Bachelor Thesis in Tourism Studies

Destination Image in Beijing, China

Exploring the Differences in Destination Branding Toward International and Domestic Tourists

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Abstract

Tourism destination marketing is one vital factor that affects the development and management of destination images. This thesis deals with the destination images of Beijing and its branding strategies towards international tourists and domestic tourists. The purpose of this thesis is to identify how Beijing is presented in tourism marketing between international tourists and domestic tourists, and to detect potential differences as well as reasons for them.

This study focuses on analyzing Beijing’s marketing materials that include websites, brochures and videos towards international and domestic tourists by content analysis. An earlier study performed by Lew and Yu, 1992, found that international and domestic tourists show different demands in China; thus this study continues an investigation to find whether the different demands of international tourists and domestic tourists are considered in current Beijing marketing materials, and if so, in what way.

To fulfill the research purpose a series of destination images and different marketing strategies from marketing materials towards international tourists and domestic tourists are identified through the content analysis. With these findings, Beijing’s current marketing strategies are clarified according to the potential differences towards the international and domestic tourists.

Keywords: Beijing tourism, branding, destination image, international and domestic tourist, tourism marketing, content analysis.
# Table of Contents

1. Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1
   1.1 Problem Statement ................................................................................................. 1
   1.2 Research Purpose .................................................................................................. 3
   1.3 Research Questions ............................................................................................... 3
   1.4 Thesis Outline ........................................................................................................ 4

2. Research Background .................................................................................................... 5
   2.1 Beijing in Context .................................................................................................. 5

3. Frame of Reference ....................................................................................................... 8
   3.1 Tourism in China .................................................................................................... 8
   3.2 Definition of Destination Image ............................................................................... 10
   3.3 Destination Branding ............................................................................................. 11
   3.4 Destination Branding and Image: A Reciprocal Relation ........................................ 13
   3.5 Branding Process .................................................................................................... 15

4. Methodology .................................................................................................................. 18
   4.1 Defining Content Analysis ..................................................................................... 18
   4.2 Sampling and Data Collection ............................................................................... 19
   4.3 Categorization ........................................................................................................ 20
   4.4 Data analysis .......................................................................................................... 21
   4.5 Actual Process in This Study ................................................................................ 22
   4.6 Limitations ............................................................................................................. 26

5. Findings ........................................................................................................................ 27
   5.1 Original Outcomes ................................................................................................ 27
   5.2 Categories of Beijing Images ................................................................................ 29
6. Analysis and Discussion................................................................. 32
   6.1 Destination images of Beijing .................................................. 32
   6.2 Differences in Marketing Strategy ............................................. 34
   6.3 Reasons behind the Differences ............................................... 38

7. Research Conclusion ...................................................................... 40
   7.1 Conclusion ................................................................................ 40
   7.2 Research Contributions ............................................................ 41
   7.3 Future Research Suggestions .................................................... 41

Appendix .......................................................................................... 46
   Appendix Figures ........................................................................... 46
   Appendix Tables ............................................................................. 51
   Appendix data ............................................................................... 52
Table of Figures

Figure 1: Destination Image and Destination Branding .................................................. 14

Table 1: The five phases in destination branding .......................................................... 16

Figure 2. Branding key links .......................................................................................... 17

Figure 3. Conceptual formation processes of Beijing’s tourism marketing materials that in English version ......................................................................................................... 23

Figure 4. Conceptual formation processes of Beijing’s tourism marketing materials that in Chinese version ........................................................................................................... 24

Table 2. Representative groups (original results) in International and Domestic Marketing materials ......................................................................................................................... 27

Figure 5. Percentages in International and domestic marketing materials .................... 28
1. Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement

Tourism is a social and economic phenomenon that heavily influences contemporary society (Crick, 1996). Nowadays, tourism industry can be considered as business behavior since it might influence the development of a local economic. Therefore, places are competing against each other to promote themselves as goods. The secret for a successful destination is to approach the right target market and to provide an appropriate combination of local tourism products and services (Buhalis, 2000). Pick’s (2005) argues that there will be a battle of destinations branding in future marketing; destinations are arguably to become the tourism industry’s biggest brands.

Tourism destination branding is a general concept; destinations can be branded like products or people. In this case, the power of branding is in making people aware of the location and linking desirable associations (Damnjanović, Kravic and Abdul Razek, n.d.). Destinations are a large entity with sets of material and non-material elements (Florek, 2005). Every destination is unique because its resources construct a unique ‘identification’. This ‘identification’ is usually recognized as the images projected to tourists. The images a specific destination offers may be similar to others but never the same. Strategies of building ‘identification’ influence the destination images and thus will influence its future planning; to the end, they will affect destination development. Elements of a destination are the foundation of destination; they generate the ‘identification’ and finally build up the destination image. What matters here is the ways in which the destination generates the ‘identification’ or in other words the ways of branding. Destination branding can be defined as a way to communicate a destination’s unique identity by differentiating a destination from its competitors (Morrison & Anderson, 2002 cited in Qu, Kim, and Im, 2011, pp. 465--476).

In destination branding, it is essential to understand consumer perceptions of the destination (Anholt, 2009). Different target consumers have different perceptions, they can be divided by their characteristics, such as sex, age, region or nationality. As discussed by Lew and Yu (1995) in early Chinese tourism there are different demands between international and domestic tourists.
These two different tourist groups have unique preferences in selecting tourism destinations; it is unknown if such differences still remain and if they are considered in tourism marketing today (ibid).

During the start of international tourism in China between 1978 to June 1989, Chinese tourism was a seller’s market with more than a sufficient supply of tourists, the quality and variety of tourist attractions mattered little. National Tourism Administration of China (NTA) shows that there had been no supporting research on either marketing or tourists in the first decade of Chinese tourism. Most of the decision on selecting tourist attractions to open for foreigners were made either by copying patterns found in other countries or by best guess assumptions and common sense judgments (Lew and Yu, 1995). The late start of tourism development has influenced China even up until today. In the early stages of Chinese tourism, the Chinese authorities sold the country to foreign tourists through images of a “mystical country”. These images were not based on sophisticated research of tourists markets or international visitors to China, subsequently did not reflect visitor’s true experience of the Chinese landscape (Lew and Yu, 1995). With the growing numbers of studies in the tourism domain, more strategies in image branding are being created because of increasing demand in tourism industry.

According to The Australian News (2014), China has been the fourth largest source country for international tourism, and it is the fastest growing market. China’s capital city, Beijing acts as political, economic, educational, cultural, and international trade center for the country. It attracts 140 million domestic tourists and 4.4 million international tourists each year. Beijing is the first choice among domestic tourists; it usually serves as the first station of arriving international tourists. With such high travel flows of both tourists groups, the city’s destination branding has become increasingly urgent and significant. Strategies behind marketing will greatly affect tourists perceptions of Beijing. This thesis seeks to identify Beijing’s destination branding and the strategies currently used through content analyzing the city’s marketing materials.
1.2 Research Purpose

Earlier studies reveal that domestic and international tourists have different demands when it comes to tourism in China (e.g. Lew and Yu, 1995). This thesis seeks to investigate whether these differences are considered in current marketing material of Beijing, and if so, in what way. Thus, the purpose of this thesis is to identify how Beijing is presented in tourism marketing towards international and domestic tourists, and to detect potential differences as well as reasons for this. The study is conducted using content analysis, where the city’s tourism-marketing materials: official websites, Medias and tourism brochure are analyzed. By analyzing the structure, patterns and emphasis of these marketing materials, the aspiration is to gain an understanding of the city’s destination branding strategy towards the two different tourists groups. To achieve the purpose we shall:

1. Clarify how Beijing promotes itself as a touristic destination through marketing materials.
2. Draw out the potential differences in marketing strategies towards international and domestic tourists.

1.3 Research Questions

To fulfill the stated research purpose, two research questions are designed in order to guide the research process:

1. What categorizes the images used by Beijing destination branding to domestic and international tourists? Which are the most used images among the domestic and international tourist categories?

2. What potential differences can be detected in marketing strategies toward domestic and international tourists?
1.4 Thesis Outline

In order to gain a clear structure of this thesis, this outline is created to briefly introduce the research’s chapters.

- **Chapter 2 – Research Background.** This chapter introduces the reader with insight to the Beijing context; the chapter’s contents clarify the reason for this study.

