

Application of Tourism Gaze Theory in Tourism Planning

Wenyu Ma*

School of Business Administration, Guizhou University of Finance and Economics, Guiyang 550025, Guizhou, China

*Corresponding author: Wenyu Ma, 18839472577@163.com

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Abstract: The theory of tourist gaze is a crucial tool for understanding tourists' visual experiences and viewing methods, with profound implications for tourism planning. This paper, based on an in-depth analysis of the theory of tourist gaze, focuses on extracting key practical points related to tourism planning, aiming to promote high-quality development in the tourism industry.

Keywords: Gazing theory; Tourism planning; Application practice

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1. Introduction

In the process of high-quality development of tourism, the development of tourism projects and products, the shaping of tourism brand and image, and the implementation of tourism marketing strategies are all crucial, and tourism planning plays a pivotal role in this process. How to fully and effectively utilize tourism planning-related theories to deeply explore the needs and preferences of tourists and promote the innovative, coordinated, green, open, and shared development of tourism has become an important proposition of this paper. Gazing usually refers to watching something or someone intently, for a long time, without blinking, showing a deep, concentrated, or thinking manner. In 1990, British sociologist Urry first proposed the concept of "tourism gaze", and gradually developed it into a crucial theoretical and analytical tool in the field of anthropology of tourism and tourism culture research. It has gradually developed into a crucial theoretical analysis tool in the field of tourism anthropology and tourism culture research^[1]. According to this theory, the tourism gaze represents tourists' observation and scrutiny of tourism destinations, which implies a potential claim of power exerted by tourists on tourism destinations and their residents. The tourism gaze theory not only reveals the interactive relationship between tourists and destinations, but also provides new perspectives and ideas for actual tourism planning, i.e., understanding and shaping tourism products through tourists' visual experiences and ways of seeing. Therefore, based on the tourism gaze theory, this paper discusses in depth the application strategies and methods of the tourism gaze theory in tourism product development, marketing activity planning, and tourism destination image shaping, so as to provide useful references and lessons for

the high-quality development of the tourism industry and the related practice of tourism planning.

2. Research review

2.1. Tourism gaze-related research

As a method and tool for examining social behavior from a tourism perspective, the study of tourism gaze theory is of great significance to the high-quality development of the tourism industry and tourism planning research^[1]. The main achievements include the following points. First, development and review studies of tourism gaze theory, where Liu Danping mainly traced the development process of tourism gaze theory and focused on analyzing the unique insights of different scholars^[2]; Scholar Cheng Hai emphasized the multidimensional characteristics of tourism gaze theory, specifically the bidirectional gaze between subject and object^[3]; Li Laryang conducted a critical analysis of tourism gaze theory^[4]. Second, Research on specific case sites based on tourism gaze theory, such as scholar Liu Yuxiao selecting Tianmu Moon Village in Hangzhou, Zhejiang as a case site, using ROST network text analysis to conduct an in-depth analysis of the tourism image projection and perception of the area^[5]; Scholar Wang Tianying used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to focus on the gaze behaviors of tourists and hosts in Huizhou villages, representing Huizhou culture^[6].

2.2. Tourism planning-related research

Tourism planning refers to the use of creative thinking as a means to conduct in-depth analysis of resources and markets based on a region's unique natural or cultural resources, aiming to achieve a rational and optimized allocation between resources, environment, transportation, and market, thereby realizing the predetermined goals of tourism development plans^[7]. Currently, there is a lot of research on tourism planning, but a lack of high-quality literature references. Most studies focus on case studies of tourism planning, including research on the tourism image planning of a specific location, tourism product planning, tourism project planning, and tourism marketing planning^[8–11]. Scholar Wang Yaming used the SWOT analysis method to plan and study the tourism festivals and marketing in Yuhang District, Hangzhou^[12]; Long Yuping conducted an in-depth study on the water cultural tourism resources in the Xiangyang area along the Han River, proposing a planning scheme and innovative ideas for building a water cultural tourism brand image^[13].

2.3. Development status of tourism planning based on tourism Gaze theory

If people view tourists' travel activities as a process of collecting and gazing at symbols, then the on-site work of tourism planners is to extract, integrate, and construct these symbols. Under the principle of market orientation, the development of tourism products and the creation of a tourism atmosphere should focus on meeting tourists' gaze preferences. Therefore, tourism planners need to start from the perspective of tourists, understand and grasp their psychological needs to extract and integrate symbols, thereby creating objects that can attract tourists' gazes^[14]. Currently, there are differing views in academia regarding the impact of tourism gaze theory on tourism planning, which generally include positive and negative effects. On the positive side, many scholars have conducted relevant research based on tourism gaze theory, such as how different gaze subjects perceive Luoyang's tourism image and how tourism resources are developed^[15–16]. For example, scholar Miao Panpan explored the differences in perceptions of Luoyang's tourism image among various gaze subjects based on tourism gaze theory^[17]. On the negative side, according to scholar Huang Dongmei, current tourism planning faces three main challenges: tourist gaze, planner gaze, and government gaze. These include the dominance and inequality inherent in the tourist gaze,

excessive accommodation of tourists' gaze needs by planners, and interference and restrictions imposed by the government gaze on the planner gaze. These phenomena lead to issues such as the homogenization of attractions and cultural commodification^[18].

