

**Wildlife Tourism Resources Development:**  
**A Case Study of Beijing Wildlife Park**

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## **Abstract**

In this era of mass tourism, and to produce social and economic benefits, the positive and negative aspects of animal tourism resources need to be explored. Following the principles of protecting the environment, public relations methods can maximise the potential of existing animal tourism resources from the perspective of tourists, working with official authorities to reinforce the scientific means of animal protection, help promote the scientific knowledge of environmental protection, and strengthen animal conservation education. This study investigates the development of wildlife tourism resources at the Beijing Wildlife Park (BWP), and aims to determine opportunities of sustainable development of the BWP. Utilising netnography to extract meaning from conversations on the internet, this study used qualitative methods to gather data from the online comments on two Chinese travel applications (apps) and conduct a thematic analysis to identify the main themes in the data. From this netnographic study, involving a thematic analysis of online comments, seven themes were identified. These were: “visitor experience,” “animal condition,” “facilities,” “management,” “environment,” “service,” and “other.” The seven themes, including positive and negative comments of BWP, showed the main attributes of BWP from different perspectives. Managers of BWP may make full use of the key attributes of the positive comments to formulate feasible and effective management plans or advertisements. The key attributes of negative comments may help address barriers to achieving a sustainable development of BWP.

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## **Attestation of Authorship**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in acknowledgement), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed:

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Duoduo Wang

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> October 2020

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# **Chapter 1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Background to the Study**

Wildlife is a product of nature which is formed from many complex ecosystems. If one kind of plant becomes extinct, then the insects dependent upon it will also subsequently disappear. If one kind of insect dies out, the birds feeding on it will have less to eat, and the death of birds will affect other animals. This is how the food chain works. In many developing countries, it is not well recognised that undamaged ecological environments offer ecosystem services benefiting human health and well-being (Golden, 2011). If the survival and development of wild animals is under threat, it is not only unfavourable for the wildlife in question, but it also affects humans and future generations. For example, mammalian wildlife is a major source of meat to many people in the developing world (Golden, 2011). In the history of China, wildlife has been seen as a major source of income and food, and China's trade in edible and medicinal wildlife has gone on for over a thousand years of history (Zhang et al., 2008). There are now many industries related to wildlife in China, such as wildlife breeding, special leathers, traditional medicines, handicraft manufacturing, and ethnic musical instruments. Wildlife also has entertainment value, and some endangered wildlife is of great economic value, as the prospect of viewing endangered wildlife can attract tourists to visit key zoos, nature reserves, forest parks and scenic attractions. Consequently, the existence of wild animals is not only important for the ecological balance of nature, but is also of significance to the survival and development of humankind.

Tourism is about travelling for different kinds of reasons over a period of time. As a major source of income for various countries, tourism can make contributions to the economies of both guest and host countries (Raza et al., 2017). Tourism statistics show that international arrivals and departures have been increasing, particularly over the past decade (Raza et al., 2017). Prior to Covid-19, according to the World Tourism Organization (2000), it was predicted that by the year 2020, international tourist numbers worldwide would reach 1.6 billion and tourism receipts would surpass US\$2 trillion. Wildlife resources play a vital role in tourism resources. Like natural resources, animals are also precious and people can learn about animals' living conditions by directly or indirectly interacting with them. The main goals of wildlife tourism are to allow visitors to become aware of the threats wildlife face and to facilitate the measures



needed to protect nature and conserve different species (Ballantyne et al., 2011). The increasing need of interacting with wildlife has resulted in the emergence of various wildlife tourism activities (Semeniuk et al., 2010). Wildlife activities can be categorised into consumptive activities (such as hunting and fishing) and non-consumptive activities (for example, observing the wildlife) (Catlin et al., 2011). The diversity of wildlife tourism enriches the content of tourism experiences, and the scope of tourism resources is greatly enhanced. More and more tourists want to interact with wildlife, especially with unusual or endangered animals (Semeniuk et al., 2010). Due to many favourable factors, such as the development of convenient transport systems and advanced communication technology, changing social attitudes towards nature and wildlife, along with the physiological benefits of interacting with animals, tourism focusing on captive and semi-captive wildlife is gradually becoming popular (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2009). It is expected that tourism participants of this type would reach between 79 and 440 million, and increase significantly over the coming 50 years (French et al., 2011). Cong et al. (2014) reported that wildlife tourism in China attracts increasing public and commercial interest, and noted that wildlife tourism is important in producing financial benefits as well as the conservation of Chinese protected areas. As a vital global activity, wildlife tourism has become a vital player in the world-wide nature-based tourism industry (Cong et al., 2017). If operated responsibly, wildlife tourism can create significant financial benefits for local areas (Ballantyne & Packer, 2013), and contribute to conservation efforts.

## **1.2 Positive and Negative Aspects of Wildlife Tourism**

Originally, developing wildlife tourism was done out of good intentions. It allowed people to learn about the current situation of nature and wildlife, and the financial benefits resulting from wildlife tourism were used in the protection of animals and the environment. However, over the past two decades, more and more studies have demonstrated that, behaviourally and physiologically, animals can be impacted by wildlife tourism (Velando & Munilla, 2011), as a result of which their survival rates and reproductive outcomes may suffer (Watson et al., 2014). In wildlife tourism, there are usually two kinds: non-captive wildlife tourism (e.g., ecotourism experiences and national parks) and captive wildlife tourism (e.g., zoos, aquariums, and wildlife parks). Each kind has its strengths and limitations. Instead of passively participating in wildlife sightings, non-captive wildlife tourism enables visitors to actively engage in viewing

wildlife (Knight, 2010). Thanks to captive wildlife tourism, visitors can see rare animals that are not common in the wild, and can attract more visitors due to the inexpensive nature of the experience at captive wildlife attractions (Hughes et al., 2005). Different settings in which wildlife tourism takes place have different negative effects. As for the negative effects of humans on animals, the focus is usually on the effects of harming or hunting animals. However, some effects are less obvious. For non-captive wildlife attractions, according to Tablado and D'Amico (2017), human presence brings much greater and non-obvious negative effects, including physiological pressure, behavioural disruption, and habitat degradation. The existence and value of captive wild animals, such as in zoos and aquariums, are therefore subject to a lot of debates (Moscardo, 2007). In captivity, various factors, such as enclosure designs and keepers' routines, may limit animals' opportunities to engage in some behaviours, such as appropriate foraging (Hill & Broom, 2009). Some parks face difficult situations because of short life cycles and poor management, especially in relation to economic viability and inadequate animal welfare (Cong et al., 2017).

With the vigorous development of wildlife tourism activities and resources, some shortcomings are evident in the development of current wildlife tourism methods, such as focusing on immediate benefits and neglecting the sustainable use of wildlife tourism resources, or focusing on economic benefits and ignoring the social and ecological benefits of wildlife tourism. These have become serious obstacles to the further development of wildlife tourism. Modern zoos and aquariums are often criticised by animal welfare groups for keeping animals in captivity even if they try to provide a high level of care and offer enclosures similar to natural habitats for animals (Packer & Ballantyne, 2012). In China, there is growing criticism of zoos and wildlife parks (Ye, 2007). In ecologically sensitive areas, tourism development not only requires environmental resources to help create tourism experiences, but also relies on the conservation of the ecological integrity of the destination (Williams & Ponsford, 2009). The World Association of Zoos and Aquariums United for Conservation (WAZA) addresses the importance of animal welfare in modern collections by managing the health and feasibility of the populations for protection reasons, and spreading reliable protection-education information to the public (World Association of Zoos and Aquariums United for Conservation [WAZA], 2005). Maintaining the long-term

development of wildlife tourism has become the focus of the wildlife tourism industry worldwide.

### **1.3 Research Aim and Methods**

Non-expendable wildlife tourism is a sustainable form of tourism (MacLellan, 1999), and meets the expectations of tourists who wish to appreciate the charm of rare animals in their natural settings. It is a growing industry, especially in developing countries (Karanth & DeFries, 2011). In order to educate and influence the public on issues affecting wild animals in wildlife-based organisations, zoos are in a unique position to offer opportunities for interaction (WAZA, 2005). One estimate of the number for people visiting zoos worldwide is 600 million people per annum (Smith, 2013). Because of the unique position of zoos, this study uses zoos as study sites. User-generated content sites continue to expand, and visitors can publicly reflect on their vacations or search for travel information through various sites, which offers researchers unprecedented opportunities to better understand visitor experiences (Mkono & Markwell, 2014). Netnography utilises the constantly changing virtual landscape of tourism (Munar et al., 2013), and can help to gain insights into tourists' opinions expressed on online platforms. Using a case study of the Beijing Wildlife Park (BWP), and applying a qualitative approach to collecting and analysing the online comments on two Chinese travel apps (Ctrip and Qunar), this research employs thematic analysis method to clarify the main themes in the comments. By examining the positive and negative aspects of BWP, the study aims to help the park work towards its sustainable development, which can give assistance to BWP and to other similar captive wildlife attractions in China. There is much literature on the positive and negative aspects of captive wildlife attractions, including that on their sustainable development. However, there is little written about captive wildlife attractions in the context of China. This research aims therefore to gain insights into the positive and negative aspects of BWP and its sustainable development.

The research questions guiding the study are 1) what are the positive aspects of BWP? 2) what are the negative aspects of BWP? And 3) how can the sustainable development of BWP be achieved? The research questions involve three aspects: the positive aspects of captive wildlife attractions, negative the aspects of captive wildlife attractions, and the sustainable development of captive wildlife attractions. To answer the research

questions, a detailed review of the relevant literature on these three aspects is provided, followed by a thematic analysis of Ctrip and Qunar comments.

#### **1.4 Outline of the Study**

The dissertation consists of six chapters. The first chapter explains the reasons for the study, identifies the objectives, and states the research questions. Chapter Two reviews historical and current literature relevant to the research questions to offer a holistic understanding of captive wildlife attractions, especially, positive and negative aspects of captive wildlife attractions, and the sustainable development of captive wildlife attractions. Chapter Three discusses the research background and research methodology adopted to answer the research questions. Chapter Four offers an analysis of the data gathered, and evaluates the findings arising from the research. Chapter Five states and interprets the principal findings. It also presents the strengths and limitations of the study, as well as its ethical considerations. Chapter Six concludes this dissertation with the restatement of research aims, a summary of research findings, and practical implications of the study.

## **Chapter 2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Wildlife tourism is seen as a kind of tourism in which wildlife can be viewed or encountered by tourists (Newsome et al., 2005). Wildlife tourism occurs in different settings, such as captive sites (e.g., zoos, aquariums, and wildlife parks) and non-captive sites (e.g., ecotourism experiences and national parks) (Ballantyne et al., 2009). Captive wildlife attractions are a large and vital part of the wildlife tourism industry (Woods, 2002). As the oldest form of wildlife tourism, nearly as old as human society itself, zoos have always made efforts to take and keep wildlife in captivity (Tribe, 2004). In ancient Egypt, the Egyptians kept their animals mainly for religious purposes (Tribe, 2004). In 1826, the world's first zoological gardens were established by Sir Stamford Raffles in London (Turley, 1999), but even though these gardens aimed to undertake scientific research on exotic species from Malaya, the goal was soon questioned due to the funding demands for these activities (Ballantyne et al., 2007). As a result, the zoo began to charge entrance fees which could be used to support its collection, research, and education activities (Ballantyne et al., 2007). With more and more interest in exotic animals, the number of zoos and wildlife institutions soon flourished. Globally, there were about 10,000 - 12,000 zoos and animal parks in 2005 (WAZA, 2005). Collectively, there are around one million living animals in zoos globally (Frost, 2011). Such a huge number of zoo visitors and animals can have various impacts, direct and indirect, on the local people and their economies.

Broadly, the word “zoo” includes such entities as wildlife parks, menageries, safaris, and zoological gardens, and others (Carr & Cohen, 2011). In China, there are mainly three categories of zoos: wildlife parks, specialised zoos, and city zoos (Luo, 2011). Specialised zoos mean aquaria, the Manchurian tiger park, and different kinds of bird collections (Cong et al., 2017). In the 1990s, the number of wildlife parks in China grew. There are currently around 30, located in Guangdong, Shanghai, Jinan, Wuhan, Beijing, Hefei, and Hebei (Luo, 2011). Visiting zoos is popular for people from all walks of life, as they can view or even interact with different kinds of animals, such as the charismatic megavertebrates, rhinoceroses, and nonmammals, such as reptiles. Currently, zoos and aquariums receive criticism from animal welfare groups regarding animal welfare issues and sustainable development. Even if zoos are faced with unprecedented challenges in

the captive management of animals, these challenges can offer them opportunities to play an important part in biodiversity protection, education, and research (Catibog-Sinha, 2008). Scientific research is needed to provide a theoretical basis for planning and measures to achieve the sustainable development of zoos. However, in China, wildlife tourism research is scant, even though there are some achievements in the field of Chinese ecotourism (Cong et al., 2017). Unlike the rest of the world, even though China has rich wildlife resources, there is no comprehensive review of research on the interrelationship between wildlife and tourism in China (Cong et al., 2017). The following sections therefore discuss the positive and negative aspects of captive wildlife attractions, followed by a discussion of their sustainable development.