- **Chapter 3 – Frame of Reference.** Provides a brief background of tourism in China. It continues by presenting the main concepts of destination branding and images which are used as the framework for the research findings and discussion.

- **Chapter 4 - Methodology.** This chapter presents the research methods chosen to meet the research purpose. It includes the concept of content analysis, key steps of using content analysis, data collection method and actual process of the study. The chapter concludes by discussing the research limitations.

- **Chapter 5 - Findings.** Presents the results of collected data.

- **Chapter 6 – Analysis and Discussion.** This chapter records the analysis and discussion of the research findings in connection to the Frame of Reference concepts.

- **Chapter 7 – Research Conclusion.** The chapter draws a summary of the whole study; it presents the research conclusion, whereby answering the research questions, and closes with suggestions for future research.
2. Research Background

The research foreground utilizes Beijing as the target destination, i.e. focus of the study. Therefore, this chapter will introduce *Beijing in Context*, as it provides background information of the target destination and the reason for having this study.

### 2.1 Beijing in Context

Beijing, the capital city of China has a history of approximately three thousand years. Beijing covers 16,808 square kilometres in area, it has a population of 11 million; it serves as the political, cultural and economic centre of the People's Republic of China (Beijing Travel, 2014). During its history, Beijing has been the political centre of the country for much of the past eight centuries. King Wu first declared the city as the capital in 1057 BC. After that, the city underwent name changes from Ji to Zhongdu, Dadu, and finally Beijing during the Ming dynasty by Emperor Chengzu in 1421. Before 1949, Beijing was known as Peking by the Western world (The Beijing Page, 2014).

Beijing’s long history contains a rich heritage and cultural relics, examples of sites and attractions are the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, Summer Palace, Temple of Heaven, the Hutong (narrow bystreets), Siheyuan (quadrangle courtyard), Pedi cab (Beijing Travel, 2014). All these examples are unique symbols of Beijing, which project an image of history or culture.

Since the early 1980s, China initiated economic and market reforms under the late Deng Xiaoping, Beijing became a truly economical and modern city (The Beijing Page, 2014). The city rapidly developed after that, especially the tertiary industry. Beijing had a GDP of 17879.4 Billion RMB in 2012 and the tertiary industry accounts for 76% of the GDP (Statistics China, 2014). By the end of 2007, there were 751 financial organizations in Beijing, and they created 128.6 billion RMB revenues accounting for 11.6% of the total financial industry revenue for all of China (Beijing Travel, 2014).

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1 Historical/cultural: Each type of attraction has its own unique combination of benefits and advantages; some focus more on the historical aspect, some on the cultural, and others mix geographic and heritage elements (Bonn et al., 2007). In this study, the different destination images (Historical, cultural, international, shopping, modern, artistic) as well as the attributes/elements the images contain are simply the features that marketing materials attempt to present to tourists.
In the past twenty years, Beijing has experienced a huge development in economy, leading towards a great impact on city construction. Skyscrapers, shopping malls, office blocks, and big hotels have been rising like trees. Contemporary music clubs, discos thrive in an era of liberalization and prosperity, mixed with modernity into the image of Beijing. Consequently, the city faces an internationalization process; growing interactions between Beijing and the world are increasing the city’s cultural integration, internalization, and modernity.

Beijing acquired the right to host 2008’s Olympic Games. Olympic facilities like the stadium “Nest”, “Water Cube” demonstrate large attractions in Beijing. To the end 2012, there was 5.01 million international tourists that stayed overnight in Beijing (Statistics China, 2014). Nowadays, foreign tourists can be seen on the streets of Beijing. With the increasing development and international communication activities, the city has become international.

Tourism is a sector that is rising and will continue to grow in the future. Beijing is a complex mix of tourism elements with different perspectives; it is attractive to both domestic and international tourists. Tourism as one of the leading sectors of the tertiary industry that has brought Beijing impressive development; to the end of year 2012, international tourists brought a number of 5149 million US dollars to the local economy (Statistics China, 2014).

Beijing is on the path towards becoming an attractive tourism destination; its use of images to different tourists may be different though. Until today, there is no clear definition about Beijing’s unique identity that is branded to tourists. Tourists can perceive marketing materials images in many different ways. Consequently, information gathered by tourists is always unclassified. There is a lack of a structured, completed overall destination image through Beijing’s tourism marketing; as a result, it is difficult to see the branding strategies.

Many tourists go to Beijing for a general experience of China, but never really realize what types of Beijing they have perceived. As the identification of Beijing, the branding matters not only tourists’ decision making, but also the images that will be built, and relative strategies for future planning of Beijing. For these reasons, on asks: How is Beijing presenting itself? Among all those historical, cultural, political, economic, modern, and international elements, which one is Beijing emphasizing? What category of destination images is Beijing generating? Is there a difference between marketing to domestic and international tourists? The answers to these
questions are displayed through the local marketing methods, and are subconsciously generated in tourists’ mind. In this process, what is shown to tourists makes people curious.

It could be meaningful to have an analysis of Beijing destination marketing, to classify and categorize themes that are branded to tourists. This research can also help Beijing to review itself, and critically evaluate its branding strategies. Thus, this study is motivated, and related to the theoretical support from the thesis’ Chapter 3 (Frame of Reference), and an appropriate research method that shall aid to fulfil the research purpose and answer the research questions.
3. Frame of Reference

The first part of this chapter offers brief characteristics of international and domestic tourists in China; it presents the key knowledge that works as mirror to reveal the potential differences between different tourist groups and guides the results of this study. Furthermore, this chapter offers a look at two concepts: destination image and destination branding that serves as the Frame of Reference, which are subsequently used to support this study. The chapter describes the relationship between the two concepts, along with the branding process.

To close the chapter we present the branding process because it offers our research the necessary information needed to enhance the understanding of destination image and destination branding. However, it must be noted that the branding process simply serves as background knowledge.

3.1 Tourism in China

The modern tourism in China was initiated in the 1920s but was rather short lived. However, relative to the birth of the People’s Republic in 1949, the development of tourism restarted. The travelling in that time was restricted and only provided services for visiting overseas Chinese residents and for foreigners with special permission to visit China. The year that the door of tourism really opened up was in 1978 (Lew and Yu, 1995).

Already in the beginning of the opening door, international tourists showed huge interests in two main areas: Eastern heartland and ethnic minority peripheral regions. Eastern heartland refers to sights of Chinese history and art, including e.g. Beijing, the Ming Emperors’ Tombs, and the Great Wall. Package tours, official trips, airline and shipping crews, private visits were the main travel types in that time (Lew and Yu, 1995). Domestic tourism was discouraged by government due to the unmatched tourism facilities with demands in early time since government aimed to satisfy overseas tourists first. But later on, when the important economic benefit and potential was found in domestic tourism, it was growing fast. Erdmann (1995, cited in Lew and Yu, 1995, p.131) stated that during his observations toward Chinese domestic tourists, he revealed not only overcrowd in all means of transportation, but also tourists squeezing
themselves into museums, parks and so on. It was estimated that the amount of domestic tourists were approximately twenty times more than the international tourists (Lew and Yu, 1995).

Early studies found that the behaviour of domestic Chinese tourists showed important differences compared to international tourists (Lew and Yu, 1995). Domestic tourists, including both local and regional were more likely to predominate Chinese traditional gardens and renovated monasteries. The cultural and natural landscape peculiarities of peripheral regions were strong attractions for international tourists while domestic Chinese tourists showed less interest for such attractions. An early observation of Yunnan province in China revealed that there were obviously more domestic tourists in any attractions and they had higher average nights of stay than international tourists. And in this observation, Yunnan was regarded as less interesting among the majority Han Chinese due to Yunnan’s remoteness and independent culture (Lew and Yu, 1995). Later observations from Lew and Yu (1995) found that, though domestic tourists were usually higher in amount than international tourists, the general trend was still that domestic tourists preferred modern, seaside resorts rather than minority periphery regions. This was explained by the assumed aspiration of developed and wealthy areas. There was also an observation by Lew and Yu (1995) revealed that lack of access (or in other word lack of money) could make domestic tourists hard to visit some destinations in China. For instance Guilin proved difficulties in rising the amount of domestic tourists, because of high costs. Even by the time Lew and Yu published their observations, the easy access to Guilin was still by air and domestic tourists could barely afford that.

