	canal, streams, hills,
	Landscape	artificial landscape (i.e. gardens)
	Landmark	recognizable natural or artificial feature
	Architecture	one or two building(s), but not landmarks
	Public Space	public realm (street, square, park, etc.)
	Object	detailed elements of physical features
	Public Arts	arts objects in public space (graffiti, cultural items, etc.)
Activity	Transport	transportation and route finding
	Water Transport	water transport, boat riding
	Shopping	shopping and commercial activities
	People	local culture, social activities, street life
	Food	food and drinks (food and café culture)
	Event	specific events organised
	Paid Activity	paid tourist/leisure activities
	Attractor	items attracting attentions (animals, unusual items, etc.)
Meaning	Memory	memory of place, evidence of visit, selfie, self-portrait photo
	Emotion	feelings and psychological meaning
	Knowledge	knowledgeable explanations, craftsmanship
	Sensorial	sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch
	Seasonal	seasonal changes, city lightings (night view)

Table 1 – Evaluation Framework of Place Identity

The framework has three main categories: physical setting, activity and meaning. In order to collect and analyse social media data in the three main categories, 21 sub-categories have also been constructed. Sub-categories are to not only reflect the concept of place identity discussed in existing literatures, but also apply the framework to a concrete example of the historic city, Suzhou. For example, considering the Suzhou's tourism characteristics as a historic water town coming from the city's extensive canal network, the sub-categories of the activity criteria have the two separate categories of 'transport' and 'water transport'.

## 4 SOCIAL MEDIA DATA COLLECTION

### 4.1 SELECTING THE CASE STUDIES

As there are a vast number of social media sites available online, it is necessary to select a manageable number of social media sites for a sampling purpose. Drawn from a number of interviews with social media users in China, the research has initially identified 24 candidates of social media platforms including Weibo, Dianping, Ctrip, Qunar, Tongcheng, Tuniu, Lvmama, 58 City, and Mafengwo. Among 24 candidates, the research has chosen three social media platforms for the case studies: Weibo (similar to Facebook, most popular social media in China); Ctrip (similar to TripAdvisor, well-established enterprise-led online tourism platform); and, Dianping (restaurant/place review site, one of largest user-generated

review sites in China). The selection was based on the number of users, reputation, popularity, the quantity of user-generated contents, and at least 5 years of the operation period. It is also expected that the three different types of social media platforms may enable to collect diverse opinions and experiences of tourists in various data formats (photo-oriented and text-oriented postings).

In terms of defining the geographical scope of the research, 20 tourism designations in Suzhou are selected by paying systematic attention to the rankings of tourism designations presented in Weibo, Ctrip and Dianping. Moreover, as the Baidu online map service (similar to Google Map) provides the real-time density data of their service users (density heat map), this spatially presented density data has been taken into account in the selection process (Baidu density heat map from 6th June to 12th June 2016). The selected 20 tourism designations of Suzhou in this research can be categorised as follows:

- Classical Gardens (5): Humble Administrator's Garden, Master of the Nets Garden, Lingering Garden, Lion Grove Garden, Pavilion of Surging Waves
- Old Towns (4): Feng Bridge, Mudu Ancient Town, Tongli Ancient Town, Zhouzhuang Ancient Town
- Streets (3): Guanqian Street, Pingjiang Road, Shantang Street
- Historic Heritages (3): Hanshan Temple, Panmen Gate, Tiger Hill
- Natural Landscapes (2): Qionglong Mountain, Tianping Mountain
- Artificial Landscapes (3): Suzhou Amusement Land, Jinji Lake, Suzhou Museum