3. The application of tourism gaze theory in tourism planning

3.1. Tourism planning practice based on the characteristics of tourism gaze

According to previous studies, tourism gaze has the following six properties, including reverse life, dominance, variability, symbolism, sociality, and inequality^[19]. This paper extracts the principles that tourism planning should have when applying tourism gaze theory according to the above properties.

First, pay attention to the gaze of tourists. The variability of tourist gazes leads to different motivations and preferences among visitors from various periods or regions. Tourists' gaze preferences can be influenced by multiple factors such as cultural background, aesthetic views, and personal interests. In tourism planning, it is essential to promptly understand tourists' gaze preferences through market research and other methods, in order to better meet their needs.

Second, create gaze symbols. Tourism gazing is often closely linked to symbolization, where tourist attractions are simplified into a few distinctive symbols to meet visitors' gazing needs. Tourism planning should cater to visitors' gazing preferences, integrating local culture, history, and natural resources to create unique representative landscapes. This allows visitors to accurately capture these gazing symbols through their gazes and widely disseminate them via photography and other means.

Third, make full use of media to innovate gaze points. The gaze of tourists is the result of multiple factors, including social and cultural background, tourism promotion, media portrayal, and personal experiences and memories, which collectively construct a socially constructed expectation of the travel destination. Tourism planning should focus on the social characteristics of tourist gazes, understand tourists' expectations and needs, provide tourism products and services that meet their expectations, and continuously innovate gaze points.

3.2. Tourism planning practice based on tourism gazing stages

According to the research of scholar Chen Chen, the process of tourism gaze can be divided into three stages: pre-field gaze, presence gaze, and departure gaze, according to the different stages of tourism activities^[20].

First, pre-field gaze refers to a psychological state and behavior in which tourists, before arriving at a tourist destination, collect and receive various images and information about the destination through various channels (such as tourist brochures, movies, TV, the Internet, etc.), and then form expectations and preconceptions about the destination in their minds. Pre-field gaze is an important part of the tourism experience, which can not only influence tourists' tourism planning and decision-making, but also provide tourists with important references and expectations in the process of field tourism. Therefore, in tourism marketing and promotion, it is important to make full use of the effect of tourism pre-field gaze to provide rich, accurate, and attractive tourism information and images to attract tourists and enhance the popularity and attractiveness of tourist destinations.

Second, presence gaze is a kind of focused and in-depth perception and experience of the tourist destination through vision by tourists in tourism activities. This kind of gaze is not only simple to watch, but also a kind of in-depth understanding and experience of local culture, society, history, and other aspects, which has the characteristics of initiative, depth, and emotion. Tourism presence gaze has certain revealing significance for tourism planning: on the one hand, it is necessary to deeply understand the needs of tourists. Tourism planners

need to deeply understand the needs and expectations of tourists, including what they want to see and experience, as well as their expectations and preconceptions of the tourist destination. On the other hand, it is necessary to focus on cultural depth excavation. Tourism planners need to focus on the cultural depth of excavation, the cultural elements of the destination in the design of tourism products, so that tourists can more deeply understand and experience the local culture in the tour process. In addition, it is necessary to utilize scientific and technological means to innovate the tourism experience. With the development of science and technology, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and other new technologies in the field of tourism are more and more widely used. These technologies can provide tourists with a more realistic and vivid tourism experience, making them feel as if they were in the destination.

Third, departure gaze is a concept relative to tourism presence gaze, which is a continuation and deepening of tourists' tourism experience. After leaving the tourist destination, tourists may review, reflect, and gaze on the behavior of what they have seen and experienced during the tourism process through reminiscing, sharing and writing travelogues. Although this kind of gaze occurs after tourists leave the destination, it still has an important impact on tourists' tourism experience and memory, and this kind of gaze not only helps tourists to consolidate and deepen their knowledge of the destination, but also helps them to better understand and experience the cultural impact and emotional resonance brought by tourism. For tourism planners, focusing on the characteristics of tourism departure gaze helps them to better design and optimize tourism products, and enhance tourists' satisfaction and loyalty. This includes focusing on the continuity of the tourism experience, strengthening the dissemination of tourism culture, and improving the quality of tourism services.

4. Conclusion

Effective tourism planning is an important way to enhance the tourism experience, strengthen the attractiveness of the destination, and promote the development of the tourism economy. As a theory that reveals the inner mechanism of tourists' visual behavior, tourism gaze research can help tourism planners to deeply understand tourists' visual needs and expectations, enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of tourism products, and promote the sustainable development of tourism destinations. This paper analyzes the development status of tourism gaze theory and its application in tourism planning, specifically analyzing tourism gaze behavior from the characteristics of tourism gaze and the stages of tourism gaze, and extracts the key points that can be used for tourism planning, hoping to provide help for actual tourism planning.

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