Despite the characteristics caused by the unbalanced and later developments, there are also cultural differences. Lew and Yu (1995) found that Chinese themselves had deeply held ideological preconceptions of what the Chinese landscape image was and these preconceptions made the Chinese people see the landscape differently compared to foreigners. Westerners seemed to find it difficult to identify the cultural roots of each idea or image in the volumes of Chinese tourist brochures, while Chinese treated promotional images and culture as common knowledge.

It is difficult to separate the influence of images from Chinese people’s lives and to appreciate landscape without preconditioned thoughts. A Chinese river might just be a waterway for western tourists, while Chinese tourists might associate the river to a poem. International
tourists are more pragmatic since they are not nurtured in the same cultural environment as domestic Chinese tourists; it is difficult for international tourists to completely understand Chinese tourists’ full experience of a place (Lew, 1992). Preconceptions affect the Chinese and it has become a serious problem for Chinese tourism that the judgements and decisions on tourism development and promotions are generally made to reflect Chinese values, which includes preconditioned ‘common knowledge’ about foreigners and their tastes of landscape (Lew and Yu, 1995). Such cultural bias makes decision makers overlook the reality of a landscape (Lew and Yu, 1995).

Significant differences exist between the destinations targeted by international tourism in China and those of Chinese domestic tourism. Even to the same destination, international tourists and domestic tourists are usually motivated for different reasons. Lew and Yu (1995) stated that trips made by international visitors often were arranged by the China International Travel Service (CITS). Western tourists more frequently visited minority frontiers and were perceived as more adventurous and interested in exotic attractions than the Chinese. In contrast to international visitors, domestic Chinese trip is a voluntary decision, similar like a pilgrimage to historical, cultural and political centres (Lew and Yu, 1995). Chinese tourists prefer to validate the poetic knowledge of places like traditional gardens. The different preferences among domestic and international tourists can be illustrated by statistical data from 1989, showing that 99 percent of the visitors coming to Tibet were westerners. The absence of Chinese visitors reveals the cultural influence of the domestic tourist’s perception of remote places; it may also be because of the disdain for minorities among the dominant Han Chinese (Lew and Yu, 1995).

3.2 Definition of Destination Image

Destination image is defined as “not only the perceptions of individual destination attributes but also the holistic impression made by the destination” (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991 cited in Blain and Levy et al., 2005, p. 330). Crompton (1979, cited in Einci, 2003, p.22) also defined destination image as “the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination”. Lawson and Baud-Bovy (1977, cited in Baloglu and Mcceleary, 1999, p.871) propose destination image as the expression of all knowledge, impressions, prejudices and emotional thoughts an individual or group has of a particular object or place. All of the
definitions of destination images mentioned about the impression of individual to a place are used as the basis for this thesis.

Ahmed (1991, cited in Baloglu and Mccleary, 1999, p. 873) stated, “destination image is to delineate the relationship between overall image and other components and the overall notion may be favorable or unfavorable”. Baloglu and Mccleary (1999) concluded that the overall impression is dependent upon individual attributes. Then, dimensions of the beliefs and feelings together influence overall attitude or image. The causal linkages indicate that beliefs influence overall or composite attitude directly as well as indirectly through affect.

Stated in Skidmore and Koller’s (2001) research, destination image is people’s thought of one place’s beliefs, ideas and impressions and it represents a variety of connections and information associated with the destination. Positioning strategy help differentiating one place from its competitors, such effective destination image ought to: 1. be valid, 2. be believable, 3. be simple, 4. have appeal, 5. be distinctive (Skidmore and Koller, 2001).

### 3.3 Destination Branding

Today, every country, city, and region on earth must compete with every other for its share of the world’s commercial, political, social, and cultural transactions, in what is virtually a single tourist market. Brand image becomes critical: nobody has time to experience the differences, people fall back on their fundamental beliefs and prejudices about destination to help them make their decisions (Anholt, 2009). Just as in the commercial marketplace destination ‘brand image’ provides a short cut to an informed buying decision. Branding acts like a calling card that opens doors, creates trust and respect, and raises the expectation of quality, competence and integrity (Anholt, 2009).

Designing a brand is the only way to create a difference between products, from which consumers can choose in a cluttered market environment. In an era of mass production and almost identical quality of products and services in one category, brand identity turns out to be the decision making factor for purchase (Galin Kastelov, 2014). Anholt (2009) stated that important contributions from destination branding are that: 1. destination marketing is a relatively straightforward business: as long as the tourist board has enough marketing expertise, resources, and patience, it can be sure of increasing tourism arrivals. 2. Tourism has a secondary impact,
however less well recognized, and which makes it one of the few means by which the overall ‘brand image’ of a country can in fact be enhanced (Anholt, 2009).

Although the idea of branding has been developing for a long period of time, the issue of tourism branding is a relatively new topic (Blain and Levy et al., 2005). Branding usually refers to the identification of a product that is generally a physical offering. However, when it refers to tourism, the destination serves as the product, because it is a large entity mixed with both tangible and intangible resources. Branding of a destination is more complex, but still explains the expectations of a supplier to make the brand perceived by its target market.

Destination branding is a commonly accepted way to communicate a destination’s unique identity through differentiating it to other destinations (Qu, Kim and Im, 2011). Anholt (2009) stated that branding is what makes a destination distinctive, memorable and differentiates the destination from all others. It is the foundation of the destination’s international competitiveness. Destination brands exert to offer identification and differentiation functions, which involve the explication of the destinations’ resources. These resources are the foundations of the differences that make a destination differ from another. Moreover, the branding creates the first idea about a destination to tourists (Vogt, 2003). Tourists can recognize a brand among others when the brand is perceived distinctive, and when its unique differences make it hard to be replaced (Qu, Kim and Im, 2011).

The concept of destination branding is crucial for a certain destination due to its characteristics of identity which differ it from competitors in the target market (Qu, Kim and Im, 2011). In most conditions, places market commercial products, such as goods and service because it does not provide an explicit association with the position sought by the DMOs (Destination Management Organization) in travel markets (Pike, 2005). In the other words, a place includes both tangible attributes and intangible characteristics: tangible attributes like historical sites, intangible characteristics like culture and customs. Due to these characteristics, identity generalization of a destination is useful for suppliers to set their target group (Qu, Kim and Im, 2011). A key component of branding is the creation and management of images (Ekinci, 2003).
### 3.4 Destination Branding and Image: A Reciprocal Relation

Destination branding is created by destination marketers such as destination marketing organizations (DMOs) and destination image can be defined as the perception of destinations by tourists (Qu, Kim and Im, 2011). Stated by Qu, Kim and Im (2011), a brand identity and brand image is reciprocal. On one hand, consumers build a destination image in their minds based on the brand identity created by the destination marketers. On the other hand, destination marketers establish and complete brand identity based on their knowledge about consumer’s brand image on the particular destination.

Destination branding and destination image are interactive. Brand image plays a significant role in building brand identity (Cai, 2002). The definition of destination branding coexists with destination image. (Blain et al., 2005). Destination branding process is the creation and management of a distinctive and appealing destination image (Ekinci, 2003). The destination branding should combine both branding concepts with the concepts of destination image (Morgan and Pritchard 1999 cited in Blain and Levy et al., 2005, pp.329-330), and the destination brand should ultimately influence destination choice, also, it was evidenced that destination image is a significant factor in determining visitor choice.

The destination branding should include the concepts of destination image and competitiveness (Blain and Levy et al., 2005). Ekinci (2003, p.22) stated that the process of destination branding begins when the evaluation of destination image includes a strong emotional attachment. Ekinci suggested that destination branding and destination image share some common ground but destination branding represents the emotional component of destination image (Ekinci, 2003). Qu, Kim and Im (2011, p.466) also stated that destination brand differentiate itself base on its special meaning and attachment given by consumers. In addition, the special meaning and attachment from consumers are exactly the result from destination images.
Figure 1. Destination Image and Destination Branding

Source: Ekinci (2003)

The study of Ekinci (2003, pp.21-22) created a model (see Figure 1) stating that “Destination marketing follows a three stage process in order to develop a favourable destination image”. It explains the relationship between destination image and destination branding by clarifying the relationship between tourists and destination. Ekinci (2003, pp. 21-22) believe that destination image comes from tourists and that destination branding is the management of relationship between destination image and tourist. However, in this thesis, only the first and second stages of the Ekinci’s model are used in order to gain an understanding of the relationship between destination image and destination branding. In the scope of this study, the main purpose to use this model is to explain the process of how destination image works in the branding.

