The Image of Wuhan as a Tourist Destination

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Destination branding is a hot topic nowadays. One of the principal challenges facing many destinations is the need to differentiate themselves from competition with many of them offering very similar product offerings. Wuhan, which is the largest and populous city in the central China with thousands of historical development, is still looking for the appropriate image and own way of branding style. The aim of the thesis is to analysis current image of Wuhan as a tourist city, and to find out new way of branding Wuhan. The research is done through several steps. In the beginning a theoretical background is prepared to get a map of destination and city as a tourism product. Later on the thesis will analysis problems of Wuhan as a tourist destination and factors influencing the image. In the end, future suggestions will be given to build appropriate image of Wuhan in the tourism aspects. Quantitative research method is taken in the form of questionnaire. The contents are concentrating on the opinions and comments about image of Wuhan as a tourist destination from the viewpoints of Wuhan citizenship and Chinese visitors. 140 respondents of different nationalities answered the questionniares. Results were collected through several methods. The research will be beneficial for the Educational Bureau of Wuhan, Hongshan Department. Since the research method is mainly done by quantitative questionnaire, a majority of questionnaires were distributed through the bureau. Furthermore, the Edu-cational Bureau has built close co-operation with the Tourism Bureau of Wuhan, the research in the future will definitely helpful to the police making related to tourism of Wuhan.	
Keywords Wuhan, destination branding, city, image, Chinese tourists, quantitative research	

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1 Introduction

1.1 Subject background

Destination image is a hot topic nowadays, and both positive and negative image has strong impact on people's decisions and buying behaviour especially in the tourism industry. However, building a positive image is becoming more and more challengeable and difficult, since people are more and more demanding in the selection of holidays nowadays (Vankova 2008). Destination image is also an essential topic for capital cities and communities, as they are belong to a country. If there is something inappropriate in the city image, it will probably have difficulties finding tourists who are willing to visit this city.

Wuhan is the largest and most populous city in the central China. The city has almost five thousands of historical development so far. During those years, Wuhan has been developing in an amazing speed. Accompanied with the construction of metro, the three towns of Wuhan were connected completely which improves the development of tourism in Wuhan. However, Wuhan is still looking for the appropriate image and own way of branding style. When the city Wuhan comes to people's mind, snacks and cuisine and Yellow Crane Tower are the so-called 'image' – even not an official image. Because of characters of Wuhan's residents – lively, enthusiastic, speaking loudly and bumbling behaviour, they always bring negative image to people from other cities. Above all, to brand a new and appropriate image for Wuhan has becoming urgent.

Since the government of Wuhan was concentrating on branding a new Wuhan, for instance the Aerial video 'Love. Wuhan' and certain events such as new logo designing competition, there are slightly changes, while it is not enough to change radically. The aim of the thesis is to analyse current image of Wuhan as a tourist city, and to find out new way of branding Wuhan. It is also personal will to introduce Wuhan, thesis writer's home city to International students and teachers.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The main objective of the thesis is to determine what perceptions Chinese, who is living and have visited Wuhan, have about the city Wuhan as a tourist destination. Research results are to reflect the perceptions Chinese people have about the image of Wuhan.

The research is done through several steps. In the beginning a theoretical background is prepared to get a map of a destination and a city as a tourism product. Later on the thesis will answer problems of Wuhan as a tourist destination and factors influencing the image. In the end, future suggestions will be given to build positive image of Wuhan.

The research will be beneficial for the Educational Bureau of Wuhan, Hongshan Department. Since the research method is mainly done by quantitative questionnaire, a majority of questionnaires were distributed through the bureau. Furthermore, the Educational Bureau has built close co-operation with the Tourism Bureau of Wuhan, the research in the future will definitely helpful to the policy making related to tourism of Wuhan.

1.3 Research problem and research questions

The research problem of the thesis is to identify the existing image of Wuhan as a tourist destination from the viewpoint of Chinese people. Later on an analysis will be adopted to differentiate the positive and negative image. Additionally, it is essential to find out the factors that influence the existing images. In the end comes to the suggestions and planning programmes about tourism development in Wuhan.

The main research problem is:

'What is the image of Wuhan as a tourist destination from the viewpoint of Chinese including residents of Wuhan and visitors outside Wuhan?'

There are several sub-questions related to the thesis following the main research problem:

- *What are the main factors and elements affecting the local Chinese image of Wuhan as a tourist destination?*
- *What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of Wuhan as a tourist destination?*
- *Which strategies could be improved to attract more Chinese visitor?*

In this study it does not distinguish the difference between business travel and leisure tourism, since the target group of respondents are mostly from local residents and citizens from other Chinese cities. As a result most of the visit motivations are for leisure.

2 Tourist destination

2.1 Understanding tourism and types of tourism

Tourism is 'a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes (UNWTO 2005-2007).' As mentioned by Goeldner and Ritchie (2006, in Weaver & Lawton 2010), tourism is 'the sum of the processes, activities, and outcomes arising from the relationships and the interactions among tourists, tourism suppliers, host governments, host communities, and surrounding environments that are involved in the attracting, transporting, hosting and management of tourists and other visitors.'