## 4.2 COLLECTING SOCIAL MEDIA DATA

The analysis results in this research are based on 640 social media postings from the three online platforms, Ctrip, Dianping and Weibo. As a single social media posting contains multiple images and/or text comments, this dataset contains 3,960 valid samples in text and/or image formats. Due to constraints of resources, the research is focused on the social media data posted from 1st of January to 30th of June 2016 (for six calendar months). Considering there are many casual postings in social media that are not closely related to the topic of this research, the data was collected through a selection process, rather than randomly, in order to obtain meaningful data effectively and efficiently. As the research deals with different types of social media platforms, the data collection methods have been adjusted for the particular social media platform. As the research evaluates the temporal change of social media data, the social media data is collected evenly throughout the six months of the data collection period. The collected social media posting data was classified using 21 sub-categories of place identity (Table 1). In this process, maximum 5 sub-categories could be tagged for a single social media posting, because there could be multiple interpretations from a single posted image or comment. In order to conduct a quality measurement for the text-format comments, trained surveyors had evaluated each comment using 10 likelihood classifications from -5 to +5 (-5 means strongly negative comments, 0 means neutral, +5 means strongly positive comments). For corpus linguistic analysis, 45 words were selected as most frequently used words in the collected text-format data, and used for further analysis.

## 4.3 DATA VERIFICATION

While the research uses 640 postings, the sample size for each tourism designation per a calendar month is relatively small. As there might be a concern on the sample size, the research conducted a pilot test to compare the data analysis results with one from a larger sample group. For this purpose, Humble Administrator's Garden, the most well-known tourism designation in Suzhou, was selected for the comparison. The data collected for 21 sub-categories of tourism identity was compared in two different sample groups, one with 142 samples and one with 603 samples (Figure 4). The results showed that there was no significant difference (less than 3%) between the two sample groups. Considering the survey resource efficiency, the analysis results show that the research outcomes from a smaller sample size may also be able to illustrate a snapshot of the city's tourism identity.

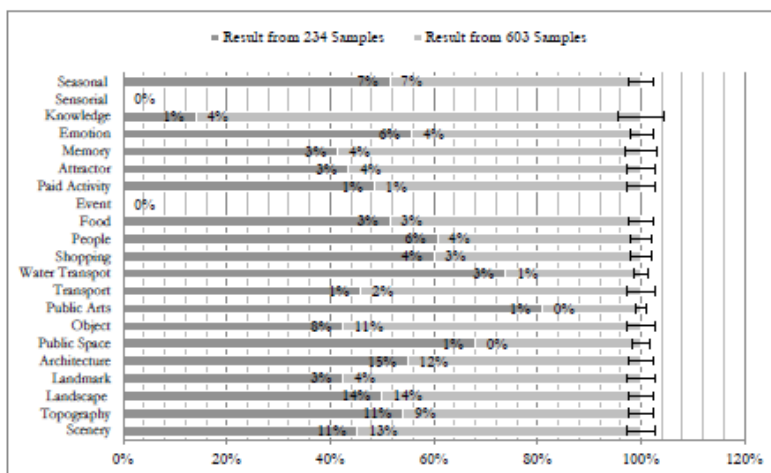


Figure 4 – Comparison of Survey Data from Different Sample Sizes

## 5 ANALYSING PLACE IDENTITY FOR TOURISM PLANNING

In the process of place identity classification, 640 social media postings had been tagged with 1,775 place identity categories. Among three main categories of place identity, the social media data shows that the postings related to physical setting is noticeable mostly (Figure 5), especially, the architecture element. One possible explanation on this is that the unique architectural style of Suzhou (black roofs and white walls) attracts visitors' attentions and is considered as 'something different' from other cities in China. Another interesting result from the physical setting category is that people publish many postings on scenery landscape and detail objects, however, are less interested in posting contents on the city's landmarks. In the activity category, food and people watching is most common posting, and attractors such as animals and unusual items are also one of popular postings. In the meaning category, not surprisingly, the memory category that includes selfie and evidence of visits is recognised as a popular posting. Additionally, seasonal change is another item posted commonly.