In Ekinci’s model, destination image involves an individual’s mental picture of a place based on their knowledge and other global impressions. The image may come from something back from the person’s memory, e.g. information from friends, relatives or social media. It is multi-dimensional constructed and is generated with various components (Ekinci, 2003). Destination image is cognitive and involves subjective knowledge of a destination and its evaluation may vary among different persons, because tourist’s attitude to a destination contains tourist’s own emotional attachment. Thus, the evaluation of destination image includes the
element of emotional attachment (Ekinci, 2003). The first stage is the selecting of destination image.

The second stage of the model, destination branding represents the emotional component of the destination image. Ekinci suggested that branding is the second stage of building a favourable destination image because only branded destination would establish an instant emotional link with tourists (Ekinci, 2003, p22). Brand is a promise to consumers to expect and trust that their expectation will be met and the brand is the assurance of quality (Blain and Levy et al., 2005). A brand will be the best way to ensure keeping competitive. Successful destination branding establishes a mutual relationship between destination and tourists by satisfying their emotional and basic needs and it creates a link between destination image and tourists self-image (Ekinci, 2003).

The third stage in this model is the brand personality. Ekinci (2003) explained it as the emphasis of human side of the brand image, which is achieved by using human personality traits to describe destination image.

What matters is that destination branding emphasizes on managing destination resources as well as managing relationships to tourists to build up a unique destination image to keep the destination competitive.

3.5 Branding Process

Laws (2002) stated that for marketing purposes, destination can be treated similar to products, which means destination branding is similar to products branding.

Research carried out by Fabricius (2006b:6 cited in Ndlovu, 2009, p.76) stated that “a destination should have a vision that is shared by all the stakeholders and potential consumers should be clearly expressed in the core values of the brand at the launching of the brand”. Branding should also see through the importance of monitoring, evaluation and review. There are five phases in branding as shown in Table 1, Figure 2 shows more detail of Table 1’s phases.
Table 1. The Five Phases in Destination Branding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase one:</th>
<th>Market investigation, analysis and strategic recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase two:</td>
<td>Brand identity development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase three:</td>
<td>Brand launch and introduction, i.e. communicating the vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase four:</td>
<td>Brand implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase five:</td>
<td>Monitoring, evaluation and review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


A destination should transcend brands in order to create “trust marks” which can be a name or symbol that links a destination emotionally with the demands and aspirations of tourists (Morgan, Clark and Gooner, 2002). The first stage in the process of building or rejuvenating a destination brand is to establish the destination’s core values, which should be durable, relevant and salient for the potential tourists (Health, 2007 cited in Ndlovu, 2009, p.76). A destination should focus on its core market segments when developing a brand. Their perceptions will define the brand’s core characteristics (Anholt, 2009). The next step involves a development of brand by checking if it is relevant for current tourists and comparing with the destination competitors. The last step is to have monitoring and evaluation on brand impact to keep brand refreshment (Ndlovu, 2009). Branding involves the creation of mental structures in tourists’ mind, and it tends to simplify tourist decision-making and provide value for the destination, thus it is important to comprehend the quality of the tourism experiences that offered at the destination level (Ndlovu, 2009).
Figure 2. Branding Key Links

4. Methodology

This chapter introduces the methods used in this study. The fundamental method content analysis will be explained, and also the sampling and analysing methods will be included. Followed up by the process of how this study was conducted. To conclude the chapter, limitations facing the study will be discussed.

This paper deals with the city of Beijing, the capital city of China. Reason for choosing this city as destination is that China as a tourism destination has become increasingly popular in the world. More and more tourists are eager to experience this captivating country, with its more than 5000 year’s history. Beijing, being the capital city can be seen as a represent of China in different dimensions. Since the 2008 summer Olympic Games, the city became even more international; tourism information such as websites, brochures and auto guide was provided in different languages, which indicates efforts made to build an affective destination branding for Beijing.

In this study, data was collected based on the requirements of content analysis and its sampling requirement. Data was collected from marketing materials; information from the data was categorized and analysed by the method of content analysis in order to find out the destination branding strategies, structures and patterns. Methodological details are introduced in the upcoming sections.

4.1 Defining Content Analysis

Content analysis is a research tool focused on the actual content and internal features of media. It is a research technique of the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication (Berelson, 1952 cited by Dwyer et al, 2012, p. 439). It is used to determine the presence of certain words, concepts, themes, phrases, characters, or sentences within texts or sets of texts and to quantify this presence in an objective manner (Dwyer et al, 2012). Content analysis is capable of capturing a richer sense of concepts within the data due to its qualitative basis and, at the same time, can be subjected to quantitative data analysis techniques (Insch and Moore, 1997 cited by Dwyer et al, 2012, p. 443). The method of content analysis is also defined as a method of analysing written, verbal or visual communication information (Cole, 1988).
In this study, part of the research purpose is to detect potential differences of Beijing’s marketing strategies toward international and domestic tourists. The content analysis offers a more flexible analysis in text and image than other methods. Content analysis contains several steps, where the first is to define the objective and source of data; second to categorize information; and last to make analysis. The actual process will be introduced in the later sections.

4.2 Sampling and Data Collection

The first step of content analysis is to define the objectives and sources that will be used. One major consideration regarding content analysis is to define suitable sampling population of textual material to enable an answer to the particular research questions (Dwyer et al, 2012). The sampling process contains three steps: select sources of communication, sampling documents and sampling within documents (Holsti1 1969 cited in Dwyer et al, 2012, p447). And it is important that when all sampling units are considered equally informative, non-probability samples should be avoided whenever possible; and when sources are unequally informative or differ in influence, circulation, or format, the selection should base on how much relevant to the research (Dwyer et al, 2012).

In this study, the sampling population is texts and images from both the official tourism websites of Beijing and the published tourism brochures that can be found in Beijing airports, train stations or internet. Because part of the research purpose is to identify how Beijing is presented in tourism marketing. In order to reduce bias, the selection of tourism brochures will focus on the type with more general information of Beijing rather than material targeting individual specific sites within the city. Hence, brochures that only introduce a specific site/destination inside the border Beijing will not be chose.

According to Jennings’s (2010), possible source of data collection could come from international and regional bodies, organizations, groups; international sector groups, associations, networks; national statistics departments, organizations and so on. In this paper, data is collected from both tourism official website of Beijing and published brochures that meet the requirement mentioned above.

This paper is a study on branding strategies of Beijing to domestic and international tourists. The marketing materials published for visitors are considered to be the best data in this study,
since they can offer both the branding strategies and differences toward tourists groups. They contain ideas on what the destination wants to display and they often represent the first contact the tourists make with a specific destination.

The collection of data is based on three principles: first, the data collection follows the perception of ‘materials that tourists can find when he/she wants to make decisions associated with their visit to Beijing’. This means for instance that the selected internet data is usually found in the first page of search results; second, the data must be official ratified so that it is able to present the perception of Beijing itself. Therefore, only the official data offered by Beijing will be selected; third, in order to see the differences between different tourist groups, both domestic Chinese data and international English data will be collected.

The authors of this thesis have both visited Beijing as tourists and searched from internet to collect data. The data collection consists of: 4 websites, 7 brochures, 3 videos from “Beautiful China Official Channel”. Among them, 2 websites Travel China Guide (Ratified by National Tourism Administration) and Beijing Travels (the product of the China Art International Travel service (CAITS)) are websites published in the English language; Visit Beijing (The Beijing Municipal Commission of Tourism Development) is the direct official website that contains both English and a Chinese version. Hence, this study will treat those websites as two, in order to seek the differentiation of branding strategies towards international and domestic tourists. The same applies for the selected brochures. Five of them are written in English and two in Chinese. Of the three videos selected from “Beautiful China Official Channel” on Youtube (An international online video website), two are in English and one in Chinese.