## **2.2 Positive Aspects of Captive Wildlife Attractions**

### **2.2.1 *Animal Protection***

Animal protection is the major role of a zoo, because in addition to the general ornamental animals, there are also many wild animals that are critically endangered. Due to wildlife's crucial part in the natural ecosystem, wildlife animals are regarded as precious natural resources, instead of just tourism resources. As a kind of modern Noah's Ark, a zoo is a place of last refuge for threatened wildlife, and can preserve a breeding population which can be used for future restocking of the wild (Frost, 2011). That is, when the worst occurs and a species is close to extinction, zoos and aquariums can serve as arks to maintain their survival (Gross, 2015). Reportedly, US\$350 million is spent on wildlife protection by the world zoo and aquarium community each year (Gusset & Dick, 2011). Therefore, the world zoo and aquarium community could play a vital role in wildlife conservation. Many zoos actively participate in conservation initiatives, such as breeding programmes, and *in situ* habitat and species conservation projects (Weiler & Smith, 2009) to save threatened species. Conservation breeding programmes have become an increasingly significant tool for saving endangered animals (Martin-Wintle et al., 2015). For example, in zoos, well-run captive breeding programmes play an indispensable role in keeping a good population of at-risk species (Catibog-Sinha, 2008). As places of experimentation, zoos and breeding centres can also be seen as laboratories for producing nature (Hennessy, 2013). For example, in North America, even though 70% of facilities experienced difficulties in breeding cheetah in captivity, in 1975, the first cheetah cubs were born in the de Wildt Cheetah and Wildlife Centre which was established in 1971 (Bertschinger et al., 2008). In China,

the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding site aims to breed and protect giant pandas through breeding programmes. Through analysis of pedigree records, the conservation breeding programmes at zoos maintain the retention of population genetic diversity (Ito et al., 2017). By establishing a central population and pedigree book, a zoo can protect the heredity and diversity of endangered species.

### ***2.2.2 Popular Science Education***

Popular science education is a major service in terms of a zoo's public welfare work, and a good way to attract tourists, especially young people. In the past few years, a high number of zoos have begun to see that conservation and education are dependent on each other (Clayton, 2009). In wildlife tourism, zoos play an important and leading role in education/interpretation (Catibog-Sinha, 2008). A well-designed education/interpretation programme for zoo visitors can not only bring more recreational experiences to visitors, but also help them appreciate wildlife better (Higginbottom et al., 2003). Modern zoos aim to educate visitors about their animals and their wild counterparts' conservation demands, while showing appreciation for wildlife in general (Godinez & Fernandez, 2019). Many people must have good memories of travelling with parents or companions to a zoo in their childhood. During their time at a zoo, the more that tourists interact with animals, naturalistic exhibits, and zoo programmes and staff, the more positive they are likely to be in both views and behaviour towards zoos, zoo animals, and conservation initiatives (Godinez & Fernandez, 2019).

Zoos and aquariums have adopted various methods for introducing animals to their visitors (Ballantyne et al., 2007). In Australia, it was observed that zoos try hard to encourage emotional responses in their visitors, and appropriate reactions in support of conservation through animal exhibits, signage, and other material about endangered species and habitats (Beri et al., 2010). At a wildlife attraction, introductions to wildlife generally include their zoological name, common name, classification, distribution, and even the characteristics of the animal, all of which is basic scientific knowledge easy for both professionals and general tourists to understand.

### ***2.2.3 Economic Benefits***

Wildlife attractions can bring many economic advantages, which can be used to benefit animals, local people, and the local area generally. In its diverse forms, wildlife tourism brings tremendous wealth globally to both developed and less developed countries (Tisdell, 2010). Cooperating with zoo and aquarium associations nationally and regionally, WAZA conducted a survey and found that zoos and aquariums receive over 700 million visitors every year (Gusset & Dick, 2011). By sharing nature's wealth, wildlife tourism can make significant contributions to the protection of wildlife. Economic funds generated by zoos can be used to support the role of zoos in conservation, education and research work (Frost, 2011), aiming to protect wildlife. Various collaborations and conservation programmes are organised by zoos and wildlife institutions. In Phoenix, Arizona, United States of America (USA), the Phoenix Zoo launched its annual grants in 2009 to fund in situ conservation projects (Phoenix Zoo, n.d.). In total, the (US) Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)'s over 200 accredited members spend more than US\$160 million annually on in situ conservation programmes around the world (Association of Zoos and Aquariums [AZA], n.d.). Money received from tourism operations can be used to undertake many projects, such as creating job opportunities, adding to incomes, and boosting local economies. In Australia, the total production of zoos is around US\$ 300 million annually. Zoos create about 5,300 job opportunities, with 3,700 full-time jobs and 1,600 part-time jobs (Beri et al., 2010), increasing local employment and stimulating local economies.

### ***2.2.4 Entertainment Value***

Zoos have immense entertainment value. Exciting things can be seen at a zoo, such as little cubs being born or trying their first steps, or a gorilla taking "selfies" (Gross, 2015). In captive wildlife attractions, such as aquariums, zoos, and wildlife parks, it is easy for visitors to take pictures with the wildlife. Throughout the history of zoos, the common theme is the zoo as a site for human leisure and entertainment (Carr & Cohen, 2011). Although zoos can be seen as showing artificial nature, visiting zoos allows people to get close to nature. Visitors are attracted to zoos largely because zoos could resemble the tourism in nature, so zoo animals can offer visitors opportunities to reflect on their relationships with the natural world (Fraser et al., 2007). Since the 1970s, there has been increasing concern for animal welfare with a consequent reassessment of the



relationship between animals and humans (Mason, 2007). In response to such concern, new forms of animal attractions, such as wildlife parks, have emerged. Getting close to real “wild” animals can offer opportunities for entertainment (Mason, 2007). According to Clayton et al. (2009), conversations with zoo visitors revealed that visitors felt connected to the animals themselves. When interacting with animals or watching animals’ activities, visitors can have a lot of fun by touching and feeding them.

There are five major, interconnected aims in many modern zoos: animal welfare, conservation, public education, research, and entertainment (AZA, 2008). Even if zoos were to focus on the first four goals, most zoo visitors would still visit mainly for entertainment. If zoos cannot attract and entertain visitors, it will be difficult for them to survive, let alone achieving their other goals (Fernandez et al., 2009). If visitors have an entertaining experience in a zoo, they will want to visit again, which can generate more earnings for the zoo. The entertainment function of a zoo can therefore benefit other zoo functions.

## **2.3 Negative Aspects of Captive Wildlife Attractions**

### ***2.3.1 Physical and Mental Health Issues***

Even if wildlife tourism could be undertaken for good intentions, it could be counterproductive if misused, threatening the sustainable development of wildlife populations, natural areas, local areas, and the tourism industry generally (Tablado & D’Amico, 2017). Tourists and tour operators need to know the negative effects of tourism operations, as well as animal welfare and rights. Firstly, wild animals living in a zoo can be affected negatively both in their bodies and psychology. Zoos have long kept wildlife in captivity, which violates their habitats and natural habits. In traditional zoos, captivity was enforced with iron bars (Shelton & Tucker, 2007), but modern zoos try to create spatial control through either invisible barriers, such as sunken enclosures, or the utilisation of a behavioural characteristic of the target species (Shelton & Tucker, 2007). There has been a progression from traditional iron bars to modern natural enclosures, but this process is difficult and requires a lot of money (Woods, 2002). Due to the paint in their enclosures and toxicity caused by urban pollution, animals kept in urban zoos often suffer from lead poisoning, and those in colder climates mainly stay indoors (Montford, 2016). Reproducing the natural environment can bring risks and problems, as there are many conditions in the zoo that cannot be easily simulated, such as climate,

migration, or hunting. Bacteria can be found in real dirt and grass, real vegetation is destroyed by animals, and animal behaviours in natural settings are usually aggressive (Woods, 2002).

Many animals are captured from the wild and kept in a harsh environment. After being captured and kept in captivity, then transported and released in new areas, wildlife inevitably experience stress at all stages of the process (Keulartz, 2015). The chronic stress caused by such relocation makes the individuals more vulnerable, and therefore, makes the population more difficult to become self-sustaining (Dickens et al. 2010). Zoos also bring unnatural stresses to animals, such as those of being exposed to humans, and being unnaturally close to some other species (Wickins-Dražilová, 2006). Exposure to this constant pressure usually results in maladaptive behaviours including self-harm, vomiting and re-eating, and growing aggression (Wickins-Dražilová, 2006). Animals have particular eating habits, but humans feed them based on humans' demands. Even if it were found that a great number of visitors could accept feeding predators with live prey, many visitors would still find this idea difficult, especially when the visitors are present during feeding (Hughes & Carlsen, 2007). Most zoos compromise by feeding predators meat, despite knowing that suppressing a hunting instinct is harmful to their health (Hughes & Carlsen, 2007). Having wild animals captive in a zoo-like attraction inevitably influences their natural behaviours and habits negatively, which attracts more public attention to animal welfare issues.

### **2.3.2 *Breeding Issues***

Breeding-related issues cannot be neglected. Captive wildlife attractions are usually proud of breeding the offspring of threatened species, helping realise the goal of animal protection. Therefore, breeding programmes play a vital role in saving endangered species. Even if there were well-run captive breeding programmes in zoos to help maintain the survival of endangered species, such programmes are not always successful, as some animals are sensitive and tend to die soon after capture, despite many years of efforts to maintain such animals captive (Catibog-Sinha, 2008). Although zoos can successfully breed animals, the success of artificially breeding wild animals does not ensure restoration to a natural habitat in the wild. Captive-born animals perform extremely badly in the natural environment, so they need to be prepared extensively for release, which requires resources that may be not available and are not

usually relaxing for the animals (Browning, 2018). Due to overbreeding, there are also surplus animal issues. According to Browning (2018), there are various reasons that lead to surplus animals, among which, is overbreeding. Surpluses can occur despite carefully controlled breeding programmes (Browning, 2018). Zoos around the world have been consistently producing surplus animals, and most are not endangered. This phenomenon has caused overcrowding in zoos, uneven distribution of resources, and poor overall animal welfare. Many zoos have taken the opportunity to sell animals or even euthanise them, to solve the surplus problems. For the animals that are no longer economically useful to a zoo, it is common to be killed, recycled (by feeding them to their predators, for example), or sold to farms and self-funded hunting clubs (Bisgould, 2014). Although the practice of managing euthanasia is rarely exposed to public attention, it is relatively common. It is estimated that European zoos in the European Association of Zoos and Aquariums (EAZA) euthanise 3,000 to 5,000 animals annually (Barnes, 2014). Although there are no relevant data, it is known that this also occurs in American zoos (Parker, 2017). Killing animals involves animal rights, so captive wildlife attractions tend to sell animals.

### ***2.3.3 Economic Purposes***

With the development of commercialisation, the purpose of some zoos is no longer to protect animals, but to provide people with places for entertainment in order to make a profit. Contrary to their protection and research claims, some zoos' practices reveal that their captives are objects of economic interest (Montford, 2016). In these zoos, animals exist merely to please humans. Traditionally, zoos have been entertainment places for viewing exotic wildlife presented only for human pleasure (Hughes & Carlsen, 2007). Animals may be trained in various postures to greet people and perform shows, and are kept in cages. Captive wild animals in many zoos in China and Vietnam are forced to do entertaining performances in an unnatural, degrading, and stressful circus-style way (AnimalsAsia, n.d.). There are still many debates about the ethics and educational outcomes of animal shows, as critics claim that animals in these performances are used, controlled, and forced to perform for human profits (Ballantyne et al., 2007), and their work and rest times are controlled to entertain humans. For example, the entertainment at London Zoo lasts until late at night, keeping animals awake and irritable (Gross, 2015). Living in poor conditions and performing unnaturally, animals come under a lot of constant pressure, and easily go mad. Accidents, like wildlife attacks, can happen, so

cases of wildlife attacks on humans are reported from time to time, such as that of a 58-year-old male zoo employee who was preparing a runway for tigers, when a male Sumatran tiger attacked him (Szleszkowski et al., 2017). Zoos also use surplus animals to generate profits by selling them. Surplus animals are those that are unwanted or lack economical uses. To remove these, zoos traditionally house them in other zoos, sell them to dealers, implement managed euthanasia (i.e., culling), transfer animals to non-zoo holders, and in a few cases, release them to the wild (Carter & Kagan, 2010). There are also different kinds of zoos used to generate profits, such as roadside zoos and mini zoos in supermarkets, which leave animals in misery.

#### **2.3.4 *Unreasonable Benefits***

It is difficult for zoos to generate benefits; tourism benefits specifically include economic benefits, social benefits and environmental benefits. For developers of and investors into tourism resources, the most important thing is the economic benefits. One of the most major challenges modern zoos face is the problem of balancing conservation aims with financial imperatives (Catibog-Sinha, 2008). Even if zoos can use visitor fees to pay operating expenses, they are not necessarily able to support other conservation initiatives (Catibog-Sinha, 2008). Economic benefits have become the core problem of zoos. According to Teeboom (2018), opening a zoo, even a small petting zoo, requires a lot of manpower and material resources, and the costs are immense. Huge investments may bring short-term huge benefits, but ultimately, zoos may face economic loss if visitor numbers drop. An economic impact analysis (EIA) is a common economic approach used for evaluating projects, but EIAs usually provide one-year results, without offering detailed information about how long impacts are expected to last (Driml et al., 2017). Without clear information about future impacts, investors and developers may make incorrect assumptions and therefore make bad decisions. For example, the giant pandas at Adelaide Zoo brought favourable financial benefits in their first year of residence, but visit numbers began to drop after two years (Driml et al., 2017). As a result, the Adelaide Zoo experienced financial problems and investors did not receive the long-term economic benefits they expected. If zoos cannot make self-sustaining profits, it is difficult for them to survive, let alone make social and environmental contributions.

## **2.4 Sustainable Development of Captive Wildlife Attractions**

Substantial studies demonstrate that the steady operation of the Earth's systems which include the atmosphere, oceans, forests, waterways, biodiversity and biogeochemical cycles, is a prerequisite for a prosperous global society (Griggs et al., 2013). Human beings play an integral part in nature. Over the past centuries, the irrational and fast development of human society has made human activities a dominant negative factor affecting the stability of the natural environment in all areas of the Earth. Real dangers, such as water shortages, extreme weather, deteriorating food production conditions, loss of ecosystems, ocean acidification and rising sea levels, may threaten development and trigger a global humanitarian crisis (Griggs et al., 2013). Through internationally coordinated actions, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) launched by the United Nations in 2015 were designed to address these risks. However, defining a unified set of SDGs is challenging, as there may be conflicts between goals, for example, between energy supply and climate change prevention (Griggs et al., 2013). To create a better and more sustainable future for all, the SDGs proposed 17 interconnected goals for the environment, society, and economy, to solve global challenges.

