# Abstract

Homogenization of tourism images is challenging destination managers in China. In order to make effective positioning strategies, create differentiated destination images and benefit from co-opetition relationships, it is important to benchmark tourism image positions between destinations. Few image and positioning studies to date have focused specifically on benchmarking the intended tourism image positions and their extents of projection on marketing material between large numbers of tourism destinations; and none has analysed these topics for China. This study addresses these knowledge deficits.

In this research, content analysis is used to analyse the intended image positions of 1/3 sub-provincial districts in China and their projections on the contents of official tourism marketing websites.

Overall speaking, the sub-provincial districts in China have fairly distinctive image positions. When compared with neighbouring districts, they are more likely to have unique image positions, but also more likely to have higher degrees of similarities once their image positions are co-occurred with others. The commonly used image positioning categories by destinations in China are cognitive in nature. Affective image positions are less adopted. The MDS graphs assist benchmarking by visualizing the similarity distances of image positions between destinations. In general, the projections of image positions on the official tourism marketing websites are not congruent.