4.3 Categorization

After the collecting of data, the work moves to the most important procedure of categorizing. Successful content analysis studies are found to be clearly formulated and well adapted to the problem and to the content. Holsti (1969 cited in Dwyer et al, 2012, p.448) has suggested that researchers should follow principles while developing categories: they should be exhaustive which means every relevant item should have a category; should be mutually exhaustive which requires no recording unit placed in more than one category; and the last principle is to be independent, which requires no affection from one categorized unit to the
classification of other data units. Two models are mainly used in conducting content analysis research: substitution model and correlational model. In substitution model, text is analysed with a priori established categories by similar meaning or by connotations; Correlation model discerns categories from the text itself, not by meaning or connotations but refer them to some theme or issue (Weber, 1983 cited in Dwyer et al, 2012, p.448-449).

In order to best achieve the purpose of this study and make better analysis of data, both substitution model and correlation model are used. The data collected are complex in both their meaning and what they represent, so that priori categories like places of interests, activities, natural sights are designed; later after the priori categories, other texts and images that not directly but represents similar meaning also need to be contained. And when there is conflict, e.g. that one data can be categorized into different categories by meaning or theme it represents, it will be categorized by the one it is most relevant to.

It is a complex process to categorize data and it requires understanding of all units inside the data and a mind structure of categories. Later there will be a section that shows the actual detail of this.

4.4 Data analysis

Stated by Elo and Kyngas’ (2007), there are two approaches to analyze data collected by content analysis, which are inductive approach and deductive approach. The inductive approach is used if there is not enough former knowledge about the phenomenon or if this knowledge is fragmented; the deductive approach is used if the structure of analysis is operationalized on the basis of previous knowledge and the purpose of the study is theory testing.

In this paper, is preferred, since an inductive way can moves from specific to general, it is more flexible and adaptable to the problems in this study. Because the data collected in this study are undefined/uncategorized marketing materials; attributes in the marketing materials are fragmented without classify, each single unit may has a single meaning. The inductive approach helps to categorize attributes into categories to reveal the strategies behind marketing materials.
4.5 Actual Process in This Study

This section introduces a more detailed description on how this study was conducted.

First of all is the selection of data, which works as the main attributes in this study. In the collection of data, websites have been chosen by searching through Google. Key words like “official”, “tourism”, “Beijing”, “travel” and relevant words in Chinese version are used frequently to check the websites. Among the searching result, normal websites like tour operators from business companies are excluded. The next step involves an examination of the data, based on the level of relevance to this study – they must contain information that is able to contribute to the purpose of this study. Finally, four websites were chosen, which are all officially ratified or directly controlled by tourism administration of Beijing. The similar approach is used for the three selected Youtube-videos. From a perspective of tourists that is planning a trip to Beijing, destination promotion videos may be consider as marketing materials too. Thus, the three videos from “Beautiful China Official Channel” are chosen as well. In the selection process of the brochures, special focus has been put on finding representative brochures with more general information in both Chinese and English versions. Authors have collected these, both on site in Beijing and through internet. Seven brochures are selected after excluding those from tour operator which contains only business purpose (price only, without instruction of destination).

In the second step of the actual study, a conceptualization of the attributes relevant for this study is outlined. Conceptual formation process is designed to analyze and categorize attributes into themes by both the substitution model and correlation model, as introduced above. For analysis of the websites, all pages are screened including sub linked pages, in order to avoid bias like miscount or page upgrades and changes. Then relevant information is coded into categories by their themes or meanings. Same goes for the brochures, where relevant texts and images are coded. When it comes to analyzing of videos, it is suggested that all the scenes and commentary need to be recorded. But during the analysis, it turned out that the actual videos are simply the mix of music and scenes without voice commentary, thus only few texts that show the names on the screen and scenes (treat as images) are recorded. The whole process is mainly based on the conceptual structure, that the authors have coded according to the attributes and their theme and meaning. In order to construct validity and reliability and to establish criterion as suggested by
Neuendorf (2002, cited in Steingraeber, n.d., p22), examples of screened webpages are attached in the appendix (see Appendix data).

After coding of attributes, it moves to the last step: to finally formulate the themes for the attributes. In the second step, a lot attributes and relevant themes were created but they were obviously too many to enable a formulation of themes. A generalization of the data was done, i.e. placed in larger categories. Finally, the categories were further divided into representative sub-categories. One important issue regarding analysis and categorization of all three different types of data is that during the whole process, the material was processed by a separation of Chinese and English versions. This enabled further analysis of the differences between domestic and international differences in the marketing material. Here shows the complete work of mind structure or in another word conceptual formation process below in Figure 3 and Figure 4.

Figure 3. Conceptual Formation Processes of Beijing’s Tourism Marketing Materials (English Version)

Source: Authors’ own design: 2014 (see Appendix for bigger picture).
Figure 4. Conceptual Formation Processes of Beijing’s Tourism Marketing Materials

(Chinese Version)

Source: Authors’ own design: 2014 (see Appendix for bigger picture).

Key details of coding

The process of coding relevant information from the data might appear complicated, but the same procedure of coding applies both to the Websites and brochures. Based on the purpose of this study, relevant information from all subpages are targeted, for instance: names of places; texts that describe a place; texts that have similar meaning of a tourism relevant objects; images of a place; images of an activity; images of natural environment.
What needs mentioning is that during the coding process of websites, only pages that do not require login authority were counted. In addition, linked pages that connected to other websites were excluded. Additionally, words with relevant information but are part of objects that does not relevant to this study are excluded, for example ‘the forbidden city’ is relevant to this study while ‘the forbidden city hotel’ is not relevant and will be excluded. Words that used as linking word for instance ‘naturally’ are not counted. Titles that showed twice in different pages are counted only once. Same images that are showed several times in different pages are counted only once. Images that contain different information are counted by the degree of how much information it contains, for example an image shows ‘tourists dancing in front of a historic place during local activity’ will be counted into both ‘historic sites’ and ‘cultural activity’. While an image that shows ‘big faces of tourists but hardly recognize the place or event behind’ will not be counted. In addition, both the websites and in the brochures, information from tourists’ comments will not be counted since the focus of this study is the strategies of the marketers.

Videos collected are easier than authors expected to be. Since the videos do not contain anyone’s voice commentary, no more sound texts need to be recorded. The videos are treated as images.

Thus, the detailed process of coding during second step enables the reliability and validity of the study. After the process of coding, attributes emerged and allowed a further categorization into representative groups. Both the results of tourism marketing materials aiming towards domestic Chinese and international are presented. Thereby, the conceptual formation processes are done. And the whole process from collecting data to coding and categorizing illustrates a clear patterns and structures of the tourism marketing process of Beijing. This contains the finding that will be presented in the next chapter after the review of the limitation of the methodology.
4.6 Limitations

The first limitation was found in the data collection process; data collection may appear to be insufficient to cover such a large city. Due to time limits of time and access to large marketing materials samples, this study could only utilize a few representative data to draw out the results. In addition, the data used in this study can hardly avoid the involvement of business purpose promotions, though it is better not to have them during an academic study. Nevertheless, they are all under estimated and do not affect the reliability and validity of this study.

A second limitation was encountered in the selecting of research methods. This study is researching on the tourism branding strategies behind marketing materials. It only involves marketing materials from official DMOs, no interviews of any kind were conducted on DMOs’ perception. It is just the analysis of their marketing materials, deeper ideas and meanings behind their marketing strategies are not represented within the results. From a tourist perspective, this study does not contain any interviews or research on tourist. It is more about the research of branding strategies behind the assumption that marketing materials which tourist can find when he/she wants to make decision. Thus, there is no real involvement from the tourists.

The third limitation indicates that the conceptual formation process requires authors’ personal mind/concept structures, which may lead to a limitation. Though the reliability and validity are still up to the requirements, it is necessary to mention it for future study suggestions.
5. Findings

In this chapter, original outcomes of data are presented; continue with findings generalized from the original outcomes in order to follow the research purpose.

5.1 Original Outcomes

Table 2 reveals data pertaining to 4 representative groups in international marketing materials, and 6 representative groups in domestic marketing materials.

