

Perception of Inbound Tourists to Hotels in Hainan Based on Network Evaluation Analysis

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Abstract: With the construction of Free Trade Zone (port) in Hainan, and the impact of COVID-19, in this paper a qualitative study was conducted by selecting the comments from international tourists on Hainan hotels on the TripAdvisor from 2010 to 2022, and analyzing the lexical frequency and sentiment of the content with NVivo 12. The research illustrates the perception of Hainan inbound tourists to hotels is mainly related to rooms, catering and service. Although the impact of the epidemic is not significant, it has stimulated new demands. Thus, suggestions on public health, personalization and service quality are carried out for the development of hotel industry in Hainan.

1. Introduction

As Hainan accelerates the pace of building a free trade zone (port), the development of inbound tourism is also included in the priority task of Hainan Province. Kang (2017) believed that since the strategy of international tourism island was put forward, Hainan as a "tourism island" has achieved remarkable results, but there is still a long way to arrive at "international". In order to further improve the level of inbound tourism industry in Hainan Province, it is crucial to figure out the factors affecting inbound tourism.

Based on the data analysis from 1993 to 2017, Bao and Yang (2019) found that most of the researches on the influencing factors of inbound tourism focused on objective and comprehensive factors, but there was a lack of researches about psychological factors of tourists. In terms of tourism marketing, perception is one of the main psychological factors affecting tourists' consumption behavior. It is a process in which people choose, organize and interpret information to construct meaningful imagination about the world (Berelson and Steiner, 1964). Kotler et al. (2009) stated that perception has an important impact on the actual behavior of consumers, and different perceptions are generated by selective attention, selective distortion and selective retention for the same object. Since hotels are the major places for inbound tourists to stay in Hainan, it is particularly important to figure out the perception of inbound tourists towards Hainan hotels. Dang (2020) believed that the COVID-19 epidemic has had a certain extent of impact on tourism industry in China. It is worth discussing whether international tourists' perception of Hainan hotels in the post-epidemic period will differ from that before the pandemic. It is of great significance to analyze inbound tourists' perception of hotels in combination with the impact of the epidemic for Hainan to build an international tourism consumption center in the future.

2. Research Background

Fu and Chen (2018) believed that tourism has made great contribution to the development of internationalization, and international tourism has become an important factor to measure the internationalization level of a region. Since 2010, The State Council of China has promulgated policies to promote the development of Hainan Island into a "world-class leisure island ". Hainan has become the focus of the development of China's tourism industry and is recognized as the first demonstration province for international tourism, exploring experience and setting a good example for tourism internationalization in China. Ritchie and Crouch (2003) proved that the most important role of policy for tourism is to ensure that tourism destinations clearly know their direction and goals. Hall (2011) proposed that policy is not only a theoretical concept for tourism, but also has practical significance in day-to-day practice. In fact, preferential policies such as visa-free entry, cruises and yachts, and unmanned island development policies have achieved remarkable effects in Hainan. In particular, visa-free policies have significantly accelerated the development of inbound tourism in Hainan and continuously promoted the development of tourism industry in Hainan (Xie and Fan, 2016). In the context of the free trade port construction, Hainan will strive to build an open economic system at a higher level, with an international tourism consumption center by promoting the integration of tourism, sports, medical care and elderly care (Chen and Fan, 2020).

In addition, the research conducted by Wan and Zhao (2016) showed that the tourism resources and products have the greatest effect in the perception of foreigners coming to China for sightseeing, followed by the service of tourism, tourist safety and language, while transportation and the price also has a certain impact. Hainan is richly endowed with tropical tourism resources, among which Sanya attracts most tourists due to its pleasant climate. As the most popular destination in Hainan, Sanya received 3.58×10^7 inbound tourists in 2015, accounting for 58.88% of the total number of tourists in the province. Its inbound tourism income was $\$1.70 \times 10^8$, accounting for 68.51% of Hainan's tourism foreign exchange income in that year. Moreover, Sanya has a considerable number of world-class resort hotels, which can provide high-level international services for inbound tourists (Chen et al., 2017). According to the research of Li et al. (2020), the inter-annual variation index of the number of inbound tourists in Hainan Province changes greatly, and the development of inbound tourism is unstable. Hainan inbound tourism markets no longer rely on Hong Kong and Macao regions, but extend to Russia, South Korea and other countries. However, it still lacks market diversity for European and American market, so in addition to the use of geographical advantages to consolidate short-distance market, Hainan should expand the European and American market, and balance the structure of the inbound tourism markets.

3. Methodology

Considering the availability and flexibility of primary data and information, a qualitative research was conducted by content analysis of network evaluation in this paper. Qualitative research usually refers to research that does not use quantitative analysis methods (Zhang, 2017). It was stated by Wilson and Hollinshead (2015) that although the qualitative research in the past has contributed a lot of knowledge to the field of tourism, the qualitative research based on positivism in the past is gradually shifting to the current creative and mixed qualitative research methods. As a common qualitative method, content analysis is defined by Botterill and Platenkamp (2012) as a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from text or image.