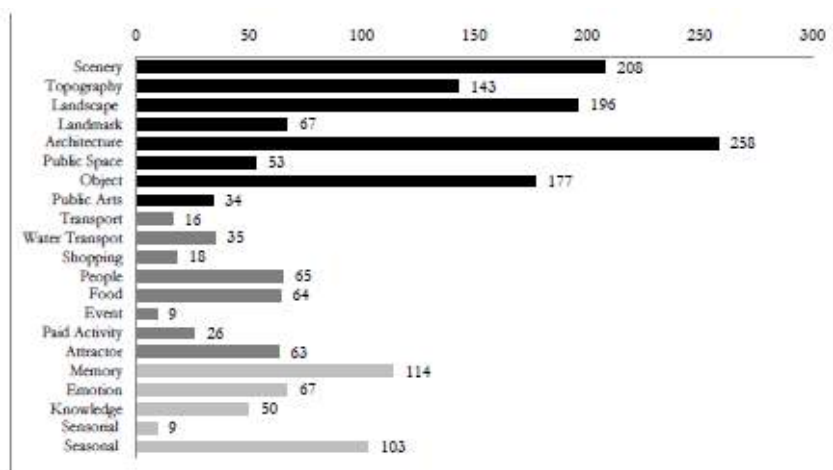


Figure 5 – Social Media Postings and Place Identity

### 5.1 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

In order to explore the spatial pattern of Suzhou's tourism activities, the research has identified the top 100 tourism designations, which were ranked in the three social media platforms used in this research. The heat map analysis is conducted with the weight of the ranked popularities in social media, and the result is shown in Figure 6.



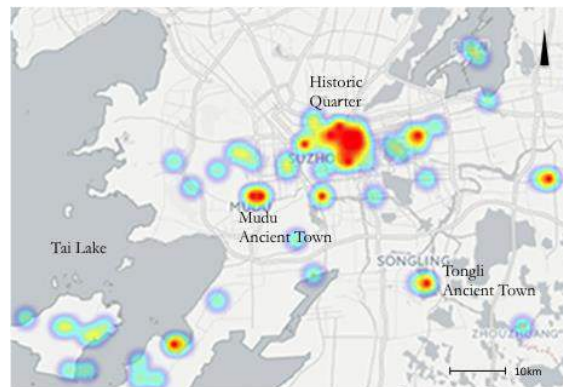


Figure 6 – Spatial Distribution of Suzhou's Top 100 Tourism Designations

There is little doubt that Suzhou has a tremendous potential for tourism throughout the whole area of the city. However, the spatial analysis result recognises the importance of the existing attractions and tourist hotspots. Most popular tourism attractions of Suzhou are located at the historic quarter, and others are clustered in the different parts of the city. Suzhou Tourism Master Plan (2009-2020) has also addressed this issue, and summarised as the tourism strategy of ‘One Core, One Belt, Three Districts’. It is notably desirable that links between all the tourist venues are established with “cross marketing” ventures so that tourists can see the wide spectrum of activities available within the area. To make the city’s tourism strategy mirroring what visitors perceive in the tourism designations, it is necessary to investigate popularities and marketing potentials in each tourism designations that will be explored further in the following sections.

## 5.2 TEMPORAL ANALYSIS

From 1,775 place identity tagged in 640 social media postings, the results of temporal analysis are shown in Figure 7. Although a number of postings are different in each calendar month, there is no significant difference in terms of the proportion of the three categories: physical setting, activity and meaning. There was an hypothetical expectation that visitors may post more seasonally related contents in the change of seasons, for example postings on flower blossom in spring, it seems that the seasonal significance is not visible in the analysis result. While visitors post many seasonal contents in their social media accounts (Figure 5), there is no particular proportional change of seasonally related contents throughout the survey period.

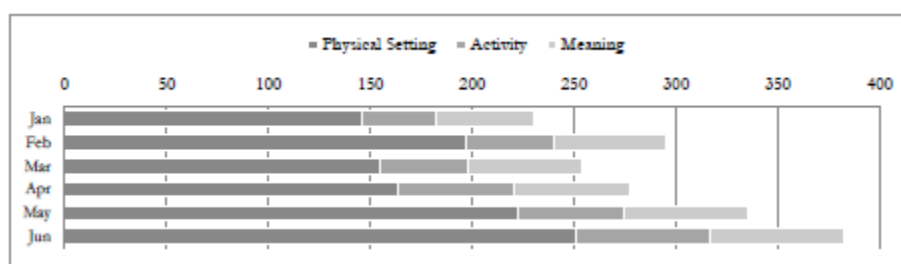


Figure 7 – Temporal Analysis Results (January to June 2016)