In launching the SDGs, the United Nations not only called on all member states to accept a series of ambitious and demanding challenges, but also emphasised the key role that companies must play in addressing these challenges (Jones et al., 2017). As one of the driving forces of the global economy, the tourism and hospitality industry makes significant environmental and social impacts in many ways (Jones et al., 2017). It is advisable for tourism or hospitality businesses to adapt their business strategies to meet the SDG goals, such as by developing innovative products and services. Also, the definition of sustainable development means meeting not only the development needs of the present, but also the needs of future generations (Aniah et al., 2009). According to Ham and Weiler (2012), sustainable development implies that financial benefits and ecological conservation are indispensable partners, inseparable from each other. The tourism industry can generate many benefits, such as foreign exchange, economic empowerment, job opportunities, and poverty alleviation (Ijeomah et al., 2007). Due to the immense economic benefits brought by tourism, more and more people are engaging in tourism, which increases daily without acknowledgement of its impact on ecologically fragile tourist attractions (Ijeomah et al., 2007). Tourism now has many

problems. The human addiction to growth creates the capacity for tourism to kill tourism (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018). Sustainable development and the application of its principles to tourism are now more urgent than ever (Liburd & Edwards, 2010).

#### ***2.4.1 Economic Sustainability***

The tourism industry is supposed to be economically sustainable, as it would be meaningless to ask whether tourism is environmentally sustainable if it is unprofitable and unable to survive. There are different drivers for the economic sustainability of the tourism industry. Seasonal operations of tourism, which cause decreased occupancy rates, transportation problems, and higher prices, has been identified as an important barrier to the sustainable development of the tourism industry (Shen et al., 2017). According to Logar (2010), the quality of accommodation facilities and sufficiency of a trained work force were also considered as factors influencing the economic sustainability of tourism attractions. According to Giannoni and Maupertuis (2007), the balance between tourism investments and environmental protection is important to ensuring the sustainability of population-based income. Also, developing tourism products must be based on meeting the needs of customers in order to achieve economic sustainability (Jaafar & Maideen, 2012). From this perspective, one suggestion would be to plan and design zoos emphasising the characteristics of their local areas, in order to attract the tourists. Zoos based on local bioregions is a developing trend (Frost & Roehl, 2007). The giant pandas and golden monkeys in China, polar bears in Canada, lions in Africa, kiwis in New Zealand, and the koalas and kangaroos in Australia, are all highlights that can attract international travellers to the animals' countries of origin. At present, there are a lot of similar zoos, with standardised zoo layout, pedestrian and animal performance areas etc., which can make visitors feel bored easily, which is detrimental to the sustainable development of the zoos. Therefore, the design and planning of a zoo should have its own characteristics. For example, Jos Wildlife Park in Jos, Nigeria, is famous for its richness of different kinds of endangered, rare, vulnerable, and abundant species of wildlife (Ijeomah et al., 2007). These factors should be taken into consideration to achieve the economic sustainability of tourism to zoos.

### ***2.4.2 Animal Physical and Mental Health***

Captive animal health, physically and mentally, is crucial for the sustainable development of captive wildlife tourism. Even if there are positive outcomes of tourism and tourists, concerns are still raised about their negative impacts on short- and long-term animal behaviour and reproductive success (Constantine & Bejder, 2008). Captive animals living in captive settings, exposed to too many tourists, can experience a great amount of stress. In China, at the Chengdu Giant Panda Breeding and Research Base, it was found that the captive giant pandas were disturbed by tourists (Cui et al., 2009). To mitigate tourist disturbance of the giant pandas, Yan (2007) highlighted the significance of a protective tourism development method, including considerations of landscaping, image orientation, tourism product design, environmental education, resource protection, and space layout. Therefore, it is important for designers and managers of wildlife tourism experiences to make sure that such experiences are educational in nature and delivered in a responsible way (Ballantyne et al., 2011). However, it is difficult for zoos to balance animal conservation and welfare, with visitor satisfaction (Woods, 2002). With the increasing environmental awareness that started in the 1960s, environmentalists and animal welfare groups have criticised the maltreatment and caging of captive animals (Catibog-Sinha, 2008). At some zoos, animals are kept in small, barren, and lonely settings, whereas other zoos have invested in building an artificial setting which is as close to nature as possible, to reduce animal stress while offering visitors better leisure and learning experiences (Catibog-Sinha, 2008). As a typical example, a wildlife park is a large enclosed area resembling animals' natural habitat as closely as possible, in which animals are not caged and can roam freely.

### ***2.4.3 Popular Science Education***

Many zoos offer tourism activities such as popular science education, to help promote wildlife knowledge. Educationally, wildlife tourism experiences can not only contribute to visitor satisfaction through the experience, but also influence visitor learning and future behaviour (Ballantyne et al., 2011). Unlike the early zoos which were mainly seen as places for leisure, according to contemporary socially and morally acceptable public opinion, zoos exist to help conserve endangered animals (Carr & Cohen, 2011). Activities with close contact with animals provided by zoos can help tourists understand and cherish the animals. In Australia, ecotourism accreditation requires the experience

of “cultivating environmental and cultural understanding, conservation, and appreciation,” (Ecotourism Australia, 2008). Also, accreditation with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums requires a commitment to education and conservation, and many zoos, aquariums, wildlife parks, and botanic gardens have mission statements that include conservation education (Ballantyne et al., 2009).

People’s awareness of wildlife conservation can be enhanced when interacting with animals. With the increasing consciousness of animal welfare, Catibog-Sinha (2008) believed that incorporating animal welfare concerns into the design of animal settings would not only educate visitors about the ecology of the animals, but also help them to know more about the difficult situations endangered animals face. In China, it was found that the most effective way to gain knowledge is to read interpretative media, followed by obtaining views and information from observing animals, or from partners, other tourists, or zoo employees (Cong et al., 2017). Using the most effective method according to the context, can increase the spread of wildlife protection knowledge.

#### ***2.4.4 Government Planning and Management***

To achieve a sustainable wildlife tourism industry, suitable planning, policy and management measures need to be implemented (Rodger et al., 2007). Governments at all levels have taken greater responsibility for, and involvement in, the planning and development of tourism destinations (Ruhanen, 2013). The negative impacts of animal tourism resources on animal, environments, and society, sometimes overshadow the advantages in some destinations. For example, building a wildlife park can damage the local ecological environment, and affect animal health and their productive rates, making it difficult to balance the social, ecological, and economic benefits. In facilitating or inhibiting sustainable tourism development goals, local governments play a major role in planning and growth for a destination (Ruhanen, 2013). Through implementation of suitable policies to mitigate potential negative impacts, planning and management measures can be customised to meet the development needs of a sustainable wildlife tourism industry (Rodger et al., 2007). According to Xiumei and Feng (2008), the construction of wildlife parks in China is still in its development process and there are some problems. In the initial stages, there are often misunderstandings about the meaning of wildlife parks, a lack of restrictions in laws and regulations, off-site conservation functions not utilised, poor animal welfare status,



serious safety risks, and a weak ability to resist market risks, to name a few. Based on this experience, it is evident that there should be appropriate policies and measures implemented by China to deal with these problems. For example, to deal with threats and challenges to biodiversity, the Chinese government implemented the Wildlife Conservation and Nature Reserve Construction Project and the Special Fund for Capacity Building of National-level Nature Reserves in 2001 (Cong et al., 2017). Not only China, but other countries are also formulating similar policies and measures to achieve the sustainable development of the tourism industry.

Captive wildlife attractions have the significance of animal protection, popular science education, economic benefits, and entertainment value, benefiting local people and economy. However, in terms of the existing forms of most zoos, wild animals are deprived of their freedoms and kept in captivity, dramatically changing their natural habits and behaviours. Animals living in poor conditions suffer damage to their physical and mental health. There are heated debates regarding animal welfare and rights, and the means to achieving the sustainable development of captive wildlife attractions is a trending topic of discussion. The world is a whole unit, so its overall sustainable development requires the joint efforts of all countries through the achieving of the SDGs. As a part of this whole, the tourism industry needs its own sustainable development that contributes to the overall sustainable development of the planet. Only this kind of development can be long-term, smooth, and sustainable.

## **Chapter 3. Background to the Research**

As an animal attraction, Beijing Wildlife Park is relatively tasteful, claiming to focus on animal conservation (The Beijinger, n.d.). By analysing the positive and negative comments about BWP on two Chinese apps, Ctrip and Qunar, this research aims to identify the positive and negative aspects of BWP so as to provide references for the sustainable development of the park. This chapter discusses the study site first, and then the research methods in detail.

### **3.1 Study Site**

At Beijing, there are three zoos – Beijing Zoo, Badaling Safari World and Beijing Wildlife Park (BWP). As the oldest zoo, built in 1906, Beijing zoo is very close to the city centre of Beijing, near Summer Palace, and its Panda House is very well known, where giant pandas can be seen. The largest mountainous eco-zoo in China, Beijing Badaling Safari World is located at the foot of the Badaling Great Wall, and has a total area of 400 acres (China Travel Tips, 2018). The BWP is located in the Wanmu Forest, Daxing District, 40 km from central Beijing (Travel China Guide, 2019). The park officially opened to the public on 8th August, 2001. It is a large-scale natural ecological park initiated by the Ministry of Forestry of the People's Republic of China, approved by the Beijing Municipal People's Government, controlled by the Beijing Tourism Group, and invested in by Beijing Lvyeqingchuan Co., Ltd (Beijing Wildlife Park, 2019). The park has more than 10,000 animals of around 200 animal species, 42 of which species are from foreign countries (Travel China Guide, 2019). Most animals are fenced in restricted areas, instead of being caged. There are more than 30 themed animal venues, including a scattered viewing area, a walking viewing area, a science education area, an animal show entertainment area, a children's zoo, and amusement parks (Beijing Wildlife Park, 2019). There are three kinds of vehicles: electric battery cars, small trains, and an animal-viewing bus, all of which can be hired. The battery cars are a small and can be used to drive around freely by families in the large park, so are especially convenient for children and the elderly. As the name suggests, the small train is a viewing train for visitors and shares the same route as the self-drive cars. At BWP, there is an open area of different kinds of wildlife, where visitors can watch and feed the animals from the animal-viewing bus. The zoo not only has an entertainment function, but also has educational purposes. As this quotation from BWP's official



especially interacting with them. A zoo which allows visitors to be in close contact with and interact with animals increases the zoo's appeal to many visitors (Hosey, 2005). Being close to various animals at the BWP, especially to exotic animals, is a major strength in attracting visitors. As mentioned, there are three zoos in Beijing: the Beijing Zoo, the BWP, and Badaling Safari World. Although smallest in size among the three, the Beijing Zoo has the highest number of animal species (500), and more than 5,000 animals (China Travel Tips, 2018). At the Badaling Safari World, there were 47 families of more than 2,000 animals in 2015 (Beijing Tourism, 2015). Compared to them, the BWP has many advantages, such as being a wildlife park filled with wild animals and exotic species, so BWP is worthy of study.

### **3.2 Methodology**

Using two popular travel apps, Ctrip and Qunar, this research employs a qualitative method to collect and analyse data. Qualitative research methods aim to examine the interconnections in a sea of data, whereas quantitative methods try to separate out pieces of data (Meyer & Avery, 2009). Different from standard quantitative research, qualitative research intends to gain an in-depth analysis of the characteristics of a particular phenomenon, instead of capturing a representative sample that produces generalisable findings (Thomas-Meyer et al., 2017). Employing a qualitative approach in this research helps to understand visitors' views and perceptions of BWP by comparing and analysing the interconnections between a great number of comments. For academic research, it is essential to collect data. Research data can be divided into two categories - primary data and secondary data. When primary data are gathered, new data are added to the existing store of social knowledge (Hox & Boeije, 2005). Gradually, created by other researchers, this material can be reused by the general research community, and is then called "secondary data" (Hox & Boeije, 2005). During the Covid-19 pandemic, due to there being no vaccine or cure, social distancing became the most effective method for mitigation and control (Scherbina, 2020). Therefore, instead of primary data, mostly secondary data were adopted in this research. Secondary data have many strengths, such as low collection cost, proven quality and reliability, contextualisation of material, high efficiency, and a broad range of available sources (Clark, 2013). By analysing online comments from two popular Chinese apps using a qualitative approach, this research obtains valuable insights into the positive and negative aspects of BWP through the eyes of tourists.

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) including blogs, online forums, Twitter, and Facebook, has become a regular way of communication, and more than 540 million tweets were shared daily (Internet Live Stats, 2020). For researching tourist experiences, the internet is becoming a vital source of data (Mkono, 2012). Shown by the *Wall Street Journal's* list of the ten most valuable venture-backed private companies, seven are online platforms, such as, Meituan-Dianping worth US\$30 billion. This illustrates the enormous impact of online platforms on the contemporary world economy (Chen et al., 2019). According to the European Commission (2020), online platforms can serve as digital marketplaces to help individuals and small businesses buy or sell effectively and efficiently through various online digital communication devices. There are two popular relevant trends. Firstly, more and more tourists share their travel experiences on online discussion platforms, and secondly, there is an increasing number of online platforms used for sharing travel experiences (Mkono, 2012). For example, as the largest online travel review site globally, TripAdvisor generated US\$1,492 million in revenue in 2015, with US\$637 million more than revenues in 2011, and attracted more than 350 million visitors each month (TripAdvisor, 2015). On Web 2.0, user reviews have a greater impact on readers' views than does the content proprietor (Walther et al., 2010). The popularity of online reviews has tremendous potential to influence people's behaviours. For instance, positive online reviews led by high past sales, serve as drivers to create future revenue (Zhang et al., 2013). If tourism big data could be fully utilised, it could exert significant influence over the tourism industry (Chen et al., 2018). Therefore, it is useful to study online reviews, as they can offer valuable information for analysing tourist behaviours and habits.