The researcher selected and analyzed the evaluation of hotels in Hainan made by inbound tourists on TripAdvisor website. As a worldwide tourism information website, TripAdvisor provides a large number of comments and suggestions on destination hotels from travelers around the world. This paper focuses on the five most popular hotels in Hainan on TripAdvisor. In light

with the language and location of website users, 472 inbound tourists' comments on Hainan hotels from 2010 to 2022 were screened out, with a total of 97,856 words (including 89,093 words of comments before January 2020, Comments after January 2020 totally 8,763 words). The relevant comment users come from Russia, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, the United States, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Germany, the United Kingdom and other countries. After the relevant reviews were selected, NVivo 12 software was used to conduct lexical frequency analysis and sentiment analysis on the content, so as to figure out inbound tourists' perception of Hainan hotels.

4. Research outcome

In order to guarantee the validity and reliability of the findings, synonym was merged in the word frequency analysis. High-frequency words without actual meaning were eliminated. According to the timeline, the evaluation content was divided into "before" and "after" the epidemic. In addition, sentiment analysis of the content related to high-frequency words was carried out to obtain the key to selective attention, distortion and retention of inbound tourists during their stay in Hainan hotels, so as to find out their perception of destination hotels.

Table 1: Comparison of the most frequent keywords of inbound tourists' evaluation before and after the epidemic

Keywords(before)	Frequency	Keywords(after)	Frequency
Room	921	Room	84
Catering	854	Catering	69
Service	586	Service	64
Beach	548	Manager	60
Swimming pool	492	Beach	47
Staff	470	Member	42
Design	280	Staff	37
Manager	248	Swimming pool	31
Member	198	Personalized	17
Quality	181	Pandemic	16

Table 2: Sentiment analysis of inbound tourists' evaluation of Hainan hotels after the epidemic

	Very positive	Positive	Negative	Very negative
Room	12.51%	48.67%	29.95%	8.87%
Catering	32.77%	56.83%	5.25%	5.15%
Service	20.97%	7.49%	3.44%	68.11%
Manager	47.1%	43.23%	9.68%	0%
Beach	5.09%	73.09%	21.82%	0%
Member	14.29%	67.67%	18.05%	0%
Staff	36.75%	63.25%	0%	0%
Swimming pool	28.57%	71.43%	0%	0%
Personalized	49.31%	50.69%	0%	0%
Pandemic	31.65%	68.35%	0%	0%

In terms of the lexical frequency analysis, it can be seen that "room", "catering" and "service" are the three key points that are most concerned by foreign tourists in hotel evaluation regardless of whether the COVID-19 outbreak occurs, indicating that inbound tourists' perception of destination hotels is mainly related to accommodation environment, catering quality and service experience. In addition, the frequency of words such as "beach", "manager", "member", "staff" and "swimming

pool" also illustrates that foreign tourists' perception of Hainan hotels is to some extent affected by tourism resources, hotel management, member privilege, staff attitude and recreational facilities. It is noted that after the outbreak of COVID-19, tourists have paid more attention to the aspects of "pandemic" and "personalized". Although the epidemic has insignificant impact on the perception of inbound tourists, it has stimulated the demand of foreign tourists for epidemic control and personalized services in destination hotels.

From the sentiment analysis, it is not difficult to find that inbound tourists' perception is mostly "positive" on "room" and "catering" of Hainan hotels after the outbreak of the epidemic despite of some negative comments, indicating that Hainan hotels have high satisfaction in the two aspects most concerned by foreign guests. However, the hotel "service" is generally unsatisfactory, and "very negative" covers more than half of the whole content. In addition, the perception of "manager", "beach" and "member" by foreign tourists is also towards "very positive" and "positive". At the same time, no negative evaluation has been found in the aspects of "staff", "swimming pool", "personalization" and "pandemic", which inbound tourists perceive most positively, showing that Hainan hotels have achieved significant results in staff training, recreational facilities, personalized services and epidemic control after the pandemic outbreak.

5. Conclusion

In terms of the research findings of inbound tourists' perception of Hainan hotels, it is concluded with the following suggestions for the international development of Hainan Free Trade Port's hotel industry in the post-epidemic period, which will also be useful for other tropical island destinations all over the world.

Firstly, considering the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, inbound tourists' perception of hotels has been related to the public health security after January 2020. Reasonable and scientific pandemic control system of hotels can bring about more sense of security to tourists during their stay, thus affecting the overall evaluation of hotels. On top of that, international tourists have an increasing demand for personalized services in hotels. Compared with the standardized services of hotels, they are likely to prefer personalized experience, which also means that inbound tourists have more expectations for hotel managers and staffs in Hainan. Last but not least, room, catering and service are still the cores of the future development of the hotel industry in Hainan. As the major industry of Hainan, hotels should pay more attention to the service experience of international tourists by improving the cross-cultural communication abilities of hotel staffs and managers, while maintaining pleasant accommodation environment and high quality of catering.

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