According to the UNWTO, *domestic tourism, inbound tourism* and *outbound tourism* are three main types of tourism (UNWTO 2008). Besides that internal tourism, national tourism and international tourism are other types.

In China, the total contribution of tourism to GDP (including wider effects from investment, supply chain and income) was CNY 4,78 billion (around €5,561 billion) in 2012 and was expected to grow by 8% to CNY 5, 17 billion (around €6,005 billion) (WTTC 2013).

2.2 Tourist attractions

A tourist attraction is a place of interest where tourists visit, typically for its inherent or exhibited cultural value, historical significance, natural or built beauty, or amusement opportunities (Abyareh 2007). A tourist, a sign / site in a non-home place and the interest or motivation of the tourist are three key elements comprising a tourist attraction (Lew, Hall & Timothy 2008, 37-38).

According to Middleton and Clark (2001), there are four main types of attractions appearing to visitors:

- *Natural attractions:* Landscape, seascape, beach, climate and other geographical features of destination and its natural resources
- *Built attractions:* Modern architecture, monuments, parks and gardens, ski slopes, golf courses
- *Cultural attractions:* History and folklore, theatre, art, music, dance and other entertainment
- *Social attractions:* Way of life and customers of resident or host population, language and opportunities for social encounters

2.3 Tourism products

Yilmaz and Bitizti (2005) argued that a tourism product 'constitutes a mix of the characteristics of the services and the singular features of the tourism industry, what really differentiate the product from any physical good.'

There are several characters that related to a tourism product (Middleton 2001; Rey 2004; Seaton 1994; Kotler et al. 2005):

- *Intangibility:* The tourist product is not able to be perceived from the senses (e.g. organ, touch and hearing) and cannot be proved before consuming activities; consequently there are high risks in the tourism industry.

- *Heterogeneity:* Services are offered by a person, which means there is no possibility of obtaining two similar products.

- *Perishability:* Tourism product is not consumer when it is offered.

- *Inseparability:* The product is produced and consumed at the very same time.

- *Seasonality:* The demand highly fluctuates among the seasons of the year.

- *High fix costs of operations:* The basic infrastructures for the tourism activity suppose great fix costs, such as buildings and transport infrastructures.

- *Interdependence:* Tourists consume not just a single product or service but a bunch of services and products combinations; all of them are interdependent.

Tourism involves large amounts of products comprising to a single industry, according to A.V.Seaton and M.M.Bennett's research (A.V.Seaton & M.M.Bennett's research 1996, 113):

- *Accommodation:* Hotels, bed and breakfast, self-catering, camp sites, etc.
- *Attraction:* Museums, galleries, theme parks, festivals, etc.
- *Transportation:* Cruise lines, ferry companies, airlines, cars hire, etc.
- *Travel organizer:* Tour operators, travel agencies, booking agencies, etc.
- *Destination organization:* National tourist offices (NTOs), area tourist boards, chambers of commerce, local authorities, etc.

3 Destination branding

This chapter will introduce the notion of tourist destination, different images about the destination, and how to brand it.

3.1 What is a destination?

'Destination' is one of the most frequently used vocabularies in the tourism. As mentioned by Wolfgang (p.3), a 'destination' is the 'sum of interests, activities, facilities, infrastructure and attractions.' A destination is the combination of multiple effects on tourists, tourist organizations and authorities. Based on the explanation, a destination cannot be called 'destination' if the tourists do not exist.

Over 30 years' years, different organizations have had different viewpoint about physical boundaries of a so-called 'destination'. They even did not think about it or ignored it. The understanding of 'a destination' is based on products which satisfy the demands of tourists in the business point of view, while the sociologists think that 'every tourist act socially creates his or her own tourism place or space (Wolfgang. F p.3)'. However, the common view was that destinations are determined by basic elements such as attractions, accessibilities and amenities. The destinations are usually called 'tourist destinations'. It is always the elements determine the destination area (Wolfgang. F p.3). In a conclusion, a destination is not a certain place with extinct boundaries (Wolfgang. F p.3).

The content of a 'destination' could be divided into three sections: *attractions, facilities and services*. Sometimes destination is treated as attraction which is a combination of experiences, facilities and services (Wolfgang. F p.3). Facilities and services are not analysed as much as attractions.

3.2 A city as a tourist destination

A tourist destination is 'an area, region or country that disposes all the tourist services needed to satisfy the demands of the tourists (Tamara. R & László. P 2002).' A city

could be seen as a tangible good, a service, an idea, or even an experience. Unique marketing will makes a city attractive in the physical goods (e.g. parks, streets, monuments) and transportation system (Bonita 2006, 10). All the factors have important effect on the reputation of the city, for instance if it is historical, traditional or modern city. Another consequence brought from the physical good is the geographical location. Does the city locate near the river, ocean, land or where else? Cultural background also influences the phenomenon of the city, such as religion.

Additionally, services are one of the most important sectors in the city tourism. Those include cuisine, accommodation, entertainment and other establishments such as theatrical products, dance performance, concerts, festivals, events, parades, shopping availabilities and parks. In all, the image of a city concludes both physical factor and service sector. Below table 1 summarizes the key components of city as a tourist destination.