Over the past few years, the exponential development of Chinese internet and electronic commerce has helped create electronic commerce companies and internet business empires such as Alibaba, Dianping, and Meituan (Tian et al., 2017). Due to China's strengths in information and technology, there is a great number of mobile phone, internet, and online shopping users, and people like to share personal views on online platforms. Online comments attract the increasing attention of the public (Qin & Ye, 2018). Compared to filling out traditional questionnaire surveys passively, people prefer to actively post their personal opinions on review sites (Li & Liu, 2019).

Online information and tools have become increasingly popular, so increasing numbers of researchers use online tools to help conduct research.

This research is a thorough study of comments about BWP posted on the Ctrip and Qunar apps, two of the most popular online travel sites in China. There are two main types of online comments: online reviews and digital ratings (Qin & Ye, 2018), and two main types of online comments: positive and negative. Users' views about products are not only shown in digital ratings (Wu et al., 2017), but they affect other customers' buying decisions. Online reviews are essential, as they express users' true feelings (Li et al., 2013).

At the time of this study, there were a lot of online users posting comments, which has become a popular phenomenon, so netnography could be adopted to study the phenomenon. Netnography is composed of the internet and ethnography, and is a method for systematically analysing online communities (Belz & Baumbach, 2010). Many researchers use online communities, such as forums, podcasts, social networking sites, newsgroups, video broadcasts, photo-sharing communities, blogs, and virtual worlds as data sources, so the internet is now a vital research site (Bowler Jr, 2010). By joining networks, billions of people participate in a complex world which not only reflects and reveals their life experiences, but is also a unique social phenomenon in itself (Kozinets, 2007). Netnographic research can help scholars to understand the world (Kozinets, 2007). Comprehensive and detailed netnography can reflect information about consumer opinions, behaviours, impressions, tastes, and interactions (Kozinets, 2010). Netnography is excellent for front-end phases of innovation, and the discovery stages of brand management and marketing (Kozinets, 2010). Through netnography, researchers can gain insights into consumers' opinions and preferences about phenomena such as the BWP, which helps managers and marketers make better decisions and plans.

### ***3.2.1 Thematic Analysis***

Qualitative methods are extremely complex, diverse, and nuanced (Holloway & Todres, 2003). As a basic method of qualitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), thematic analysis examines research data, aiming at understanding and representing the experiences of people as they encounter, engage with, and live their experiences

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). It can be adopted to identify, analyse, and represent themes or patterns within data (Bowen et al., 2012). There are six phases of thematic analysis: getting familiar with data, creating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and generating the results (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After strictly following the six phases, from reading every comment carefully again and again, to finding the suitable initial codes, to considering and reconsidering themes, to settling down themes, comments were sorted into different themes to show the positive and negative aspects of BWP. Obtaining insights into visitors' positive or negative views regarding BWP can provide a reference for operators and planners to achieve the sustainable development of wildlife tourism.

### **3.2.2 Reliability**

For users, it is convenient to post their personal experiences on online review sites. However, concerns on false reviews may occur because a personal experience is subjective and not verifiable, (Chen et al., 2019). Also, some online comments may be manipulated for various reasons. For instance, to create a positive company image, some companies manage their online official websites, using web administrators to remove negative comments which damage their business image, posing challenges to web-based research (Mkono, 2012). Monitoring web-based content is almost non-existent, causing readers to make decisions based on false or biased information (Metzger et al., 2010). Therefore, online comments from only one app may not be reliable. Consequently, data in this study were gathered from two apps so as to enhance the reliability of the research.

### **3.2.3 Collection of Textual Information**

In the process of conducting netnography, there are two methods of collecting data: 1) the written interactions of participants on the online sites (which are usually copied and pasted to word processor documents for analysis on the researcher's computer); and 2) the researcher's own field notes, in which they describe, reflect on, and analyse what was observed during the research process (Kozinets, 2002). The first method was feasible for this research. Based on understanding people's perceptions of and views on visiting BWP through their online comments, the positive and negative aspects of the park were analysed in order to achieve its sustainable development,

addressing the main aim of this research. Apps having reviews of such visits have the potential to provide a lot of information about this. A sample of potential apps was chosen through a search of app lists in the travel directory of the Baidu website. Baidu is China's most popular search engine, responding to 74.6% of China's online search queries, as of February 2019 (Investopedia, 2019). Thereafter, a number of apps (Meituan Dianping, Dazhong Dianping, Ctrip, and Qunar) were searched with the keywords of "Beijing Wildlife Park." After reviewing the research results, two popular Chinese travel apps, Ctrip and Qunar, were chosen to analyse visitors' online comments regarding BWP. On these two apps, comments were already classified into different categories: positive reviews, negative reviews, neutral reviews, reviews with videos, and reviews with pictures, and different categories coincided. As the study aimed to help BWP achieve its sustainable development by analysing its positive and negative aspects, positive and negative comments were the most valuable. Therefore, online positive and negative comments about BWP on two apps were collected and analysed. The Chinese visitors' comments were copied and pasted directly from the apps into Word documents for information storage and analysis.

#### 3.2.3.1. The Ctrip App

As online comments are updating every day, the data were taken from the most recent date at the time of data collection. Up to 14th August 2020, there were 14,501 Chinese comments on BWP with an overall rating 4.7 out of 5.0 on the Ctrip app. There were three dimensions of ratings: scenery (4.8 out of 5.0), fun (4.7 out of 5.0) and cost performance (4.6 out of 5.0). Online comments were automatically categorised by the app, into 14,243 positive comments, and 258 negative comments. Due to the high numbers of comments, the latest 250 positive comments and 250 negative comments were used for analysis. Theoretically, there should be 250 different users making 250 different positive comments. However, in practice, users often made more than one comment or made the same comment at the same time, which could not be ignored. Comments that did not make sense were removed. For example, four original Chinese comments “提提图姑姑汇金谷”, “一直追主贵”, “看起来了拼了命命命抵哦行么了最土基因” and “嘻嘻嘻模糊糊速锐” on Ctrip did not have any meaning, as they were just random words combined. After keeping the first of the same comments made by the same users at the same time and removing meaningless comments, there



were 191 different users making 221 different positive comments with 6,253 Chinese words, available for analysis. There should also have been 250 different users making 250 different negative comments. However, after keeping the first one of the same comments made by same users at the same time and removing meaningless comments, there were 227 different users making 241 different comments, resulting in 7,502 Chinese words available for analysis.

#### 3.2.3.2. The Qunar App

As with the Ctrip app, online comments were updating every day, so the most recent data were collected. As of 15th August 2020, there were 41,114 Chinese comments on BWP with an overall rating 5.0 out of 5.0 on the Qunar app. These online comments had also been automatically categorised by the app, into 41,060 positive comments and 54 negative comments. The last year's positive comments available on the app were collected and analysed, as one year was considered sufficient for a study of positive comments. Regardless of time, all the negative comments available on the app were collected and analysed as just one year of negative comments was not sufficient for the study. From 14th August 2019 to 15th August 2020, there were 88 positive comments, with 7,442 Chinese words. Theoretically, there should have been 88 different users making 88 different positive comments. However, as before, some users made more than one comment or made the same comment at the same time, which could not be ignored. The comments that did not make sense were also removed. This left 79 different users making 85 positive different comments, with 7,231 Chinese words. There were 54 negative comments, with 3,998 Chinese words, which should have been 54 different users making 54 different comments. However, in practice, there were 50 different users making 54 different comments, with 3,991 Chinese words available for analysis.

#### 3.2.4. *Text Frequency Analysis*

To effectively exploit corpora, frequency-ranked word lists have long become part of the standard approach (Baron et al., 2009). The number of times each word appears in the text is recorded by a frequency list. Therefore, interesting information can be obtained from a frequency list, in relation to words that occur or do not occur in the text (Baron et al., 2009). The text data were analysed using GooSeeker, which is

Chinese scraping software for content analysis, qualitative research, text analysis, policy and document analysis, automatic word segmentation, and social network analysis. Its main function is to classify words, by calculating the frequency Chinese words occur in the text. GooSeeker was applied in this research for the word frequency analysis. To produce the best interpretable results from this text-mining analysis, there are several preliminary steps needed.

- (1) Meaningless words that made no contribution to the interpretation of the text need to be removed. Therefore, words such as “我”(I), “你”(you), “他”(he), “她”(she), “他们”(they), “它”(it), “我们”(us), “是”(am, is, are), and similar others, were removed.
- (2) Avoid separate counts where the spelling of scenic spots is inconsistent and different, e.g., “野生动物园”(the wildlife park), “动物园”(the zoo), and “北京野生动物园”(BWP).
- (3) Group terms that have similar meanings, but are expressed in different words, e.g., “照相机”(camera) to “相机”(camera), “宝宝”(baby) to “婴儿”(baby), and “老人”(the elderly) to “老年人”(the elderly).

After calculating the frequency statistics of Chinese words through Gooseeker, online comments were identified and categorised into themes using thematic analysis.

### **3.2.5. Coding and Analysis**

Thematic analysis has many advantages, such as its flexibility, relatively ease and speed to learn and do, and ability to generate unexpected insights. Following established guidelines (Thomas & Harden, 2008), thematic analysis in this study had three main stages. In the first stage, individual reader comments were read again and again, codes were assigned to relevant and key pieces of information, and no codes left were checked (Giles et al., 2015). The goal was to find the basic relevant content instead of explaining it (King et al., 2018). As the comments were made in Chinese, Chinese comments were given codes by selecting key words or finding the basic relevant content in these comments. For example, this was the original comment:

孩子开心的玩了一天，自驾车涨价了。景区内的水很贵,只有两种，昆仑山 10 元，依云 18。值得推荐 (The child had a happy day and the price of self-driving cars increased. The water in the scenic area was very expensive, there were only two kinds of water, Kunlun Mountain 10 yuan and Yiyun 18 yuan. Recommended).

From this, the basic contents were selected, such as “children had fun,” “the price of renting cars increased,” and “water was expensive.” In another example, this was the original comment:

带着老人孩子去的，总体体验不错，虽然是大夏天，但几乎都有树荫。就是排队人太多了，做笼车排了一个多小时，排队的地方太热了 (Took the elderly and children, and the overall experience was good. Although it was a hot summer, it was almost all in shade. There were too many people in the queue. Spent more than an hour in line waiting for animal-viewing buses, and the queuing place was too hot.

Key words were selected, such as “the elderly and children,” “overall good experience,” “much shade,” and “long waiting time.” In the Word documents, online comments were read line by line in order to make sure no information was left out. For each coding result put in Excel spreadsheet, double-checks were made. At the end of this first step, 221 Ctrip positive comments had 221 Chinese codes, 241 Ctrip negative comments had 241 Chinese codes, 85 Qunar positive comments had 85 Chinese codes, and 54 Qunar negative comments had 54 Chinese codes.

In the second stage, after all the codes had been created, similar codes were combined together, some codes were renamed, and identical codes were taken out to create descriptive themes (Giles et al., 2015). This step aimed to classify the free codes, by continuously comparing and analysing the connections within the codes (Cong et al., 2014). Based on the codes generated, the final codes were divided into different categories so as to derive interpretive meanings. For example, there were similar codes, such as “野生动物园中出售的蔬菜价格昂贵” (vegetables sold at BWP are expensive), “水很贵” (water is expensive), “租车很贵” (renting cars is expensive) and “食品价格昂贵” (food is expensive), which were combined together and renamed as “租车和商品很贵” (renting cars and products is expensive). In another

example, similar codes were “假期拥挤” (crowded during holidays), “假期期间入口处拥挤” (crowded at entrance during holidays), “假期等候时间长” (long waiting time during holidays) and “在假期里排队” (waiting in line during holidays), which were combined together and renamed as “假期人太多” (too many people during holidays).

When this had been completed, the Ctrip 221 and 241 free codes were reduced to 21 (see Table 1) and 39 (see Table 2) interpretive codes respectively. From Qunar, 85 and 54 free codes were reduced to 21 (see Table 3) and 23 (see Table 4) interpretive codes respectively. In the final stage, to best describe the data, codes were categorised into significant analytical themes (Thomas & Harden, 2008). These themes showed the wide range of public opinions towards BWP. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this step is the “define and refine” process. The raw word texts were reviewed one by one, as was each tentative theme, and the free and interpretive codes related to each theme. Based on the categorisation of codes, seven themes were generated: “visitor experience,” “animal condition,” “facilities,” “management,” “environment,” “service,” and “other,” showing BWP from seven different perspectives (see Tables 1-4).