## 5.3 POPULARITY ANALYSIS

Popularity analysis is in twofold. Firstly, all 1,775 tagged categories were analysed based on 20 tourism designations (Table 2). An interesting result is shown in the ‘shopping’ category. Humble Administrator's Garden, which is the most well-know classical garden in Suzhou, is recognised as the most popular place for shopping activities presented in social media. However, Guanqian Street scored lower in ‘shopping’ activity, although it has been the city’s town centre shopping district. This result can be explained by the decline of Guanqian Street in recent years, due to newly developed large-scale shopping malls in Suzhou. In the case of Pingjiang Road, the ‘food’ and ‘sensorial’ categories are highly ranked, although this is one

of main tourism development areas with rich architectural heritages and a concentration of art craftsmanship shops. Suzhou Museum is also worthy of paying attention, as the ‘knowledge’ category is scored lower considering it is a museum, and the ‘architecture’ category is also not recognised while this museum building is designed by one of representative Chinese architects. Those analysis results have great potentials in rethinking the tourism marketing and promotion strategies of individual tourism designations.

Popularity Analysis	Physical Setting										Activity										Review Score (Avg. 3.9)		
	Scenery	Topography	Landscapes	Architecture	Architecture	Architecture	Architecture	Architecture	Architecture	Architecture	Architecture	Architecture	Architecture	Architecture	Architecture	Architecture	Architecture	Architecture	Architecture	Architecture		Architecture	Architecture
Classical Garden	Humble Administrator's Garden	7	10	10	6	8	2	7	3	13	11	33	12	6	0	8	6	4	12	2	0	10	6.8
	Master of the Nets Garden	0	0	5	0	4	6	2	3	0	6	0	5	2	0	0	6	3	4	2	0	3	1.2
	Lingering Garden	1	0	12	6	6	2	11	12	0	6	0	5	6	0	0	5	4	3	6	0	3	4.5
	Lion Grove Garden	3	1	7	3	5	2	7	12	0	0	0	6	0	22	15	8	4	0	2	0	1	5.9
Old Towns	Parlour of Surging Waves	6	4	9	6	5	4	9	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	4	3	12	0	9	3.1
	Feng Bridge	4	3	3	1	3	8	3	6	19	9	11	2	5	0	4	6	4	9	6	0	1	1.9
	Mudu Ancient Town	5	7	7	4	6	11	4	3	0	0	0	5	9	12	8	8	4	3	4	0	3	2.2
	Tongli Ancient Town	7	17	3	4	6	11	3	3	19	11	22	3	16	11	4	0	8	12	8	0	4	5.9
Streets	Zhouzhuang Ancient Town	5	6	4	0	3	0	3	0	0	6	11	6	3	22	8	0	3	4	4	0	3	1.6
	Guangqian Street	2	1	0	4	2	13	1	3	6	6	6	3	0	0	0	6	8	1	10	0	6	2.4
	Pingjiang Road	1	6	1	3	4	4	3	9	6	8	0	6	20	0	4	3	10	13	4	22	6	7.2
Historic Heritages	Shantang Street	7	17	4	4	5	6	5	0	0	0	0	11	3	0	8	10	4	6	12	22	9	4.2
	Hanshan Temple	3	5	5	12	8	6	7	18	13	0	0	8	0	0	4	3	3	7	4	0	8	3.3
	Patmen Gate	7	2	5	1	6	4	3	3	0	6	6	5	6	11	0	3	3	9	6	33	2	1.9
Natural Landscapes	Tiger Hill	4	8	6	7	7	0	6	3	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	3	3	3	2	0	7	5.3
	Ciongbang Mountain	10	1	6	13	6	4	11	5	0	20	6	5	5	11	0	8	10	0	4	22	9	4.2
Artificial Landscapes	Tianping Mountain	9	0	7	4	3	2	3	3	13	0	0	6	3	0	8	8	4	3	6	0	6	5.6
	Suzhou Amusement Land	7	3	2	3	3	6	6	6	6	3	0	6	6	0	12	5	9	1	0	0	5	1.1
Suzhou Museum	Jinji Lake	12	8	0	12	3	9	2	9	0	9	6	2	8	0	0	6	6	3	4	0	4	5.0
	Suzhou Museum	0	0	7	3	5	2	5	3	6	3	0	2	2	0	19	2	5	1	2	0	4	4.1

Table 2 – Popularity Analysis Results (unit: %, except Review Score)

Secondly, 10 likelihood classifications on positive and negative comments posted on social media are also calculated in popularity analysis (Table 2, Review Score). The weights from +5 to -5 are added in the review score calculation and standardised by the numbers of comments posted in each tourism designation. The average review score is 3.9, and Pingjiang Road and Humble Administrator’s Garden show higher visitor satisfaction, while Suzhou Amusement Land (theme park) is awarded the lowest score for the visitor satisfaction.