Table 1. Product component of the city (Bonita 2006, 10)

Place	Services/Events	Image
Interesting architecture	Festivals	Exciting
	Parades	Historical
Historical buildings	Cultural events	Charming
Cultural facilities	Plays	Friendly
Churches, temples, mosques	Sports	Beautiful
Unique street patterns	Tours	Artistic
Public parks or squares	Cinemas	Ethnic
Walking path, canals	Hotel rooms	Spiritual
Mountains, rivers, oceans	Dining	Licentious
Monument	Entertainment	Family fun
Transportation system		

3.3   Image of destination

Image is the mental conception, perception and idea. Defined by Balogu and Brinberg (1997, in Weaver & Lawton 2010, image is 'the sum of beliefs, attitudes and impressions held by a person or group of people towards some phenomenon.' The image of a tourist destination, especially a country, may influence the decision for tourists choosing a destination (Awuah & Reinert 2011, 135). There is no difference between positive and negative image, and the destination itself is based on 'people's perception of a location that creates the scene and motivates them to travel (Makkonen 2008).'

According to Gunn (1972), destination images 'can be placed on a scale, starting from an organic image, followed by the induced image and ending in the complex image.' Image to a destination is important and it is all about how a place is represented can inspire people come to visit and to revisit it (Coshall 2000, Tapachai & Waryszak 2000, in Morgan, Pritchard & Pride 2002). Figure 1 describes the formation of destination image.
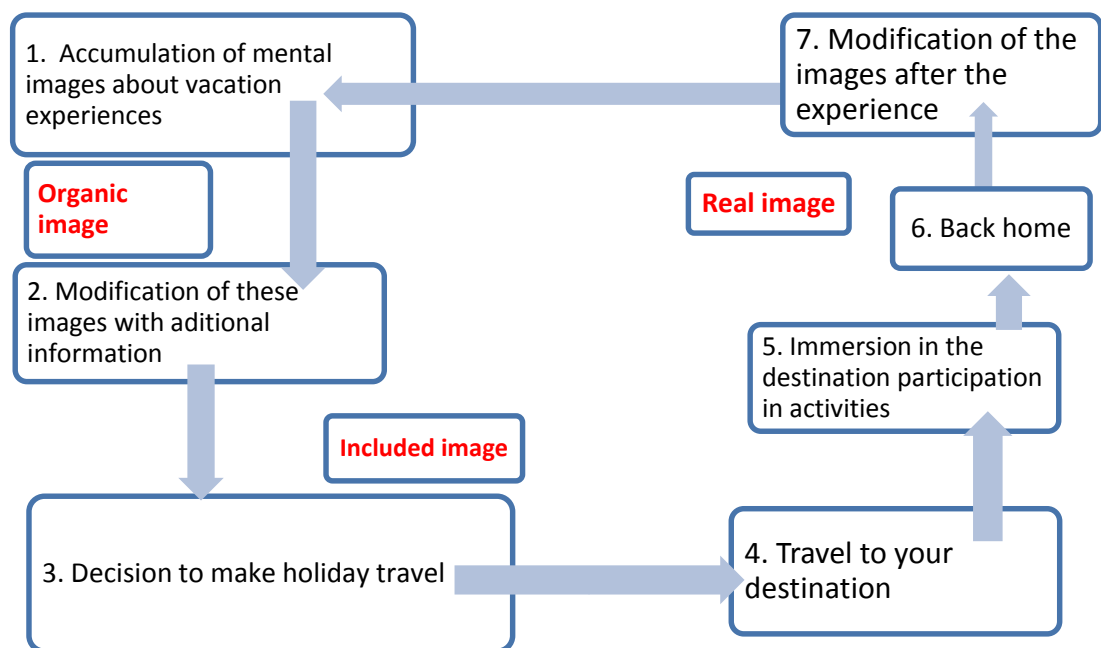

Figure 1. Postulated relationships between motivation and destination image (Gunn 1972, Fakeye & Crompton 1991)

In the early stage of the study, Gunn divided the destination image into two dimensions: organic image and induced image. Organic image illustrated original impression of a destination when the tourists have not physically visited yet, while induced image

shows after visiting the destination. According to Kotler and Gertner (2004, 42, in Kishko 2010), even a country does not consciously manage and promote its name as a brand, people have a certain image of countries.

The organic image depended purely on non-touristic and non-commercial sources in the beginning through different approaches, such as mass media, education and opinions of peer groups. After the organic image was modified into induced image when there were more and more tourism information came out (e.g. brochures, travel websites, travel guidebooks, travel agents), people found a new way of knowing about information of tourist destination (e.g. climate, food, culture, history).

Later on Fakeye and Crompton (1991) improved based on Gunn's theory. They defined organic image as 'a large awareness set of potential destination', and induced image as 'the personnel contacts, the beliefs and the image portrayed by marketers.' Additionally, they appended the third dimension - the real image, which means, if the organic image is unfavourable, or the induced image was not as interesting as the tourists imagine.

After visiting the destination, the image from the tourists were changed and modified, and the experiences were based on actual visiting to the destination. The image is becoming more and more complicated and differentiated because of direct visiting experiences to the destination (Kishko 2010).