Table 2. Representative groups of International and Domestic Marketing materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International marketing materials: (% of the materials)</th>
<th>Domestic marketing materials: (% of the materials)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mixed attractions (45%)</td>
<td>Historic attractions (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities (25%)</td>
<td>Modern attractions (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping and local products (20%)</td>
<td>Leisure attractions (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation/ infrastructure (10%)</td>
<td>Cultural attractions (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Art attractions (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transportation/ infrastructure (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Content Analysis Results, 2014

The representative groups in Table 2 show differences between international marketing and domestic marketing. They are the original outcomes from the data analysis of the thesis. They show the components of international marketing materials and domestic marketing materials. The creation of representative groups with such differences is based on the direct results from analyzing different marketing materials. And the creation of representative groups are also based on the issue mentioned in the methodology chapter, which describes how to categorize attributes by the level of relevance, if there are conflicts in categorizing, either by their meaning or by the theme they represent.

Some general differences between two marketing materials are revealed from the original outcomes as showed in Table 2. First, it is difficult to find clear boundaries of attractions, since the international marketing materials focus on a recommend mixed attractions, while domestic marketing materials have clearly several aggregations of similar attractions. Second, it is
necessary to highlight that the attractions in international marketing materials might be less in amount, but nevertheless world famous compared to attractions in domestic marketing materials. Third, it is revealed from brochures that the international marketing materials have a structure that presentations of attractions are highly arranged with recommended time of stay and recommended route while the presentations of attractions in domestic are freely structured without much arrangement.

Based on the original outcomes and the research purpose, representative groups are generalized and classified into several destination images. Figure 5 dedicates the percentage of each image in the whole marketing materials.

**Figure 5. Percentages in International and domestic marketing materials**

Source: Content Analysis Results, 2014
More details, as well as different ways to divide the images in two groups of marketing materials will be presented in the next section.

5.2 Categories of Beijing Images

Summarizing from the original outcomes, it shows that the destination images of Beijing presented in international marketing materials are historical, cultural, international and a shopping heaven; while the destination images of Beijing presented in domestic marketing materials are historical, cultural, modern and artistic. And the most used destination images are the historical and cultural images, according to their percentages in both international and domestic marketing materials. Despite the same destination images that both groups of marketing have, the main differences amongst marketing groups are between the international image and modern image, as well as the shopping heaven image contra the artistic image.

5.2.1 Historical Beijing

This destination image is created through the introduction of historical attractions in Beijing. The attributes to build historical image of Beijing contains names of attractions as well as related descriptive texts and images.

The attractions offered in the international marketing are to be considered world-famous. The representative attractions that build historic image for Beijing are first and foremost the Forbidden City and the great wall. The international marketing materials have showed historical images of Beijing with a limited number of representative historical attractions. Comparatively, the domestic marketing materials have showed considerably more historical attractions.

The creation of historical image of Beijing in both international and domestic marketing materials has used a lot of descriptive texts like “historic”, “ancient”, “heritage” combined with pictures of historical houses and palaces in Beijing. The historical destination image stands for a substantial part in both international and domestic marketing materials.

5.2.2 Cultural Beijing

Cultural image is another substantial part in both international and domestic marketing materials. The cultural image of Beijing and the cultural attractions present here has a prominent place in the analyzed marketing materials. All attributes relevant to cultural attractions are included, for instance temples, shows etc. The cultural image of Beijing is focused on texts that
describe cultural attractions as well as pictures showing aspects of Chinese life, food, painting and writing, traditional activities, while embellish them with cultural beliefs (for instance hanging traditional antithetical couplet on the door is explained as the cultural belief of people’s wish for happy life).

The international marketing materials have presented cultural image of Beijing with few attractions and a lot activities. Local activities, e.g. art show, Kung Fu show, Beijing opera and Chinese food are the main attributes contributing to the cultural image of Beijing. They seem to try to generate a strong Chinese culture impression in tourist’s mind, especially Beijing Opera which is highly representative as unique identity of Beijing. However, those activities are seldom included in domestic marketing.

The domestic marketing materials have used another way to present cultural image. Temples, traditional gardens, residences of famous people as well as universities are the main attractions representing this group. The materials display a destination image of Chinese style; they are similar to the historic attractions but they are more related to cultural characteristic than historic, for instance a temple with only 20 years history is introduced as cultural attraction. In domestic marketing, one issue regarding the creation of the cultural image is due to the ‘cultural preconditions’ that the attributes under this destination image have. Domestic marketing materials have offered many attractions which contain more Chinese cultural background. The ‘cultural preconditions’ help them to build cultural image, for instance Beijing University which is one of the highest education facilities in China with a long history but more famous for its strong cultural representation. Same applies to the temples in the domestic marketing materials. They are not categorized as historical attractions, but show significant importance in building cultural destination images.

5.2.3 International Beijing and Modern Beijing

The international image of Beijing is the specific image that is only presented within the international marketing materials. The Olympic attractions and pictures presenting Beijing as an international city are the main attributes to build this destination image.

Comparatively, the modern image of Beijing is the specific image created by domestic marketing materials. Pictures in this group show modern buildings, city lights, Olympic stadium,
military museum, parks and so on. The pictures are combined with texts and they created a
destination image of modernity.

They have used similar attributes but they created two destination images due to the
different emphasis they have during the combination of texts and pictures. One is placing
emphasis on internationality whilst the other is emphasizing modernity. It is important to
highlight that in the domestic marketing materials, parks are frequently presented while
international marketing hardly mentions them.

5.2.4 Shopping Heaven Beijing and Artistic Beijing

The shopping heaven image is the specific image in the international marketing materials
and the artistic image is specific for the domestic marketing materials. In this study, they are
considered comparable, since they come from similar attributes for instance local products.

Shopping heaven Beijing is the image displayed in the international marketing materials. A
lot of local products as well as shopping malls, markets are prominent attributes representing this
image. Attributes like Chinese traditional dress Qi Pao, Clay figures and art products in 798 art
district are used to create image of shopping heaven. Texts like ‘buy’, ‘purchase’ ‘souvenir’ and
images of women (mostly foreigners) in a Chinese dress are frequently shown in this part as well
as texts and images that describe china and clay figures and so on. The international marketing
materials promote a lot of shopping activities while domestic marketing materials do not.

Contrary to the shopping heaven, local products marketed to domestic tourists are
approached differently; they are approached by marketing tangibles as artistic images. Artistic
Beijing is the image prominent towards the domestic marketing materials. Similar attributes of
shopping heaven image are used to build artistic image. However, the attributes are described or
presented in a way that is treated as art attractions. Images show strong art style and difficult to
categorize into other groups. The domestic marketing materials treat the local products (for
instance clay figures and art products) as part of artistic attractions. Even the areas that sell these
local products are treated more as attraction with travel purpose, rather than shopping districts.
The domestic marketing materials do not put emphasis on purchasing value, but rather focuses on
more general attraction-descriptions; hence it is not specific in its content in the same way as the
shopping theme.
6. Analysis and Discussion

This study seeks to reveal whether there are potential differences (and reasons for such differences) in current tourism marketing of Beijing, towards domestic and international tourists. This is conducted by analysing the relevant tourism marketing materials of Beijing. Previous chapter have revealed the findings from the data analysis: representative groups regarding international marketing materials and domestic marketing materials have been presented and described. The representative groups offer probability of comparison and will be discussed in this chapter. Thus, this chapter of the thesis aims to have discussion and analysis on the findings base on the purposes and research questions of this study to draw out the answers.

6.1 Destination images of Beijing

This study set out to identify how Beijing is presented in tourism marketing towards international and domestic tourists. Several destination images of Beijing are summarized through both international and domestic marketing materials. As the stated in section 3.2 Definition of Destination Image suggests that destination image is more about impressions, beliefs and emotional thoughts that someone has of a particular object or place (Baloglu and Mccleary, 1999). Such impressions, beliefs and emotional thoughts were structured by the marketing materials with different emphases and presented to two tourist groups.

In general, images presented by Beijing international marketing materials highlights historical, cultural, international and shopping heaven, while images presented toward domestic tourists emphasize historical, cultural, modern and artistic features. The creation of destination images follows the same pattern, which is the combination of both texts and images. In the process of presenting a destination image, how much volume of relevant texts and images that can fulfill a theme/ category decides what image is to be constructed. The eventual image constructed emphasizes the presentation of destination images designed to create different results.