#### 5.4 CORPUS ANALYSIS

The research analysed the frequency of word appearance in the text-format comments in all 640 postings using a word counting software. Considering the similarity of the meanings, 45 words are selected for further corpus analysis in 20 tourism designations. In general, the abstract words like ‘wonderful’, ‘beautiful’ and ‘eating’ are mostly used in collected social media postings (Figure 8). However, there are also differences in corpus analysis results based on the tourism designations (Table 3). For example, Humble Administrator’s Garden, the largest and most popular classical garden, is tagged with the words describing feelings, such as ‘wonderful’, ‘beautiful’ and ‘knowledgeable’, while other smaller gardens are described with the words related to the particular activity and physical appetences, such as ‘evening activity’, ‘Suzhou Pingtan (a local musical performance)’, ‘stroll’, ‘flower’ and ‘rockery’.



Figure 8 – Word Cloud Results from Corpus Analysis

Frequently Used Words		1st	2nd	3rd
Classical Gardens	Humble Administrator's Garden	wonderful	beautiful	knowledgeable
	Master of the Nets Garden	wonderful	Suzhou Pingtan	evening activity
	Lingering Garden	stroll	knowledgeable	rockery
	Lion Grove Garden	rockery	amusement	enjoyable
Old Towns	Pavilion of Surging Waves	flower	beautiful	culture
	Feng Bridge	poem	canal	bell tone
	Mudu Ancient Town	Yans Garden	beautiful	architecture
	Tongli Ancient Town	ticket	eating	walk
Streets	Zhouzhuang Ancient Town	beautiful	eating	Wansan's pig feet
	Guanqian Street	snack	stroll	unique feature
	Pingjiang Road	eating	stroll	chicken feet
	Shantang Street	eating	wonderful	unique feature
Historic Heritages	Hanshan Temple	poem	ticket	temple
	Panmen Gate	city gate	good	boating
	Tiger Hill	tower	jian pool	history
Natural Landscapes	Qionglong Mountain	high	amusement	air
	Tianping Mountain	red maple	stone	high
Artificial Landscapes	Suzhou Amusement Land	exciting	quene	installation
	Jinji Lake	ferry wheel	existing pier	nightscape
	Suzhou Museum	Bei Yunming	design	modern

Table 3 – Corpus Analysis Results

## 6 CONCLUSION

The research found that this new method has a major advantage of mapping existing place-based tourist activities, and plotting visitors' personal interests and perceived resources that can be closely associated with future strategic tourism development of the city. The analysis results show that the social media study is potentially useful to identify the key characteristics of particular tourist designations of the city from the visitor's perspective. The social media research can also be applied to the quality evaluation of tourism experiences and the practice of tourism planning and management. In terms of survey methods, the traditional tourism planning practice usually employs the data collection methods using questionnaires and interviews that are resource-incentive survey methods. As discussed, considering place identity is subjective feelings of individuals, the main weakness with questionnaire and interview survey methods is that the poorly designed questionnaires and the untrained interviewers can mislead the survey results. However, the social media data collection method may be beneficial for place identity survey as it may be influenced less by the survey environments, because social media is user-generated contents.

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## ID 1614 | THE SPECTACULARIZATION OF THE URBAN SPACE FOR TOURISM IN BRAZIL AND ITS CONTRADICTIONS

Renata Maia de Paula<sup>1</sup>; Randal Martins Pompeu<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>UNIFOR

[renatampds@gmail.com](mailto:renatampds@gmail.com) ; [andal@unifor.br](mailto:andal@unifor.br)

### 1 INTRODUCTION

The third industrial revolution based on the interaction of microelectronics with computers and the consequent collapse of the Fordism model of mass production led the major western economies to rethink their models of accumulation.