3.4 Branding and marketing

Destination branding has risen on the agenda in municipal government which are trying to attract tourism and investment and for national resources (Dinnie 2011, 131-137). Most destinations have a unique selling opportunity that can be translated into a unique selling proposition. Whatever proposition is used it must also have the potential to last, to grow old and to evolve in a long-term branding campaign, thereby it is essential to get it now and as soon as possible (Morgan, Pritchard & Pride 2002). As mentioned by the Blue Book of Cities in China (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 209), China has 118 megalopolises of more than one million people, whilst 39 super-metrop-

olises (e.g. Beijing, Shanghai, Shenyang) of over two million residents. Since Wuhan belongs to the numerous groups, it has already become a challenge to be a maverick genius within other cities.

Destination marketing is one of the most important contents in the place marketing. The process of place image creation, place promotion and place marketing are seen as the essential links matching the tourism product and the tourism experience – the holiday and the individual (Goodall & Ashworth 1988, in Kishko 2010). Therefore, special marketing materials and promotion are needed in order to attract more and more tourists. By corrective and positive promotion there will be more tourists visiting.

Defined by Wahab et al. (1976, 24 in Moilanen 2008, 23-24), the definition of destination marketing is:

> 'tourist destination marketing is the management process through which the National Tourist Organization and /or tourist enterprise identify their selected tourists, actual and potential, communicate with them to ascertain their wishes, needs, motivations, likes and dislikes, on local, regional, national and international levels, and to formulate and adapt their tourist products accordingly in view of achieving optimal tourist satisfaction thereby fulfilling their objectives.'

Today, destination marketing is performed through the world since each destination should be individual and unique, and have own features. Good destination branding should reflect a promise being delivered and matching expectations from visitors, while the branding should be sustainable, believable and relevant (Morgan, Pritchard & Pride 2004). It is suggested that a detailed destination marketing planning is needed, and the outcome is SWOT analysis (Laws 1995).

Internet is a tremendous instrument for developing strong destination marketing. It has strong effect on the marketing of destination since the television was invented, compared to any types of technology (Howie 2003). Comparing to traditional methods, using internet is able to promote the destination specifically aimed at the needs of individual tourists (Morgan, Pritchard & Pride 2002, 196-197). Nowadays internet becomes powerful for promotion, distribution and selling process in the tourism, which means, the promotional messages are available to be handled amazingly than the situation

when brochures are needed to be printed and decisions are needed to be made (Morgan, Pritchard & Pride 2002, 121-122).

The role that destination management organizations play cannot be ignored. Those groups should be proactive in tacking urban environmental quality issues (e.g. littering and air pollution) urban planning, designing issues of public squares and traffic-free areas (e.g. 'people places') (Howie 2003).

4 Consumer behaviour in tourism

This chapter will introduce the consumer behaviour of tourist destination. What are the main reasons that tourists come to visit the tourist destinations, experiences that tourists have during their visit, types of visitors, and the destination selecting process.

4.1 Analysis of tourists visiting Wuhan

Tourists, in the terminology of UNWTO, are 'visitors and tourists for the specific category of stay overs and same-day visitors'. According to Weaver and Lawton (2010), tourists can be divided either in international or domestic, and either in stay overs or excursionists. Figure 2 illustrates four major types of tourists in the possible categories:
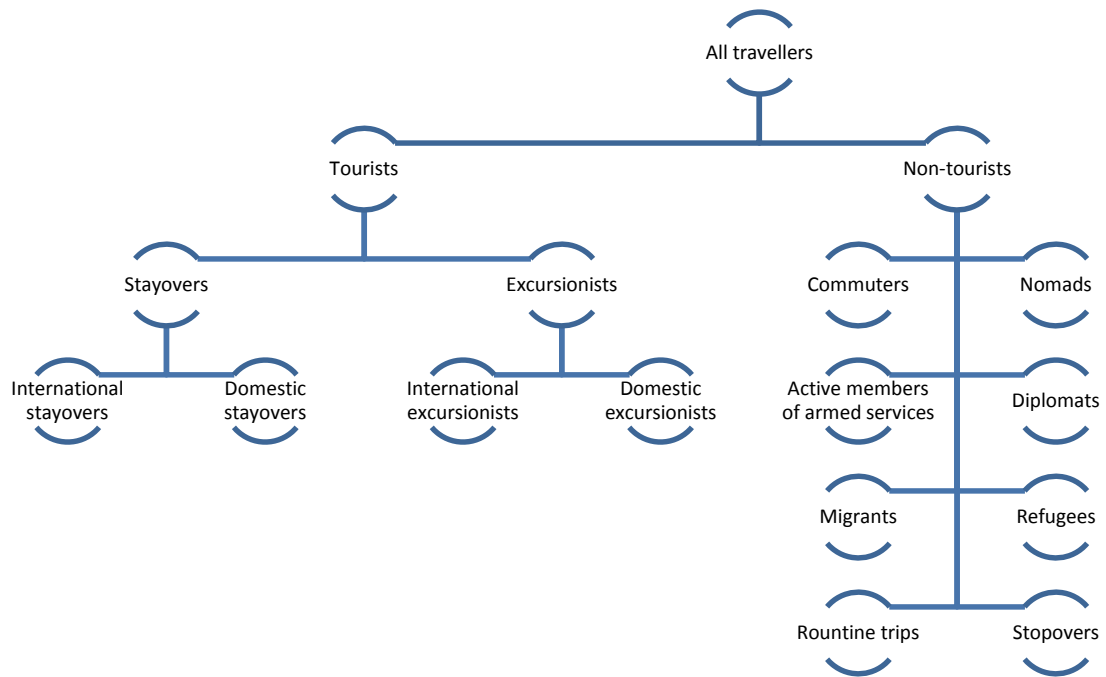
Figure 2. Four types of tourist within a broad travel context (Weaver & Lawton 2010)