**Table 1**  
Ctrip Positive Comments

<b>Ctrip Positive Comments (n=221)</b>			
<b>Codes</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fun, good view, good experience, recommend (n=128)</li> <li>• children, adults, and the elderly, having fun (n =27)</li> <li>• could interact with and feed animals (n=12)</li> <li>• good experience in self-drive and walking routes (n=8)</li> <li>• visited many times (n=6)</li> <li>• not crowded during non-holidays (n=2)</li> <li>• not expensive (n=2)</li> <li>• good indoor design (n=1)</li> </ul>	Visitor experience	186	84.16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a lot of energetic, healthy, and friendly animals (n=3)</li> </ul>	Animal condition	3	1.35
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• safe animal-viewing bus (n=5)</li> <li>• good and big park (n=5)</li> <li>• big carpark (n=1)</li> <li>• creative entrance and isolation (n=1)</li> <li>• good playground for children (n=1)</li> <li>• small train (n=1)</li> </ul>	Facilities	14	6.33
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• convenient check-in (n=5)</li> </ul>	Management	5	2.26
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fresh air, clean environment, good green plants (n=3)</li> <li>• good shade from strong sun (n=1)</li> </ul>	Environment	4	1.8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good service (n=2)</li> </ul>	Service	2	0.9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advice (n=4)</li> <li>• non-relevant (n=3)</li> </ul>	Other	7	3.2

**Table 2***Ctrip Negative Comments*

<b>Ctrip Negative Comments (n=241)</b>			
<b>Codes</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>expensive entrance ticket, products, and activities, charged expensive fees (n=26)</li> <li>poor experience, low cost performance, poor enjoyability (n=25)</li> <li>crowded (n=21)</li> <li>disappointing self-drive due to traffic jams, unclear traffic signs and few animals (n=21)</li> <li>too many people during holidays (n=21)</li> <li>long waiting time for small trains and viewing cars (n=18)</li> <li>difficult to interact with animals (n=5)</li> <li>viewing buses were too quick (n=3)</li> <li>location too far away (n=3)</li> <li>no preferential policy for medical staff during pandemic, nor discounted tickets for children and the elderly (n=2)</li> <li>inadequate scenic spots (n=1)</li> <li>poor play area design (n=1)</li> <li>too much noise (n=1)</li> </ul>	Visitor experience	148	61.41
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>not many animals (n=11)</li> <li>lazy and unhealthy animals (n=4)</li> <li>animal attacks (n=3)</li> <li>poor animal shows (n=2)</li> <li>animals in the wildlife area were fenced in ditch (n=1)</li> <li>animals were fed too much during holidays (n=1)</li> </ul>	Animal condition	22	9.12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>not enough viewing vehicles (n=4)</li> <li>no bathroom around the parking area (n=1)</li> <li>automatic check-in machine was not working (n=1)</li> <li>animal-viewing truck was not electric, too much noise and pollution (n=1)</li> </ul>	Facilities	7	2.9

<b>Ctrip Negative Comments (n=241)</b>			
<b>Codes</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• problems with the management of entrance, exit, small trains, wildlife area and parking: waiting time was too long; people jumping the queue; crowded when boarding (n=11)</li> <li>• unable to bring vegetables from outside (n=3)</li> <li>• self-drive cars required extra expensive parking fees (n=3)</li> <li>• could only feed designated animals (n=1)</li> <li>• eating and shopping mainly required cash (n=1)</li> </ul>	Management	19	7.9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poor air (n=1)</li> <li>• some animal houses had strong odours (n=1)</li> <li>• too much rubbish (n=1)</li> </ul>	Environment	3	1.24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unclear information about cars, activities, and tickets (n=7)</li> <li>• no phone signal (n=2)</li> <li>• information not updated, such as location and content (n=1)</li> <li>• poor staff service (n=1)</li> <li>• poor online audio commentary (n=1)</li> <li>• only junk food and not many resting areas (n=1)</li> </ul>	Service	13	5.4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• complaints about Ctrip app (n=22)</li> <li>• non-relevant (n=7)</li> </ul>	Other	29	12.03

**Table 3***Qunar Positive Comments*

<b>Qunar Positive Comments (n=85)</b>			
<b>Codes</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good experience with self-drive, small trains and safe animal-viewing bus (n=18)</li> <li>• children, adults and the elderly had fun (n=10)</li> <li>• no waiting time for small train and viewing bus during non-holidays (n=5)</li> <li>• good experience interacting with and feeding animals (n=3)</li> <li>• not too many people during non-holidays (n=3)</li> <li>• not expensive (n=2)</li> <li>• not far from Beijing city (n=1)</li> </ul>	Visitor experience	42	49.4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a lot of lovely animals (n=2)</li> </ul>	Animal condition	2	2.4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• park is big (n=5)</li> <li>• helpful battery car (n=5)</li> <li>• clean and safe facilities (n=1)</li> </ul>	Facilities	11	12.9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• convenient check-in (n=8)</li> <li>• free ticket policy for children under 1.2 metres (n=1)</li> <li>• good management (n=1)</li> <li>• animal-viewing buses arrived on time (n=1)</li> </ul>	Management	11	12.9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good view (n=1)</li> </ul>	Environment	1	1.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good staff service (n=9)</li> <li>• children's meals provided in the park (n=1)</li> </ul>	Service	10	11.8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comments on Qunar app (n=4)</li> <li>• non-relevant (n=3)</li> <li>• advice (n=1)</li> </ul>	Other	8	9.4



**Table 4.***Qunar Negative Comments*

<b>Qunar Negative Comments (n=54)</b>			
<b>Codes</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• too many people and cars during holidays (n=9)</li> <li>• long waiting time for small train and bus (n=5)</li> <li>• not good (n=5)</li> <li>• expensive ticket, complaints about the ticket policy for children and the elderly (n=2)</li> <li>• meaningless self-drive as could not feed animals (n=2)</li> <li>• not a wildlife park, just a zoo (n=1)</li> <li>• safety issues in the parking area (n=1)</li> <li>• a little too far away (n=1)</li> <li>• the park is small (n=1)</li> </ul>	Visitor experience	27	50
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not many animals and lazy animals (n=1)</li> <li>• poor animal shows (n=1)</li> </ul>	Animal condition	2	3.7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unclear traffic signs in the self-drive area (n=1)</li> </ul>	Facilities	1	1.85
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• products and activities in BWP charged expensive fees (n=3)</li> <li>• extra parking fees charged for self-drive (n=2)</li> <li>• deposit was not refunded after self-drive (n=1)</li> <li>• animal-viewing bus only stopped for few seconds (n=1)</li> <li>• could not bring vegetables from the outside (n=1)</li> </ul>	Management	8	14.8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poor air (n=1)</li> </ul>	Environment	1	1.85
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poor staff service and few staff during holidays (n=3)</li> <li>• poor phone signal (n=2)</li> <li>• no map on the ticket (n=1)</li> </ul>	Service	6	11.1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• complaints about Qunar app (n=8)</li> <li>• non-relevant (n=1)</li> </ul>	Other	9	16.7

## **Chapter 4. Research Results and Findings**

In the methodology section, the methods used and how the research was conducted were explained step by step. The results of text frequency analysis and thematic analysis are presented in this chapter.

### **4.1 Text Frequency Analysis**

The Appendices show the word frequencies for the cleaned text data. After analysing and comparing Ctrip and Qunar positive comments about BWP (see Appendix A and Appendix C), "worth it" (n=106) was found to occur most, followed by "Nice" (n=103). "Recommend" (n=102) and "experience" (n=101) ranked third and fourth respectively. After comparing the negative comments about BWP on both Ctrip and Qunar (see Appendix B and Appendix D), "animal" (n=79) was found to have the highest word frequency. "Zoo/park/wildlife park" (n=63) ranked second, followed by "does not have" (n=53) and "wait in line" (n=52).

### **4.2 Thematic Analysis of Text**

The thematic analysis was in three stages. At the end of first step, 221 Ctrip positive comments had 221 Chinese free codes, 241 Ctrip negative comments had 241 Chinese free codes, 85 Qunar positive comments had 85 Chinese free codes, and 54 Qunar negative comments had 54 Chinese free codes. After interpretive coding, Ctrip had 21 positive interpretive codes (see Table 1) and 39 negative interpretive codes (see Table 2). Qunar 85 and 54 free codes were reduced to 21 interpretive codes (see Table 3) and 23 interpretive codes (see Table 4) respectively. In the third step, these codes, negative and positive, were categorised to seven overarching themes: "visitor experience," "animal condition," "facilities," "management," "environment," "service," and "other." Table 5 compares and combines the codes in the Ctrip positive comments and those in the Qunar positive comments. Similarly, Table 6 was generated after the codes of Ctrip and Qunar negative comments had been compared and combined.

**Table 5**  
*Combined Positive Comments*

<b>Positive Comments (n=306)</b>			
<b>Codes</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fun, good view, good experience, recommend (n=128)</li> <li>• children, adults and the elderly had fun (n =37)</li> <li>• good experience in self-drive, small trains, safe animal-viewing bus, and walking route (n=26)</li> <li>• could interact with and feed animals (n=15)</li> <li>• not crowded during non-holidays (n=10)</li> <li>• visited many times (n=6)</li> <li>• not expensive (n=4)</li> <li>• not far from Beijing city (n=1)</li> <li>• good indoor design (n=1)</li> </ul>	Visitor experience	228	74.5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a lot of energetic, healthy, and friendly animals (n=5)</li> </ul>	Animal condition	5	1.63
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good and big park (n=10)</li> <li>• helpful battery car (n=5)</li> <li>• safe animal-viewing bus (n=5)</li> <li>• big carpark (n=1)</li> <li>• creative entrance and isolation (n=1)</li> <li>• small train (n=1)</li> <li>• good playground for children (n=1)</li> <li>• clean and safe facilities (n=1)</li> </ul>	Facilities	25	8.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• convenient check-in (n=13)</li> <li>• animal-viewing buses arrived on time (n=1)</li> <li>• free ticket policy for children under 1.2 metres (n=1)</li> <li>• good management (n=1)</li> </ul>	Management	16	5.22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fresh air, clean environment, good green plants (n=3)</li> <li>• good view (n=1)</li> <li>• good shade from strong sun (n=1)</li> </ul>	Environment	5	1.63
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good staff service (n=9)</li> <li>• good service (n=2)</li> <li>• children's meals provided in the park (n=1)</li> </ul>	Service	12	3.92
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• non-relevant (n=6)</li> <li>• advice(n=5)</li> <li>• comments on Qunar app (n=4)</li> </ul>	Other	15	4.9

**Table 6**  
*Combined Negative Comments*

<b>Negative Comments (n=295)</b>			
<b>Codes</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poor experience, low cost performance, poor enjoyability (n=30)</li> <li>• too many people and cars during holidays (n=30)</li> <li>• disappointing self-drive due to traffic jams, unclear traffic signs and too few animals (n=24)</li> <li>• long waiting time for small trains and viewing cars (n=23)</li> <li>• crowded (n=21)</li> <li>• difficult to interact with animals (n=5)</li> <li>• no preferential policy for medical staff during pandemic, nor ticket policy for children and the elderly (n=4)</li> <li>• viewing buses were too quick (n=4)</li> <li>• location too far away (n=4)</li> <li>• the park was small (n=1)</li> <li>• not a wildlife park, just a zoo (n=1)</li> <li>• inadequate scenic spots (n=1)</li> <li>• poor play design (n=1)</li> <li>• too much noise (n=1)</li> </ul>	Visitor experience	150	50.8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not many animals (n=11)</li> <li>• lazy and unhealthy animals (n=5)</li> <li>• animal attacks (n=4)</li> <li>• poor animal shows (n=3)</li> <li>• animals were fed too much during holidays (n=1)</li> <li>• animals in the wildlife area were fenced in ditch (n=1)</li> </ul>	Animal condition	25	8.5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not enough viewing vehicles (n=4)</li> <li>• no bathroom around the parking area (n=1)</li> <li>• automatic check-in machine was not working (n=1)</li> <li>• animal-viewing truck is not electronic, too much noise and pollution(n=1)</li> </ul>	Facilities	7	2.4

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• expensive entrance ticket, products, and activities, charged expensive fees (n=29)</li> <li>• problems with the management of entrance, exit, small trains, wildlife area and parking; waiting time was too long; people jumping the queue; crowded when boarding (n=11)</li> <li>• self-drive cars required extra expensive parking fees (n=5)</li> <li>• could not bring vegetables from outside (n=4)</li> <li>• eating and shopping mainly required cash (n=1)</li> <li>• could only feed designated animals (n=1)</li> <li>• deposit was not refunded after self-drive (n=1)</li> </ul>	Management	52	17.6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poor air (n=2)</li> <li>• some animal houses had strong odours (n=1)</li> <li>• too much rubbish (n=1)</li> </ul>	Environment	4	1.4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unclear information about cars, activities, and tickets (n=7)</li> <li>• poor staff service (n=4)</li> <li>• no phone signal (n=4)</li> <li>• poor online audio commentary (n=1)</li> <li>• only junk food and not many resting areas (n=1)</li> <li>• no map on the ticket (n=1)</li> <li>• information not updated, such as location and content (n=1)</li> </ul>	Service	19	6.4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• complaints about Ctrip app (n=22)</li> <li>• complaints about Qunar app (n=8)</li> <li>• non-relevant (n=8)</li> </ul>	Other	38	12.9

#### ***4.2.1. Seven Themes in Positive Comments***

A total of 306 positive comments on BWP represented those most discussed in the text data set, accounting for 50.9% of total positive and negative comments. The seven themes identified were “visitor experience,” “animal condition,” “facilities,” “management,” “environment,” “service,” and “other.”

#### 4.2.1.1. Visitor Experience

“Visitor experience” could be thought of as visitors’ feelings about their visits, as codes having the highest frequency were mainly those analysed. As presented in

Table 5, there were many positive comments about BWP on various aspects, such as low price, good experience, nearby location, good interactions with animals, and interesting park activities. The code “fun, good view, good experience, recommend” ranked first in frequency, showing that many visitors enjoyed their visits to the BWP. The code “children, adults and the elderly having fun” ranked second, showing that BWP was suitable for visitors of all ages, as evident in one family’s comment:

我们是一家三口挑了一个周一去的这个大兴野生动物园，值得推荐哦！虽然是暑假，但是疫情期间又是周一所以人不多，孩子觉得有趣好玩，大人们也觉得体验很好👍，自驾车开到体验区很有趣哦，另外停车场很大，这是市内旅游景点不能比的，赞一个吧！（We are a family of three and picked this Daxing Wildlife Park on one Monday. It is highly recommended! Although it was the summer holidays, it was a Monday during the epidemic period, so there were not many people. Children and adults both had fun. It was also interesting to drive to the experience area by car. Also, the parking area was very large, which cannot be compared to the parking areas for tourist attractions in city 👍!).