6.1.1 Destination Branding Towards International Tourists

Marketing materials targeting international tourists suggest an emphasis on shopping heaven and image. The international image of Beijing was created mostly by attractions related to the Olympic Games 2008; this was supported with pictures of foreigners with different flags.
Also used to attract international tourists are shopping heaven images that display shopping markets, as well as pictures showing shopping activities. There are many local products mentioned in international marketing materials and given recommendations to purchase, while similar pictures and texts are used to illustrate local products and activities into arts as an artistic image in domestic marketing materials.

Destination branding towards international tourists is a clear evidence of how Beijing assigned a brand identity to the city through its hosting of the Olympic Games. This major event served the city an international “calling card” to provide the international tourists a sense of trust and respect in the city, similar to the ideas presented by Anholt (2009). Moreover, this major event illustrates Beijing as an exoteric city and has placed Beijing onto a global stage alongside other major cities, e.g. London, Paris, New York, Tokyo, etc. In regards to branding and its connection to shopping heaven, the latter serves an important function to associate tangible souvenirs representing the intangible unique Beijing culture as the branding into the international tourists’ perceptions (Qu, Kim and Im, 2011).

6.1.2 Destination Branding Towards Domestic Tourists

Because the Olympic Games added a brand identity and more credibility to the city, these features sparked greater curiosity and a sense of national pride among domestic tourists to visit. The event marked a unique identity, thus giving Beijing a distinctive brand, which adds to its differentiation amongst other domestic cities, e.g. Shanghai and Xi´an (Qu, Kim and Im, 2011).

For the domestic marketing, it is more common with modern and artistic images. The thesis found the domestic marketing materials used modern images of parks, modern buildings, nightclubs and modern dressed Chinese people to demonstrate Beijing as a city on a prosperous transition to modernization. As for artistic images, similar to shopping heaven image, domestic marketing place value on souvenir figurines, e.g. clay figures, Qi Pao, jade ornaments, teapots (Visit Beijing, English, 2014). Destination branding to domestic tourists found that local products in the core of the city’s branding emphasize artistic value, which implies attention on artistic image of Beijing.
6.1.3 Destination Branding Towards Both Tourists Groups

Among all the destination images summarized from the marketing materials, the most used images are the historical and cultural. As presented in both international and domestic marketing materials, the largest percentages are given to historical and cultural image, which makes them the most used images.

6.2 Differences in Marketing Strategy

A purpose of this study is to detect potential differences in tourism marketing to international and domestic tourists, as well as reasons for the differences. Through the comparison of international marketing materials and domestic marketing materials, serving as a conceptual framework is utilizing Figure 1 (Destination Image and Destination Branding) to point out the several differences in branding strategies. It proves that the different demand of different tourist groups are still considered in current marketing materials; therefore, different strategies are detected toward international marketing and domestic marketing. The differences are shown in the marketing materials as the structures of presentation, numbers, and emphases of attractions, and uses of specific attributes.

6.2.1 Different Structures of Presentation

Illustration structure in marketing materials demonstrates a clear difference to both tourists groups, i.e. domestic and international; the most evident of the differences was found to be in brochures. To elaborate on the clear evident differences, efforts are made in arranging and structuring information provisions and content in marketing brochures to international tourists’ journey, whereas little effort is made in emphasizing information to domestic tourists.

As previously discussed by Ekinci (2003), successful destination branding establishes a mutual relationship between destination and tourists by satisfying their basic needs (see Figure 1). As found in international brochures, most tourism attributes are arranged into structures, for example travel routes, which offer both recommendations of attractions and recommended time of stay as well as recommended routes. This gives an impression of recommending an arranged journey to the international tourist. However, the structure of presentation in domestic brochures offers information suggesting a volunteer journey, which offers the tourist a sense of freedom in
their travel, where they can combine activities and attractions according to their individual tastes, preferences, and possibly satisfy their basic needs.

In marketing brochures, there is an obvious distinction made between recommended attractions to both groups. For domestic brochures, there are more attractions recommended that are listed freely by similarities or geographic distances, unlike the international brochures which arrange fewer and only representative attractions for the journey. Such difference reveals different marketing strategies towards the two tourist groups.

Since international tourists are considered harder to access and are not familiar with Beijing, marketing strategy towards them offers a one-stop service that makes the travel experience more comfortable. Strategy to domestic tourists is to offer them free combination of attractions according to their own preference. This is similar to tourism in early China as mentioned in the Frame of Reference Section 3.1 that international visitor’s trip is often arranged by the China International Travel Service (CITS) while domestic visitor is more voluntarily (Lew and Yu, 1995).

6.2.2 Different Amounts and Emphases of Attractions

Besides difference in the structures of presentation, the amounts and emphases of attractions presented in the two different marketing materials is one other vital difference can be detected. The marketing towards international tourist reveals a characteristic in strategy that is to offer fewer amounts of attractions and more emphasis on big, representative, world famous attractions in Beijing. According to Ekinci’s model (2003, pp. 21-22), destination image involves an individual’s mental picture of a place based on their knowledge and other global impressions. In this context, it is necessary to highlight that attractions of international marketing materials are less in amount but world famous and representative compared to attractions in domestic marketing materials. The reasons may be various, and could possibly derive from the international tourists’ limited time or a comparatively smaller interest in other sites.

As earlier study (e.g. Lew and Yu, 1995) found, there were some ‘cultural preconditions’ regarding specific attractions. This perception is able to explain the differences in marketing toward international tourist and domestic tourist in this study. The domestic marketing materials obviously contain more numbers and types of attractions than international marketing materials
due to such perception; i.e. that domestic tourist can have ‘cultural preconditions’ that make more attractions suitable for them. As presented in the findings in previous chapter and in figure 5, there is an obvious difference that cultural attractions are representing a big percentage in the domestic marketing materials. The Frame of reference revealed that domestic tourists in China prefer traditional gardens, temples and renovated monasteries (Lew and Yu, 1995). This perception is considered in branding strategy, and it can be detected in the domestic marketing materials. It is obvious that cultural attractions like temples and gardens, as well as universities are emphasised in the domestic marketing. Indeed, there are many temples in Beijing presented as attractions in domestic marketing materials, but in the international marketing material, they are not as prominent. Consequently, that the idea that domestic tourists have more ‘cultural preconditions’, seem to be confirmed. Thus, they are more interested in attractions that do not have the same appeal to international tourists. Probably, this can be explained by differences in cultural belonging.

6.2.3 Different Ways to Use Specific Attributes

The third difference is the different ways to use attributes to present destination images through the marketing materials. It shows in a threefold way: the specific involvement of activities in international marketing; specific ways to use local products in both marketing groups; the specific attractions in building modern image in domestic marketing.

As mentioned earlier in the findings, in international marketing materials, attributes related to activities are the prominent during the creation of cultural image. The activities are treated as specific emphasis in building strong traditional Chinese style of Beijing, especially Beijing opera. These activities are one of the most important features that international tourists are interested in, which are used as the best brand in marketing to foreigners. The international marketing materials present tourism activities frequently, while domestic marketing materials barely mention them. This difference reveals that more recommendations of activities are presented to international tourist. There is one thing that cannot be ignored: that Beijing is treated as “the first sight of China” to international tourists. Beijing is like the door of China so that it needs to be addressed with representative activities to show an overall image of Chinese culture. Therefore, more representative activities are presented to international tourists to show them more and make them
devoted to China while probably most domestic tourists already knows a lot of such representative activities and are less interested in them.

The specific ways to use local products in both marketing groups are revealed in the images of shopping heaven and artistic categories. They differ in the use of local products. Local products seem to be more valuable in the perception of international tourists than domestic tourists. Throughout the international marketing materials, quite an effort is made into the presentation of local products including the streets or areas that are selling those products. The local products are presented like the best souvenirs with strong Chinese cultural value for international tourists. Hence, international marketing presents the local products as shopping attractions. Comparatively, the domestic marketing materials introduce those products differently. Local products are introduced as artistic images and the streets and areas with such arts are introduced as attractions for travel purpose only. Domestic marketing materials focus more on travel value than the shopping value. Thus, international marketing create shopping heaven image while domestic marketing create artistic image. This shows as diversity between two marketing groups toward similar attractions.