The first category is the international stay overs. Those are the tourists 'who remain in a destination outside their usual country of residence for at least one night'. Correspondingly are the international excursionists, by staying in the destination at least one night with no visit experiences. The third group is the domestic stay overs. Those people stay at least one night in the destination in the same country of residence, for instance people from Helsinki stay at least one night in Porvoo which is the town close

to each other. The last group is the domestic excursionists which is undertaken a one-day trip without staying overnight in the destination.

According to China Tourism Academy, comparing to business travel, most people come to Wuhan prefer to spend leisure time in Wuhan. In general more people come from southern China. In addition to this, part people come to Wuhan for studying in the universities and find employment opportunities. Young groups especially students are in the majority. Since they do not have much income, they prefer to travel by themselves to get travel experiences. Furthermore, the peak tourist seasons are in January, February, July and August. Usually more tourists visit Wuhan (China Tourism Academy 2013).

Comparing to outbound Chinese tourists, the inbound tourists pretend to be much natural and comfortable since they do not have difficulties in language and culture. Although the tourists may feel certain difference of local customs, they will have special experiences of Chu culture during travel (China Tourism Academy 2013).

For most tourists, cuisine style of Wuhan is a must-to-taste. This is important to attract Chinese tourists which are different to the cuisine style of other cities (e.g. Cantonese cuisine). Except this, Chinese people like shopping. When they come to Wuhan and looking for shopping facilities, several department stores collecting amounts of brands are great choice. For students who have limited budget, night market and small scale markets are best choices which are also welcomed by local residents of Wuhan.

4.2 Travel experiences

According to Swarbrooke & Horner (2007, 213-214), there are three factors of satisfying the consumer in tourism:

1. It leads to positive word-of-mouth recommendation of the product to friends and relatives, which in turn brings in new customers.
2. Creating a repeat customer by satisfying them with their first use of the product brings a steady source of income with no need for extra marketing expenditure.

3. Dealing with companies is expensive, time-consuming and bad for the organization's reputation. Furthermore, it can bring direct costs through compensation payments.

According to Ryan (2002), he gave certain explanations about tourist experience:

> 'Tourism today is perceived primarily as an individual good, and is of compara tively recent origin in its form of jet travel to far-off places undertaken in peri ods of short duration. It is an individual good in the sense that tourists pursue the holiday for selfish reasons by needs for relaxation and many tourists do not question the impact that tourism as a phenomenon creates.'

Emotional brand values of a destination is another important issue to care, for instance the hotel the tourists stay in, the friendless of local people or some overall impression (Tapachai & Waryszak 2000, in Morgan, Pritchard & Pride 2002, 19). In addition to that, most service products are 'intangible' – which means people cannot try them before they purchase, as a result people will purely trust information provided by travel agents and organizations, brochures and information on the website (Howie 2003).

4.3 Push and pull factors

The motivations related to tourists' choices of destinations can be classified into pull and push factors (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977; Epperson, 1983; McIntosh & Goeldner, 1990, in Prayag & Ryan 2010).

The 'push' factor can be originated from Maslow's hierarchy of needs in figure 3 (Mayo & Jarvis 1981, in Prayag & Ryan 2010; Maslow 1943). Crompton (1979, in Prayag & Ryan 2010) identified seven socio-psychological and two 'alternate cultural' factors motivating visitors choosing a destination: it is the escape from a perceived mundane environment, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relationships, and facilitation of social interaction, novelty, and education. It was confirmed by Iso-Ahola (1982, in in Prayag & Ryan 2010). Later on Kim et al. (2003, in Prayag & Ryan 2010) identified four broad domains of push factors namely: family togetherness and study, appreciating natural resources and