Ranking third, the code “good experience in self-drive, small trains, safe animal-viewing bus, and walking route” showed that activities in the park were fun for visitors. One comment demonstrated this well:

自驾和步行这边路线都是很有惊喜 俩边都无可挑剔 就是景区太大了 还是需要乘坐小交通有趣好玩 (Both the self-driving and walking route were very pleasant and impeccable, but the park is too big, need to take small trains, fun).

Overall, it was evident that most visitors of all ages could have a good time in the park.

#### 4.2.1.2. Animal Condition

Animal condition was a crucial influence on visitors' experience. Healthy, energetic and friendly animals can bring a lot of pleasure and fun. One comment described children's view response to viewing the animals.

孩子们很高兴，尤其到了可以投喂的鹿区，大鹿脑袋直接挤进车窗，要求投喂，孩子形容融化了他的心。猛兽区也不错，熊和老虎很活泼，一直贴着车求投喂，太可爱了 (The children were very happy, especially when they arrived at the deer area where deer could be fed, and the big deer squeezed its head directly into the car and asked for food. The child described it as "melting his heart." The wildlife area was also good, the bears and tigers were very lively, close to the car and begging for food, so cute).

#### 4.2.1.3. Facilities

At the BWP, there were three kinds of vehicles: safe animal-viewing bus, a small train, and battery cars.

带孩子们去玩，非常好，孩子们很开心，可以坐小火车看动物，坐笼车看猛兽，可以喂食小动物，非常好的一次出游体验很好，值得推荐 (It was great to take children to play. The children were very happy. They took a small train to view animals, took the animal-viewing bus to view animals, and fed small animals. It was a very good travel experience and is worth recommending).

As for battery cars, some thought that

太大了 租电瓶车合适 一天 400 可以玩的多点 (as the park is big, it is best to rent a battery car, 400 RMB for a day, so you can view more places).

Also, there was a big carpark and good playground where children could have a good time. During the pandemic,

大门和隔离区特别有创意 (creative entrance and isolation area) (note: isolation area is the area established against Covid-19)

were built to ensure the safety of visitors.

#### 4.2.1.4. Management

Good management in the BWP helped achieve a smooth operation. Starting from the check-in, respondents commented that

买票很方便，不用换票，直接二维码扫码入园 (it was very convenient to buy tickets, no need to change the tickets, just scan the QR code to enter the park).

There was a favourable policy for children, for example,

1.2 以下儿童免票，真好 (children under 1.2 metres were free of charge, which was great).

In the wildlife area, there were free-ranging animals, where visitors could interact with animals from the animal-viewing buses. Animal-viewing buses arriving on time showed there was good management of these buses.

#### 4.2.1.5. Environment

Besides animals, the environment was also important to attracting visitors, demonstrated in comments such as:

北京野生动物园值得推荐，园区很大，绿植做得也很好，动物种类繁多 (BWP is worth recommending, the park was very large, the green plants were also very good, and there were many kinds of animals);

空气好，动物也很可爱，那车也很爽 (the air was good, the animals were cute, and the car was cool); and

景色不错，体验很好 (good view, good experience).

#### 4.2.1.6. Service

In the park, not only did the staff provide good service, but also, children's meals were provided. Drivers of the animal-viewing buses were helping visitors enjoy their time at the park, evidenced with comments such as

服务非常好，司机特别好 (the service was very good, the driver was very good);



能够真实的看到动物，猛兽车的司机师傅兼导游，很会搞气氛！风趣幽默，热情接地气儿 (could see real animals, the driver, also called the “tour guide” of the animal-viewing bus, was very good at creating atmosphere! Funny and humorous, passionate, and grounded); and

领着孩子，特别好，里边餐食也有儿童餐，真心不错 (it was very nice to take children, there were also children’s meals, it was really nice).

#### 4.2.1.7. Other

Under this theme, there were 15 comments in total, including six irrelevant comments and four comments on Qunar that could be ignored. There were five pieces of advice from visitors regarding BWP. Two visitors recommended to

早去早玩啊 (visit as early as you can)

and one advised

挺好的，早去早玩，否则排队排疯了 (it was good, so try to visit as early as you can otherwise there will be long waiting lines).

As there were usually too many people waiting for small trains and animal-viewing buses, one recommendation was

建议先去小火车排队，然后再去猛兽区排队，因为这两地方人很多，乱逛的话可能会导致只能二选一 (wait for small trains first, and then animal-viewing buses, because there are a lot of people in these two places, and you may only choose one of the two if you visit without a special purpose).

It was recommended to visit in autumn, because

天气转凉，动物们比较活跃，都会出来晒太阳 (when the weather turns cooler, the animals are more active and will come out to bask in the sun).

#### 4.2.2. *Seven Themes in Negative Comments*

A total of 295 negative comments on BWP were analysed in the text data set, accounting for 49.1% of total positive and negative comments. The seven themes identified therein were the same as for the positive comments, are discussed next.

#### 4.2.2.1. Visitor Experience

The most discussed feelings by visitors were

体验不佳，性价比低，可玩性低 (poor experience, low cost performance, poor enjoyability); and

人太多了，节假日不适合出行 (too many people, not suitable for travel during holidays).

This was due to many reasons such as

买的小火车笼车的通票，但基本上排队要三个小时以上，实际没用 (bought a pass for small trains and viewing buses, but basically it took more than three hours to wait in line, which was actually useless); and

自驾区堵成狗，一旦开始排队就不能改了；根本不是放养的动物，自驾区也没什么，非常差 (the self-drive area was very crowded, and once the queue started, it could not be changed; animals were not free-ranging, and [we had a] poor experience in the self-drive area).

Many judged BWP to be “拥堵” (crowded). Some noted that

本身票价就是贵的，然后人超级多，自驾很快就结束了 (the ticket itself was expensive, and there were so many people, animal-viewing buses finished too soon, and it was difficult to interact with animals).

Others complained about no preferential policy for both medical staff during the pandemic, and not enough discounts in the ticket policy for children and the elderly.

#### 4.2.2.2. Animal Condition

The main complaints about animals were that there were too few:

这里很不值得来，一百多的门票，里面的动物很少，动物园都没有大熊猫，交通也不方便，不建议大家去玩了，一点也不好，没意思 (It is not worth coming here. One ticket was over 100 RMB, there were very few animals, there were no giant pandas, inconvenient transportation, it is not recommended. It was no good, boring).

Lazy and unhealthy animals and animal attacks were two other interpretive codes in this theme. Some reviews mentioned unhealthy animals, noting that even though the ticket was expensive, the zoo still treated animals very poorly:

群居动物单独关起来，鹦鹉馆里的鹦鹉尾巴基本都是在笼子上磨秃的，一只大嘴鸟的嘴断了一半一动不动怀疑抑郁症 (The social animals were locked up alone, the tails of parrots in the parrot area were basically bald from grinding on cages, the mouth of a toucan was half broken, and the toucan was motionless, maybe due to depression).

Some commented on animal attacks:

孩子在鹦鹉馆被类似于鸡一样的动物追着啄咬 (a child was chased and bitten by a chicken-like animal in the parrot area).

Also worth mentioning, was that the animals were forced to perform to please the visitors, fenced in restricted areas, and fed too much during the holidays.

#### 4.2.2.3. Facilities

During holidays, there were too many people waiting for small trains and viewing cars, producing complaints about not enough viewing vehicles.

游玩 3 小时 排队 2 个半小时 我就纳闷了 像这种节假日就不能多增加小火车嘛，明明知道 人流量特别大就不能有一个好的安排，简直了 太生气了 (Played for three hours and queued for two and a half hours. I was wondering why there couldn't be more small trains on holidays like this? Knowing that the flow of people was particularly large, no good arrangement was prepared - too angry).

Codes such as “no bathroom around the parking area” and “automatic check-in machine was not working” also revealed problematic facilities. Also, the noise and pollution from the animal-viewing truck could not be ignored:

笼车是很好的体验方式，但是全都不是电动车 (The animal-viewing trucks could deliver a good experience, but they were not electric).

After this comment was made, the animal-viewing truck was changed into an animal-viewing bus, which caused less noise and pollution, and increased safety.

#### 4.2.2.4. Management

The most mentioned code about management was “expensive entrance ticket, products, and activities, charged expensive fees.” Respondents’ complaints were about

门票贵 (expensive tickets), and

物价超贵，垄断经营，租一辆二人电瓶车 500，买四分之一圆白菜，三颗油菜，两颗胡萝卜 60 (products were super expensive, monopoly business, renting a two-person battery car cost 500 RMB; a quarter cabbage, three individual rape vegetables, and two carrots cost 60 RMB).

In terms of the health of animals, BWP did not allow visitors to bring vegetables from outside the park. Therefore, visitors had to buy vegetables sold in the park if they wanted to feed the animals. There were also problems with the management of the entrance, exit, small trains, wildlife area and parking during holidays.

强烈建议别去这个动物园，人太多了 (It is strongly recommended not to visit this zoo, as there were too many people).

Extra charging was another issue, and visitors mentioned that

自驾游车买了票还要收停车费 (besides self-drive tickets, extra parking fees were also required from self-drive drivers).

Some noted that eating and shopping mainly required cash, which was not convenient if visitors did not have cash with them.

#### 4.2.2.5. Environment

Several respondents observed that

空气质量不好，视距太小 (the air quality was not good and the viewing distance was too small), and

有些馆内异味严重 (some animal houses had strong odours).

During holidays,

人太多，景区没有做好提示工作 (there were too many people, and the park had not done the preparation work well)

which resulted in

垃圾太多没人清理 (too much rubbish, no one cleaned up).

#### 4.2.2.6. Service

Poor service manifested in different ways, such as with unclear information, poor staff service, poor signal, poor food, and no map. Unclear information about the BWP, renting vehicles, self-drive and tickets, brought confusion and complaints. For example, information was a problem:

没有及时更新，位置不准，内容不全 (Not updated in time, inaccurate location, incomplete content).

It was difficult to pay by phone due to the

园内没信号 (poor signal in the park).

Poor staff service was also commented on by four respondents:

工作人员完全不管理自驾秩序，自驾排队时间 4 小时 (The staff did not manage the order of self-drive area at all, and the self-driving queue time was four hours).

Tourists at BWP also complained that poor online audio commentaries were offered in the park and that there was no park map on the ticket.

### 4.3 Summary

According to the text frequency analysis, “worth it,” “nice,” “recommend,” and “experience,” had the highest word frequency for positive comments on both Ctrip and Qunar. For negative comments on both Ctrip and Qunar, “animal,” “zoo/park/wildlife park,” “does not have,” and “wait in line” ranked highest. After the thematic analysis of text data, seven themes were identified for both positive and negative comments about BWP. These seven themes showed that BWP had a lot of strengths from different perspectives, but the main negative aspects needed to be addressed.

## **Chapter 5. Discussion**

### **5.1 Statement of Principal Findings**

From the analysis of the positive and negative aspects of BWP through online comments on two Chinese apps, Ctrip and Qunar, seven themes for positive and negative comments were identified: “visitor experience,” “animal condition,” “facilities,” “management,” “environment,” “service,” and “other.” Through these themes, the strengths and weaknesses of BWP were clearly shown, providing information to help the sustainable development of BWP. Combining Ctrip and Qunar comments, produced 306 positive and 295 negative comments. Most comments were supportive of visiting BWP, although there were some who took a negative view. Positive comments revealed a range of views about visiting BWP from different perspectives; people appreciated that visitors of all ages could have fun, interact with various healthy animals, and experience all kinds of safe facilities, good management, a favourable environment, and good staff service. Negative comments raised a variety of contrasting opinions. Some proposed that the visitor experiences at BWP were characteristic of poor experience, low cost performance, and poor enjoyability. Particularly during holidays, there were a lot of people waiting in long lines for BWP activities. On the self-drive routes, visitors complained about the difficulties of interacting with animals, which were usually far away and not very energetic. The animals lived in poor conditions and were forced to perform for human satisfaction, which drew complaints. There were other concerns about not enough viewing vehicles and poor management, environment and service. Overall, most of the comments were positive however, recommending that people visit BWP. Negative comments can be seen as issues which need to be solved to achieve the sustainable development of BWP.

### **5.2 Interpretation of Research Results**

#### **5.2.1. *Positive Comments***

##### **5.2.1.1. Visitor Experience**

The positive aspects of BWP can be explained under the following seven themes. From the perspective of a visitor’s experience, most said that they had good experiences, not

only in participating in BWP activities, but also interacting with animals, and recommended that people visit BWP. Self-drive opportunities were seen as convenient for the elderly and children, and when choosing the walking route, visitors could have more close interactions with animals. Both the self-drive and walking route had benefits, and offered flexibility to visitors. As BWP is not far away from Beijing city, and the entry ticket was not expensive, many people visited BWP many times.

#### 5.2.1.2. Animal Condition

The main reason for people to visit BWP was to view the animals. Unlike Beijing Zoo, where animals are mainly caged behind iron bars or cement walls, the animals in the BWP were mainly free-ranging. Even though some animals were caged, their artificial environment resembled the natural environment, which was good for the animals and shows that BWP cared about animal welfare. Closely interacting with and feeding animals was fun for visitors of all ages. This kind of travel experience allows visitors to interact with nature directly, and delivers a positive educational message to visitors (Ballantyne et al., 2011).

#### 5.2.1.3. Facilities

There were clean and safe facilities at BWP. The park was large and clean, and had small trains, animal-viewing buses and helpful battery-operated cars to meet different purposes. BWP had a large carpark, and a good playground for children. During the Covid-19 pandemic, creative entrance and isolation areas were set up to protect visitors from the coronavirus, showing that BWP cared about the visitors.