The specific attractions in building a modern image was revealed in the domestic marketing. Domestic marketing have used a lot of modern attractions like parks, business buildings and so on while international marketing does not mention them. As Frame of reference presented, an earlier study explained that since the boom of domestic tourism, everywhere is crowded so that domestic tourists even squeezed themselves into parks (Lew and Yu, 1995). It is considered that a lot domestic tourists visit Beijing for its prosperous image as modern big city since that is what the marketing materials are trying to promote. As also stated in the literature review that Lew and Yu (1995) observed early domestic tourists in China placed an interest in developed and wealthy areas. Therefore, parks, skyscrapers, office blocks, clubs etc. seem to be a major reason for some domestic tourists to visit Beijing. Thus many attractions related to this theme are shown in domestic marketing materials only and draws out one characteristic of domestic tourists in China.
6.3 Reasons behind the Differences

Throughout the different marketing strategies toward international and domestic tourists, the cultural preconditions generally showed as huge reason that makes the branding strategies different. Section 3.1, *Tourism in China*, stated that culture shows as ‘common knowledge’ or ‘cultural preconditions’ affecting domestic Chinese tourists deeply (Lew and Yu, 1995). In this study, many attractions that are frequently mentioned in Chinese marketing materials are the domestic tourists’ preferences; they are either temples or renovated sites. *Common Knowledge* and *Cultural Preconditions* depict the similarities of religious and cultural attractions; the domestic tourist perceives theses attractions profoundly, thus they are more deeply affected.

Beijing, depicted as the prosperous capital city since centuries ago, was fulfilled with cultural deposits. Many attractions in this city were already deeply related to stories and spirits. The spirits are the knowledge that only people who were born and raised in such an environment will know. For example a stone besides the wall may be a love story of ancient Chinese that foreigner may hard to understand; as the similar example revealed in Frame of reference that Chinese associate a river to a poem (Lew, 1992). The cultural root makes the preference of attractions different between domestic and international tourists. And the cultural root leads to such high frequent appearance of cultural attractions in Chinese marketing materials since domestic tourists may be the major or only group to visit them.

The marketing materials cannot explain why elaborated travel arrangements are made for international tourists, but not for domestic tourists. Although, the Frame of reference had mentioned that it were the same in earlier China. There is an assumed reason that is related to the time limit and difficulty of entry for international tourists. Thus international tourists need to be efficient in their travelling, while domestic tourists can travel freely. Also, the level of familiarity with the country that domestic tourists naturally have might not be as prominent among international tourists, and this may also be part of the reasons.

Another possibly reason might be the travel budget of the domestic tourists and that this might be different from that of international tourists. As mentioned in the Frame of reference, Lew and Yu (1995) found that, due to the high cost of travel, domestic tourists have difficulties to access some destinations, while international tourists do not, since they often have larger
travelling budgets than domestic tourists. This may explain why domestic marketing barely mention shopping and activities, and present local products in different ways. The price of *local products* might be more acceptable to international tourists since they may have higher budget and motivation to purchase, while domestic tourists have lower purchase motivation. One assumption is that local products are comparatively normal to be seen throughout Chinese life and might not be perceived as interesting among the domestic tourist. Same applies to the shows and Beijing opera and activities. People may less interest in features that can be associated with everyday life and that is perceived as familiar. Therefore, domestic marketing focus more on travel purpose than purchase.
7. Research Conclusion

7.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to identify how Beijing is presented in tourism marketing between international tourists and domestic tourists, and to detect potential differences as well as reasons for this. To meet the research purpose the authors used content analysis to record, present and analyse findings; therefore, to conclude this study, the analysis and discussion can answer the research questions:

1. What categorizes the images used by Beijing destination branding to domestic and international tourists? Which are the most used images among the domestic and international tourist categories?

Beijing destination branding categorizes images by combining similar attractions according to destination images, constructed toward different marketing groups. Throughout the marketing materials, images presented to international tourists are historical, cultural, international and shopping heaven. While images presented to domestic tourists are historical, cultural, modern and artistic. Among them, the most used destination images of Beijing are historical and cultural (see Figure 5 for results).

2. What potential differences can be detected in marketing strategies toward domestic and international tourists?

This study proves that the demands of different tourist groups are considered in current marketing materials. For this reason, differences in the marketing strategies toward two tourists groups are evidently presented in Chapter 6 (Analysis and Discussion). Potential differences were detected as being:

- Firstly, the marketing used toward international tourists is more arranged and structured to make their journey more comfortable; while for domestic tourists, marketing presents information that suggests a more voluntary and flexible journey.

- Secondly, marketing towards international tourists emphasizes to a lesser degree on famous and representative attractions, while domestic tourists are suggested with more
amounts of local attractions with an emphasis on cultural attractions e.g. temples and renovated monasteries regardless of their sizes and reputation.

- Thirdly, international marketing emphasizes activities and shopping, while domestic emphasizes on travel purpose only.

Reasons for the authors’ conclusions concerning the differences are because the marketing materials show an unbalanced volume or numbers of attractions toward two tourist groups, and a high arrangement of information is detected in international marketing materials. The main potential difference in marketing materials may be that the international tourists are not familiar with China and the difficulty of entry and time of stay limits. Therefore, high arrangement is necessary in the marketing to international tourists, meanwhile domestic tourists have a lower barrier in this perception.

The second differences shown in the marketing towards the two tourist groups are mainly because of the cultural knowledge. Branding strategies revealed that marketing towards international tourists avoids many cultural sites since they may not understand the history and value of the sites, but marketing towards domestic tourists are aware of the value of such cultural sites. Cultural knowledge or cultural preconditions offer domestic tourists more attractions. A third reason of the differences to the two tourist groups is the budget for travel. International tourists show a higher motivation to pay for activities and purchase souvenirs, therefore more money is spent on their overall travel.

7.2 Research Contributions

This study offers research contributions by firstly contributing to the field of destination branding through the case of Beijing. Secondly, this study revealed current differences in branding strategies between international and domestic tourist, in addition, this research used Beijing as a case example and examined the current branding strategies which can probably offer some suggestions on ways for Beijing’s future branding development and management.

7.3 Future Research Suggestions

This study should be treated as a beginning to the research of branding strategies of a destination. It is suggested that further research should be followed, which takes interviews to collect both DMOs and tourists’ opinions to complete the later work. This study is an
examination of current tourism branding and the importance it has in analysing current images as well as the special finding in differences between international and domestic tourists this study draws out are vital.
References


Ndlovu, J. (2009). Branding as a strategic tool to reposition a destination. 1st ed. Pretoria: [s.n.].


**Online references:**


Figure 1. Destination Image and Destination Branding

Source: Ekinci (2003)
Figure 2. Branding Key Links

Figure 3. Conceptual Formation Processes of Beijing’s Tourism Marketing Materials (English Version)

Source: Authors’ own design: 2014 (see Appendix for bigger picture).
Figure 4. Conceptual Formation Processes of Beijing’s Tourism Marketing Materials (Chinese Version)

Source: Authors’ own design; 2014, see Appendix for bigger picture.)
Figure 5. Percentages in International and domestic marketing materials

Source: Content Analysis Results, 2014
### Table 1. The Five Phases in Destination Branding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase one:</th>
<th>Market investigation, analysis and strategic recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase two:</td>
<td>Brand identity development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase three:</td>
<td>Brand launch and introduction, i.e. communicating the vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase four:</td>
<td>Brand implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase five</td>
<td>Monitoring, evaluation and review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Table 2. Representative groups of International and Domestic Marketing materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International marketing materials: (% of the materials)</th>
<th>Domestic marketing materials: (% of the materials)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mixed attractions (45%)</td>
<td>Historic attractions (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities (25%)</td>
<td>Modern attractions (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping and local products (20%)</td>
<td>Leisure attractions (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation/ infrastructure (10%)</td>
<td>Cultural attractions (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Art attractions (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transportation/ infrastructure (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Content Analysis Results, 2014
Appendix data

Example of screened websites

Visit Beijing (English) Screenshot:

![Visit Beijing (English) Screenshot](source: Visit Beijing (2014))

Visit Beijing (Chinese) Screenshot:

![Visit Beijing (Chinese) Screenshot](source: Visit Beijing (2014))

Source: Visit Beijing (2014)
Travel China Guide Screenshot:

Beijing Travels Screenshot:

Source: Travel China Guide (2014)

Source: Beijing Travels (2014)