health, escaping from everyday routine, and adventure and building friendship. Figure 4 summarizes all types of 'push' factors influencing types of activities travelers prefer, why they choose certain destination, and what type of experiences they seek (Ryan 1991, in Prayag & Ryan 2010).
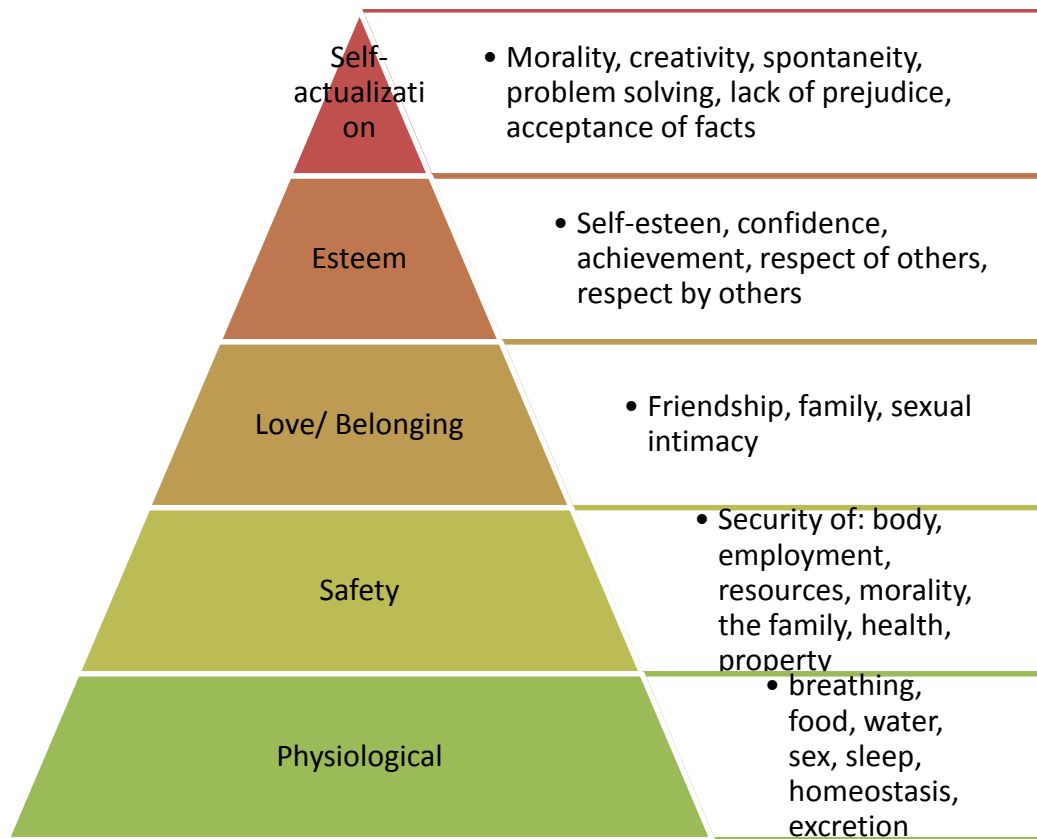
Figure 3. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow 1943)
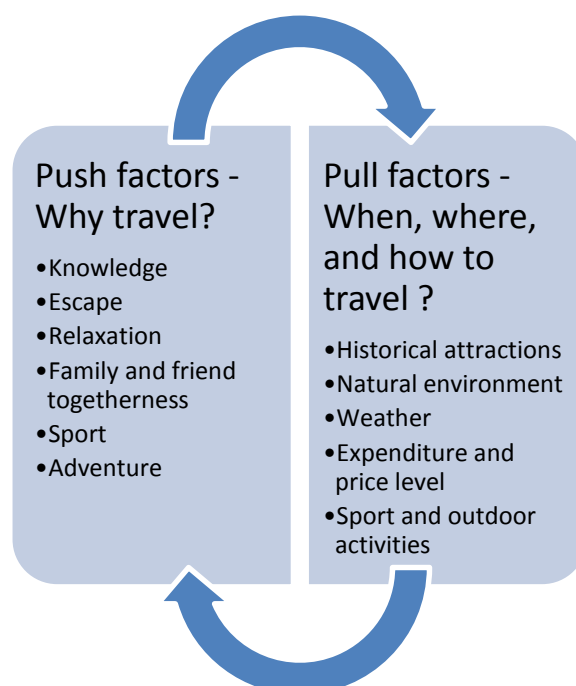
Figure 4. Push and pull factors in the tourism (Dann 1977, 184 - 194)

Defined by Mill and Morrison (1985; Klenosky 2002; Mill &Morrison, 1985; in Prayag & Ryan 2010), 'pull' factors can be defined as factors 'influencing when, where, and how people would like to travel and are related to the features, attractions, or attributes of the destination itself.' Since now and then 'pull' factors have become popular in the nowadays tourism research, such as 'social opportunities and attractions', 'natural and cultural attractions', 'physical amenities and facilities', and 'nightlife and ambiance' as important for destination choice (Fakeye & Crompton 1991; Hu & Ritchie 1993; Kim et al. 2003, in Prayag & Ryan 2010). Destination choice therefore 'emanates from tourists' assessments of destination attributes and their perceived utility values (Kim et al. 2003, in Prayag & Ryan 2010).'

5   Wuhan as a destination in China

This chapter will focus on the case Wuhan, a city as a tourist destination locating in China. Firstly there is a brief introduction about the internal tourism development in China and categories of Chinese tourists. In the next section will focus on the city of Wuhan, historical development and main tourist attractions of the city since history is an important part of the city. In the last the chapter will discuss about the current problems and challenges in the form of SWOT analysis based on the theories.

5.1   China internal tourism

Before going to the analysis about Chinese tourists, it is time to differentiate two notions: inbound tourism and internal tourism. Combining with target groups of residents of Wuhan and out-of-city visitors, it is important to distinguish the connection between them. According to the glossary of UNWTO (2005-2007), inbound tourism 'comprise the activities of a non-resident visitor within the country of reference on an inbound tourism trip', while internal tourism is the combination of domestic tourism and inbound tourism. Target groups include local residents and non-resident visitors within the country of reference. In this thesis the opinions about image of Wuhan as a travel city come from residents of Wuhan, non-residents in China and international groups. As a result, to know about tourism statistics of Wuhan it is more reliable to know about inbound tourism of China and ranking of Wuhan as a tourist destination.