#### 5.2.1.4. Management

Good management is vital in any organisation. From the preferential policy for children and the elderly, to convenient check-in, to the on-time management of animal-viewing buses, there were various management practices that benefited visitors.

#### 5.2.1.5. Environment

The environment at BWP was considered favourable, such as fresh air, plenty of green plants, good views, and shade from the strong sun. If city people wanted to escape from the urban life and get close to nature, BWP is a good option.

#### 5.2.1.6. Service

Good staff service and considerate service, such as responsible drivers and children's meals, are worth mentioning, as they increased visitors' satisfaction.

#### 5.2.1.7. Other

Five pieces of advice were offered by visitors, which could help future visitors. Two visitors recommended to go as early as possible, as the park was big and there would be a lot of people if late. One visitor recommended to choose the walking route instead of the self-drive route, and it was recommended to go in autumn, as animals were more energetic on cooler days. Many people liked to try the small trains and animal-viewing buses, so there were long waiting lines for both, based on which, one piece of advice was to wait in line for small trains first, and then the animal-viewing buses. On the basis of these positive aspects, the strengths in BWP were clearly evident; marketing strategies or advertisements could make full use of these.

### 5.2.2. *Negative Comments*

#### 5.2.2.1. Visitor Experience

The negative aspects of BWP were also under seven themes. Poor experience at BWP was mentioned due to a number of reasons. According to Table 6, the main reason, was too many people and cars during holidays. There were long waiting lines for all park activities, and traffic jams, which brought disorder and complaints, decreasing visitors' satisfaction. During holidays, there were many complaints about self-drive vehicles due to traffic jams, unclear traffic signs, and difficulties of viewing animals. Restrictions on visitor numbers should therefore be considered during holidays, or more staff to maintain order during holidays, especially in relation to traffic in self-drive areas.



#### 5.2.2.2. Animal Condition

The most mentioned complaint was that there were not many animals. However, according to China Travel Tips (2018), there were more than 200 animal species and 10,000 animals at BWP. In view of the specialist and diverse needs of exotic animals, it is not surprising that such animals are kept in zoos (Melfi, 2009) to meet the needs of human beings. Hediger (1950) was one of the first highlighting that a zoo environment might not be able to meet the needs of exotic animals. There are a number of reasons for this, such as the different climate, inimical bacteria to exotic animals, and the difficulties of providing enough care (Walker, 2007). At present, if zoo animals show signs of poor condition, remediable steps are taken to deal with these problems. BWP is a kind of wildlife park, which encourages visitors to interact with animals closely. However, there were safety issues, such as animal diseases and attacks. Some visitors also wanted to see animal shows, and complained about the poor animal shows in which animals were forced to perform. Keeping a balance between animal welfare and economic profits is a major issue. The ability of zoos to balance the need to maintain economic viability and play an important role in conservation is indeed a great challenge, requiring continued efforts from the public and private sectors (Catibog-Sinha, 2008).

#### 5.2.2.3. Facilities

During holidays, there were long waiting lines for viewing vehicles. For this, either visitor numbers needed to be controlled, or more viewing vehicles purchased.

#### 5.2.2.4 Management

Many visitors mentioned that tickets, products and activities in the park were very expensive. Self-drive visitors complained that they not only needed to pay ticket fees, but also extra parking fees. Furthermore, visitors were not allowed to bring vegetables from the outside, which is understandable for the animals' health. However, the vegetables sold in the park were very expensive. Price management was an issue; prices should be guided by reasonable measurements. During holidays, there was poor management of the entrance, exit, small trains, wildlife area, self-drive area, and

parking, causing traffic jams, disorder and complaints, all of which warrant attention from BWP. Different management plans for holidays were clearly needed.

#### 5.2.2.5. Environment

There were negative comments about the environment, such as poor air, strong odours from some animal houses, and too much rubbish. To deal with this, more cleaners could be considered, especially during holidays.

#### 5.2.2.6. Service

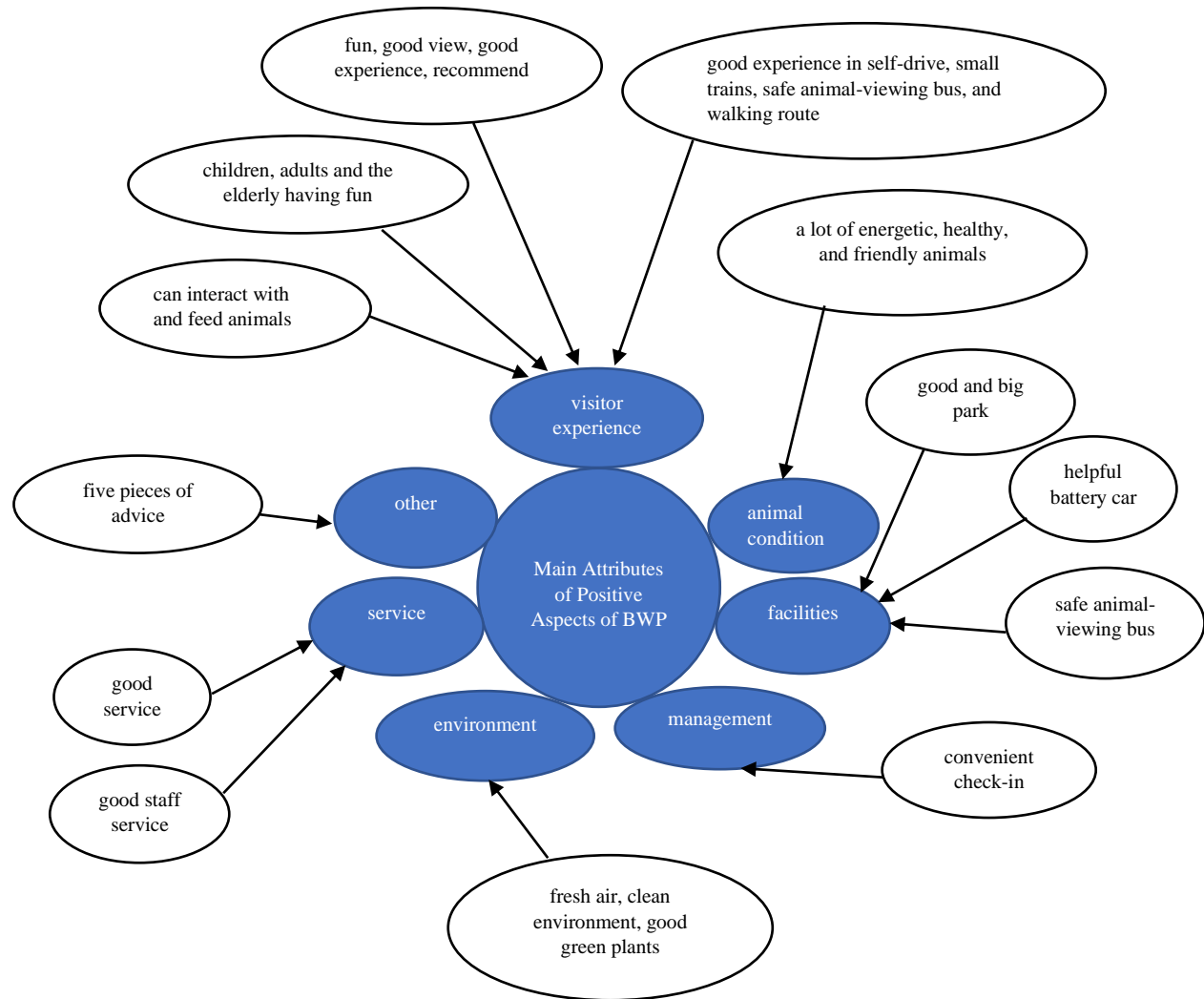
The main complaints were about unclear information about cars, activities, and tickets, poor staff service, and poor phone signals. It was evident that BWP needed to update their website regularly. In terms of poor staff service, while there may not have been enough staff, it is possible that there may also have been too many visitors for staff to handle. More staff can be hired and more quality training could be arranged for staff, to increase the quality of service.

### 5.3 Summary

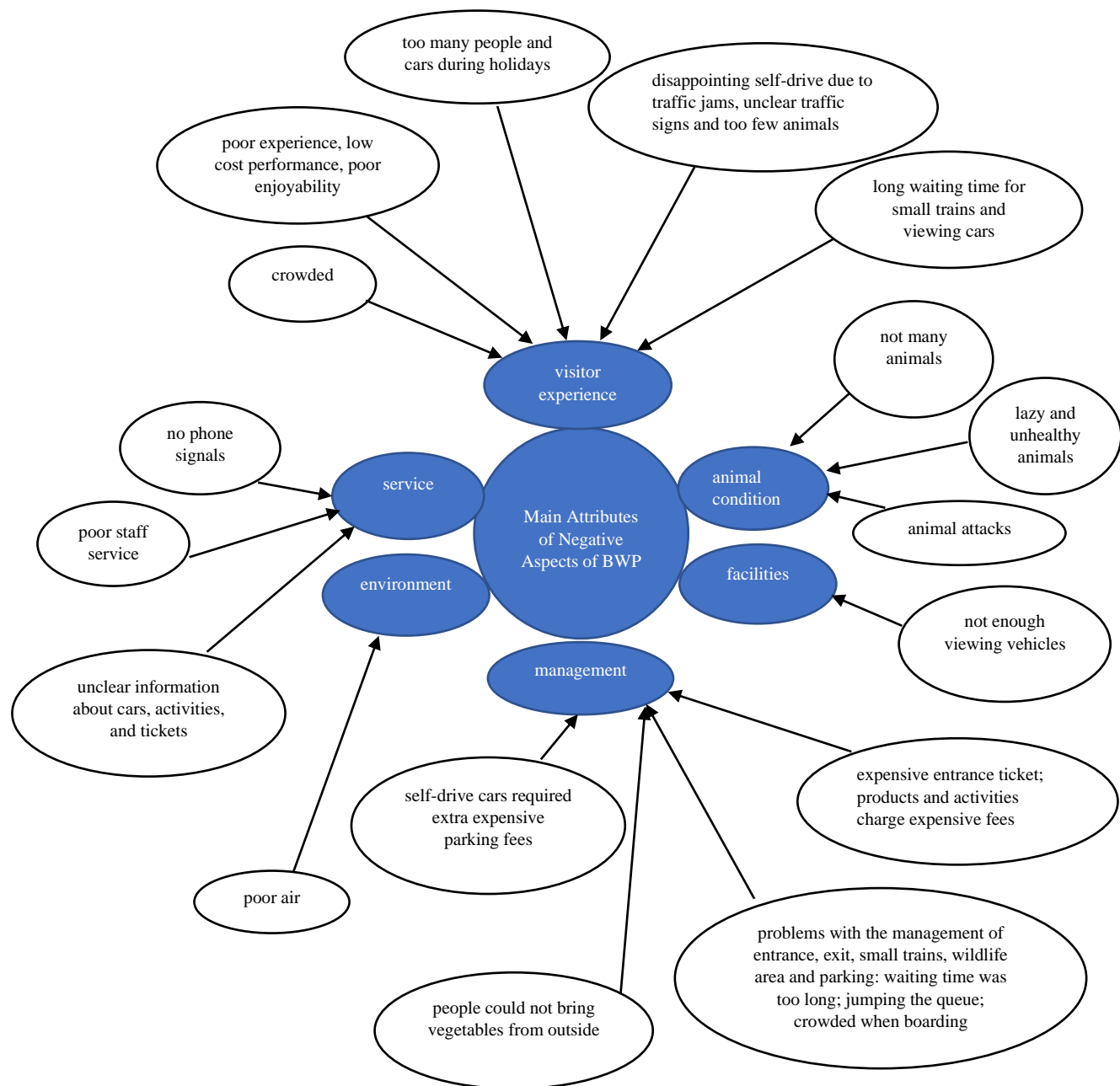
As the service industry faces increasingly fierce competition from market pressures, high-quality service is a major strategy for the survival and development of any enterprise (Sukwadi & Yang, 2014). As collections of animals to be protected and studied, zoological parks are popular recreational places (Sukwadi & Yang, 2014). Service quality is recognised as the main driving force for improving customer satisfaction, and therefore, competitiveness (Chang, 2008). For most zoo visitors, the main element of quality service may be the tangible elements of the parks. As quality is a multi-dimensional composition, managers must be competent in managing the key attributes/characteristics of their service operations (Corrêa et al., 2007). Therefore, managers' success in increasing tourists' quality of experience may lie in their ability to improve the quality of the service attributes of a zoological park. By managing the performance of the service attributes, service quality can be enhanced. When visitors have had positive experiences, they are likely to feel satisfied with their visit, and be willing to revisit the zoo. As not all attributes can meet the needs of tourists, it is important to know which major attributes have the greatest influence on tourist satisfaction (Ramseook-Munhurrin et al., 2009). Thus, when evaluating service offerings, understanding which aspects tourists consider most important has become a priority for zoos (Sukwadi & Yang, 2014). In this research, analysing the online comments on Ctrip and Qunar regarding BWP provided interpretative codes in numbers and percentiles, showing the main attributes of BWP (see Figure 2 and Figure 3

). This research makes useful contributions for BWP managers and planners developing strategies to improve visitor satisfaction.

**Figure 2:**  
*Main Attributes of Positive Aspects of BWP*



**Figure 3:**  
*Main Attributes of Negative Aspects of BWP*



Seeking to strengthen their conservation missions, zoos have become powerful driving forces for environmental education (Moss & Esson, 2010). Studies have shown that there are many reasons for people to visit zoos, and zoos are considered by many visitors as destinations for family leisure, entertainment, and social activities (Reading & Miller, 2007), as well as being educational places (Falk et al., 2008). Except for

formal education initiatives, such as those designed for schools and other organised groups, or organised public lecture programmes, much of the learning potential at a zoo lies in viewing animals and visitors' interactions with them (Moss & Esson, 2010). In other words, even if it is difficult to quantify, the learning potential is greatly associated with the attractiveness of animal species and visitors' interest in them. Based on the online comments collected, there was no specific educational activities or information at BWP. In this regard, one suggestion for BWP is that based on such information, its species planning process can make informed decisions about which species should be used for educational value to maximise BWP's educational benefits.

#### **5.4 Strengths and Limitations**

Even though all of the available comments on Ctrip and Qunar apps were successfully downloaded, some comments may have been removed by website administrators to protect BWP's image. Thus, there may have been comments considered offensive or inappropriate by website administrators, that could not be viewed or analysed (Giles et al., 2015). Such comments potentially offer legitimate opinions, and their exclusion may have resulted in some bias in the research results (Giles et al., 2015). On the basis of considering the readership of apps, the wording of included comments, and whether initial negative reviews led to other negative reviews, no strong evidence was found to support the notion that visitor reviews on Ctrip and Qunar were influenced by these factors, because many reviews in each theme were similar.

It could be argued that researchers interested in accuracy should focus on the data collection process, instead of the data collected (Kozinets, 1998). Thus, whether the online comments and commenters represented the range of views of the public was considered. Therefore, two of the most popular Chinese travel apps, Ctrip and Qunar, were those selected, so some of the most-read comments on this topic were largely captured for analysis. All readers' comments were analysed to help identify major matters raised by commenters. Another potential limitation relates to the lack of control over who made the comments and their demographic characteristics. On Ctrip and Qunar apps, it was difficult to determine the gender, age, and social status of the commenters, so it is not possible to determine how representative they are of the Chinese public. That said, the problem of representativeness is not unique to the results of netnographic research (Giles et al., 2015). Considering the various views expressed

both in support and not in support of visiting BWP, and numerous obvious contradictions in the data, there is confidence that the range of opinions offered were captured. However, this does not necessarily mean that the sample completely represents the general population, so further research is needed to determine whether these views are repeated in a representative sample.

The data collection method used allowed the collection of a series of spontaneous opinions that are generated when an individual is able to post comments without the demand characteristics of primary data research, and with the added protection of anonymity (Coulson, 2005). This method gave access to honest public perceptions of BWP. However, due to the anonymity of the internet, some commenters may feel they do not need to be honest or polite (Fredheim et al., 2015). There is also a possibility that interested parties paid commenters to make their comments (Thomas-Meyer et al., 2017), and the extent and impact of this practice on research findings remains unknown. However, as the 601 comments on the two Chinese apps had significant overlaps of opinions, the full corpus of comments was highly likely to accurately reflect the range of opinions present.

To operationalise the study, netnography was selected as the research technique. Netnographic analysis is based on collected consumer reviews that contain detailed information about the commenters' experiences posted on the internet (Thanh & Kirova, 2018). In netnography, a large amount of opinions can be conveniently gathered. This is a strength, as a large number of opinions can be analysed (Kozinets, 2012) with limited resources (Moraes & Michaelidou, 2012), and within a short period of time. Compared with traditional interviews or focus group methods, this approach requires less resources because participants do not have to be recruited and interviews do not have to be arranged, conducted, or transcribed (Giles et al., 2015). As no researchers were present when commenters made their comments, researcher influence on the results was negligible. Conversely, the lack of researcher interference in the data also meant that commenters' reasoning and meaning could not be probed (Thomas-Meyer et al., 2017). Despite this, the complexity of interpretive codes and the seven themes identified indicates that comments were not superficial.

## 5.5 Ethical Considerations

According to Kozinets (2015), netnography is a specific method for conducting ethnographic research on the internet. It is still a relatively new method for collecting and analysing data, and there is less guidance on the ethics of applying this method than for others (Giles et al., 2015). Therefore, it is useful to talk about the major ethical issues associated with this method. Firstly, online comments collected from the Ctrip and Qunar apps initially were not offered for research purposes, and commenters do not necessarily know that their comments were used for this study. Therefore, informed consent was not required for their participation in the research. However, commenters were aware that their comments could be viewed by others, as these were posted online publicly (Kraut et al., 2004). Secondly, researchers, including me, do not necessarily identify themselves as researchers and observers to online commenters, because when comments are posted online, comments are just read and used; researchers do not become part of a conversation or discussion. In other words, we, as researchers, do not have any influence, negative or positive, on data collected in the research. Thirdly, to protect the anonymity of commenters, any details that could have identified them were carefully deleted. Finally, a summary of research findings was not provided to participants. Those who posted the comments are anonymous and therefore hard to contact. This can be considered a difficulty, because most commenters are unlikely to review their website after they have made their comments, even if headline results were posted on the websites from where the initial comments had been collected (Giles et al., 2015). Therefore, a recognised limitation of online research is that it is very difficult to debrief subjects compared to the case of traditional research methods (Kraut et al., 2004).



## **Chapter 6. Conclusion**

### **6.1 Summary of Findings**

From this netnographic study, involving a thematic analysis of online comments, seven themes were identified in positive and negative comments. These were: “visitor experience,” “animal condition,” “facilities,” “management,” “environment,” “service,” and “other.” There were many positive comments, such as those about visitors having a good experience, the healthy animals, clean and safe facilities, good management, favourable environment, and good service, all providing evidence of the positive aspects of BWP. The negative comments mainly focused on the crowds experienced during holidays, expensive products and activities, poor animal living conditions, problematic facilities, poor management (especially during holidays), difficulties interacting with animals using self-drive options, poor air quality, and unsatisfactory staff service, demonstrating the negative aspects of BWP. Interpretative codes of both positive and negative comments summarised the main attributes of each theme. In the positive comments, there were three main interpretative codes in the theme “visitor experience”: “fun, good view, good experience, recommend,” “children, adults and the elderly having fun,” and “good experience in self-drive, small trains, safe animal-viewing bus, and walking route.” In the theme “animal condition,” the only code was “a lot of energetic, healthy, and friendly animals.” In “facilities,” the three major codes were “good and big park,” “helpful battery car,” and “safe animal-viewing bus.” In the theme “management,” “convenient check-in” ranked top, and “good staff service” and “good service” ranked top in the “service” theme. In the theme “other,” there were five pieces of advice from visitors. Managers of BWP can make full use of the key attributes of the positive comments to formulate feasible and effective management plans or advertisements.

In the negative comments, there were also seven themes. In the theme “visitor experience,” the most frequent interpretative codes were “poor experience, low cost performance, poor enjoyability,” “too many people and cars during holidays,” “disappointing self-drive due to traffic jams, unclear traffic signs and too few animals,” and “long waiting time for small trains and viewing cars.” In the theme “animal condition,” “not many animals,” “lazy and unhealthy animals,” “animal attack,” and “poor animal shows” occurred most. In terms of “facilities,” “not enough viewing

vehicles” was the most common complaint. In the theme of “poor management,” “expensive entrance ticket, products, and activities, charged expensive fees,” “problems with the management of entrance, exit, small trains, wildlife area and parking: waiting time was too long; people jumped the queue; crowded when boarding,” and “self-drive cars required extra expensive parking fees” are worthy of attention. “Poor air” and “some animal houses have strong odours” were in the theme “environment.” Under the “service” theme, “unclear information about cars, activities, and tickets,” “poor staff service,” and “no phone signals” ranked top. The key attributes of negative comments could be used to address barriers to achieving the sustainable development of BWP.

## **6.2 Implications for Practice**

The seven themes for the positive and negative comments of BWP, showed the main attributes of BWP from different perspectives. From the positive comments, it was evident that visitors mostly enjoyed themselves at the BWP, but the negative comments showed that the main issue was during the holidays, when the park was very crowded with too many people and cars. Advice directly from visitors included “visit as early as you can,” and “wait for small trains first, and then animal-viewing buses, because there are a lot of people in these two places, and you can only choose one of the two if you visit without a special purpose,” and “visit in autumn.” Based on these research findings, it is recommended to visit BWP during non-holiday periods, otherwise it will be very crowded, or during holidays, visitor numbers could be controlled or more staff could be hired to maintain order.

There were deep contrasts and contradictions in the views expressed, highlighting that a “one size fits all” solution for problems is unlikely to be effective. For example, some visitors commented that there were a lot of animals at BWP, while others had the opposite view. Tailoring and targeting various different management measures may be the most effective and acceptable in this situation (Cameron & Ritter, 2007). Research may need to explore how to adjust interventions while achieving both effective and cost-effective solutions (Giles et al., 2015). Online comments are subjective, so some could not reveal the truth. Different visitors may give opposite views on the same topic, such as the condition of animals. During a day, animals can exhibit different behaviours. During cool weather, they can be energetic and willing to interact with visitors, but if it is hot, they prefer to sleep or hide in the shade. Therefore, different

visitors encounter different animal behaviours on the same day. Regarding this, BWP could explain this kind of animal behaviour to visitors in advance, and explain animal numbers, behaviours, and habits, in different situations.

The most negative view expressed was that there were too many people during holidays, leading to various problems. Tourism is best understood as a sector of consumption, and with living standards rising, people consume increasing amounts of travel and tourism; tourists contribute 11% of global consumption according to one report (Goodwin, 2017). Increasing numbers of people engage in travel, which often results in over-tourism. In a destination suffering from over-tourism, the hosts or guests, locals or tourists, think that there are too many tourists, and the quality of the experience in the area declines unacceptably (Goodwin, 2017). There were too many visitors during holidays at BWP, stretching beyond the park's capacity, showing that BWP managers were too focused on financial benefits. To achieve the sustainable development of BWP, measures should be implemented to deal with such issues. In the short term, zoos should be managed responsibly, rather than allowing them to chase economic benefits only. As the world is a whole, industries and people are interdependent and mutually developed. In the long term, being part of the world, the tourism industry should not only show responsibility towards tourism businesses, but also towards the environment, social community, and each generation's offspring.

Netnography is a relatively new methodology. Compared with other qualitative research methods, the unique strength of netnography is that it is good at telling stories, understanding complex social phenomena, and helping researchers develop topics from the perspective of consumers (Rageh et al., 2013). Further research is needed however, to clarify the effectiveness of this method in collecting public opinions from the internet. It may also be useful to consider the value of different ethnographic methods (Giles et al., 2015). For example, one could be immersed in the online setting, instead of simply downloading online comments (Giles et al., 2015) as was done in this research. In addition, on different apps, the percentage of visitors posting comments about visiting BWP and the generalisations from data collected could be further explored. However, the limited existing research in this area, especially on BWP, shows that those who post comments online are just a small proportion of the visitors.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Ctrip Positive Comments

Ctrip Positive Comments		
Rank	Word	Frequency
1	值得 (worth it)	106
2	不错 (nice)	103
3	推荐 (recommend)	102
4	体验 (experience)	101
5	好玩 (fun)	93
6	有趣 (interesting)	90
7	景色 (view)	83
8	孩子 (children)	34
9	动物 (animal)	31
10	可以 (capable of )	22
11	野生动物园 (wildlife park) /动物园 (zoo)	21
12	开心 (happy)	17
13	猛兽 (wildlife)	12
14	喜欢 (like)	11
15	感觉 (feel)	9
16	排队 (wait in line)	9
17	火车 (train)	9
18	时间 (time)	8
19	地方 (location)	8
20	方便 (convenient)	8
21	小时 (hour)	7
22	游览 (tour)	5
23	互动 (interact)	5
24	老虎 (tiger)	5

## Appendix B: Ctrip Negative Comments

Ctrip Negative Comments		
Rank	Word	Frequency
1	动物 (animal)	79
2	动物园/园区/野生动物园 (zoo/park/wildlife park)	63
3	没有 (does not have)	53
4	排队 (wait in line)	52
5	小时 (hour)	50
6	火车 (train)	40
7	体验 (experience)	35
8	孩子 (children)	30
9	工作人员 (staff)	21
10	门票 (ticket)	21
11	门口 (entrance)	20
12	堵车 (traffic jam)	19
13	知道 (know)	19
14	时间 (time)	18
15	不让 (prohibit)	17
16	结果 (in the end)	16
17	进去 (enter)	16
18	里面 (in the park)	16
19	猛兽 (wildlife)	16
20	建议 (advice)	16
21	根本 (not at all)	16
22	不好 (bad)	16
23	特别 (especially)	15

## Appendix C: Qunar Positive Comments

Qunar Positive Comments		
Rank	Word	Frequency
1	动物园 (zoo) /野生动物园 (wildlife park) / 园区 (park)	34
2	火车 (train)	26
3	不错 (nice)	20
4	孩子 (children)	18
5	方便 (convenient)	17
6	动物 (animal)	16
7	猛兽 (wildlife)	12
8	开心 (happy)	11
9	排队 (wait in line)	10
10	体验 (experience)	9
11	值得 (worth it)	9
12	地方 (location)	8
13	建议 (advise)	8
14	感觉 (feel)	8
15	便宜 (cheap)	8
16	喜欢 (like)	8
17	看到 (saw)	7
18	工作人员 (staff)	7
19	北京 (Beijing)	7

## Appendix D: Qunar Negative Comments

Qunar Negative Comments		
Rank	Word	Frequency
1	没有 (does not have)	14
2	动物 (animal)	13
3	动物园 (zoo) / 野生动物园 (wildlife park)	17
4	排队 (wait in line)	8
5	孩子 (children)	8
6	不是 (not)	7
7	火车 (train)	7
8	建议 (advise)	6
9	门票 (ticket)	5
10	服务 (service)	5
11	猛兽 (wildlife)	5
12	不如 (not as good as)	4
13	联系 (contact)	4
14	不能 (cannot)	4
15	回来 (come back)	4
16	一直 (all the time)	4
17	导游 (tourist guide)	3