China's tourism industry is one of the fastest-growing industries in the national economy. Ten years' ago, total revenue of tourism in China reached around €51.5 billion accounting for 5.44% of the GDP. In the last year 2012, number of Chinese resident travelling was increased to 2.96 billion person-times with a year-on-year growth rate (12.1%), according to National Bureau of Statistics of China. The revenue of domestic tourism has increased by 17.6 percent to €0.28 billion Yuan (Morning Whistle 2013). Wuhan is on the way of developing tourism. According to the statistics of Tourism Bureau of Wuhan 2010, total amount of inbound tourists is 88.5 million, and amount of international visitors is 0.92 million. Domestic tourism revenue is €90.25 billion, while total tourism revenue is €94.29 billion (Tourism Bureau of Wuhan 2010). According to the website of Travel China Guide, Wuhan is one of the cities which received more

than 200 thousand oversea tourists, and it is one of the 44 cities that had earned over 100 million US dollars from overseas tourist revenues (Travel China Guide 2011).

5.2 About the city, Wuhan

Wuhan (in Chinese '武汉', abbreviation 'Han') is the capital of Hubei Province and a modern metropolis with infinitive possibilities according to attachment 1. The city locates between the middle reaches of the Yangtze[1] and Han Rivers. Divided by the Yangtze, the city is known as the 'Three Towns of Wuhan' with Hankou and Hanyang on the west bank, and Wuchang on the east. The rest districts are shown on attachment 1. If China is analogized as a human body, Wuhan definitely locates in the heart of China. Until May 2011, the whole population of the city is 9,785,392 million (Dmworld Marketing Research Co.Ltd. Guangzhou 2011).

Wuhan is named as 'The nine Provinces' Leading Thoroughfare'. Since there are dozens of railways, roads, metros and expressways passing through the city, Wuhan is an important transportation hub called 'Chicago of China.' The distance between Wuhan and cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou is more or less equal. By the end of 2014 China will have built a high speed passenger transport network of 'four horizontal and four vertical' passenger lines with the connection of eight-hour provincial capital traffic circle. As an intersection location, Wuhan will be connected to Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Chongqing and Guangzhou. Described by China Travel Trends (2011), Wuhan will be the shipping center of the middle section of Yangtze River. With the development of transportation, it will bring more and more business travelers since more and more business opportunities in Wuhan in the close future.

As a sub-provincial city, major industries include optic-electronic, automobile manufacturing, steel manufacturing, new pharmaceutical sector, biology engineering, new materials industry and environmental protection. Wuhan is one of the top metropolises

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1 The Yangtze River (in Pin Yin 'Chang Jiang' and simplified Chinese '长江'), is the longest river in Asia and third longest river next to the Nile in Africa and the Amazon in South Africa. From the glaciers on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau in Qinghai to the East China Sea, the whole distance is 6,418 kilometres. The Yangtze River is also one of the biggest rivers by discharge volume in the world, which drains one-fifth of the land area of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and its river basin is home to one-third of the PRC's population.

of retails next to Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou of China. Hangzheng Street Small Commodities Market has been prosperous for hundreds of years and enjoys a world-wide reputation. Figure 6 is a picture recording the street view of Hangzhengjie Small Commodities Market.

Figure 6. Street view of Hanzhengjie Small Commodities Market (Top Yangtze Travel)

Wuhan is an energetic city, a political, economic, financial, cultural and educational centre, with many international companies located here. Having scientific, technological and educational institutions such as Wuhan University, the city is also an intellectual centre. Gathering large amounts of enrolled college students, Wuhan is one of the three scientific and educational centre following Beijing and Shanghai. There are eight national universities locate inside Wuhan. Besides that, there are 12 public, six PLA (People's Liberation Army), and six private universities.

Wuhan is a transportation hub gathering different transportation approaches, for instance railway, waterway, highway and airline. Wuhan Tianhe International Airport is located in Wuhan's suburban Huangpi District which is around 26 kilometres to the north of Wuhan city centre. Because it is located in the central China airline route network, it is the busiest airport in central China. International destinations flying from the airport include Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Los Angeles, Paris, San Francisco, Seoul,

and Singapore. By the end of 2010, Wuhan is expected to serve at least five international and 100 domestic routes. Public transportations are numerous in Wuhan. By buses and metro it is possible to get all the main attractions.

5.3 Tourism products in Wuhan

5.3.1 The history

The 'Chu' culture and Hankou

With a history that dates back more than 3,500 years, Wuhan is one of the "Chinese Famous Cities of History and Culture". It is difficult to find the exact time of the foundation of ancient Wuhan, but in the ancient time the land was called 'Chu[2]' which was the cradle of the Chu Civilization in the period of Pre-Qin[3] (Travel China Guide 2013).

After centuries in the Qing Dynasty, Hankou became one of the four best-known towns in China. The city was already the centre of trade and transportation in central China according to figure 7. Up to now Hankou is still an essential transportation hub in central China and a feature of Yangtze River cruises for leisure sightseeing and business travel between Sichuan and Shanghai and Hong Kong (Travel China Guide 2013).

Figure 7. Hankou in Qing Dynasty, 'Chicago of China' (Wikipedia 2005)

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[2] Chu Civilization is one of the seven warring states before Qin, in the country's first feudal dynasty.
[3] 770 B.C. - 221 B.C.

21

Wuchang Uprising

The Wuchang Uprising, started on 10th October in Wuchang 1911, was inspired by Dr Sun Yat-sen, became the blasting fuse of the Xinhai Revolution, and ended the Qing Dynasty with two millennia of imperial rule and branding new the Republic of China. Since then Wuhan became a political centre, and served as the capital of the National People's Government and was for years a centre of Chinese Communist Party activities. Since now and then, the Xinhai revolution museum (also called 'red building'), which was the People's Government, nowadays is the museum of Xinhai Revolution which is shown on the figure 8.

Figure 8. Xinhai Revolution Museum (Wikipedia 2005)

Since then Wuhan is one of the most important cities in China and has for more than 3500 years, since the Shang and Zhou dynasties, been an important town which time to time through the centuries also has been the political, military and cultural centre for the whole of China (China Travel Guide).

5.3.2 The cuisine customs

Wuhan is a city which embraces different delicious snacks cuisine, and there is a long period of history included. Famous examples are Qing shui zong (a pyramid-shaped dumpling made of glutinous rice wrapped in bamboo or reed leaves which originally came from the period of the Warring States), you guo (a deep-fried twisted dough stick

from Song and Yuan Dynasty), rice wine and mian wo from Ming and Qing Dynasty, tang bao (steamed dumpling filled with minced meat and gravy) and hot braised noodles (hot dry noodles /re gan mian).

The cuisine in Hubei Province ranks as one of the major cuisine and cooking styles in China which is over 2,000 years. Originating from Chu cuisine, it has already improved into own characteristics. Famous cuisines are for instance steamed blunt-snout bream in clear soup and preserved ham with flowering Chinese cabbage.

Another notion which cannot be ignored is having breakfast (in Chinese 'Guo Zao/过早'). It is generally known that Wuhan has combined the eating culture of Guangzhou and dressing of Shanghai. Because of the geographical location, Wuhan in certain case has mixed customs and habits from neighbourhood cities. Inside Wuhan it is easy to find different tastes of different regions. Figure 9 shows four famous examples of snacks and cuisines of Wuhan.

Figure 9. Famous snacks and cuisines of Wuhan (clockwise order: salty doughnuts, duck's neck, hot and dry noodles, bean skin)

5.3.3 Main tourist attractions

Yellow Crane Tower

Since Wuhan is known widely as "Homeland of White Clouds and Yellow Crane" and is one of China´s largest cities, the most famous historical attraction is the Yellow Crane Tower (Chinese: 黄鹤楼 pinyin: Huáng Hè Lóu) which already existed for 1,700 years. It was originally built in AD 233 during the Three Kingdoms Period [4] as a Wu Kingdom military tower. Today the tower is 52 metres high with five stores and the existing one was from the Qing Dynasty and it was completed first in 1985 (Wuhan China 2013).

Yellow Crane Tower is considered one of the Four Great Towers of China[5]. It is classified as an AAAAA scenic area by the China National Tourism Administration (Wuhan China 2013).

East Lake Scenic Area

East Lake (Chinese: 东湖; pinyin: Dong Hu) is a large urban lake located in Wuhan, China. It was designated as one of the 4A tourist zones of China in 2000. The lake includes a bird sanctuary, botanical garden, museums, boat rides, fishing, cycling, a public aquarium, and other activities for locals and tourists alike. In the end of Mo Shan features[6] a Daoist temple was built, which was originally from the masterpiece 'Romance of Three Kingdoms' before the famous battle of Red Cliffs happened (Wuhan China 2013).

Wuhan University (Cherry Blossom Park)

Wuhan University (simplified Chinese: 武汉大学; pinyin: Wuhan Da Xue) is located in Wuhan, which is administered by the Ministry of Education of China. The university is commonly regarded as one of the most beautiful and outstanding campuses in China. In 2012 it ranked eightieth in the top ten universities in China arranged by CUAA

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[4] The Three Kingdoms (AD 220–280) were Wei (魏), Shu (蜀), and Wu (吳), which refers to the period between the foundation of the state of Wei in 220 AD and the conquest of the state of Wu by the Jin Dynasty in 280.

[5] Four Great Towers of China: Yellow Crane Tower (Wuhan), Pavilion of Prince Teng (Jiangxi), Yueyang Tower (Yueyang), Penglai Pagoda (Shandong)

[6] Mo Shan Feature belongs to East Lake Scenic Area, which is an important part in the whole area. It belongs to the first recognized 4A tourist attractions in June 2002.

(CUAA 2012). The academic ranking of World Universities was 401-500 (Academic Ranking of World Universities 2012).

Inside the campus the cherry blossom festival is undertaken annually. The garden was originally planted by invading Japanese army in 1939, while the sakura inside the garden up to now have evolved to the friendship between China and Japan. In the year 1992 of friendship between China and Japan 20 years anniversary, 200 plants of cherry blossom trees were given as a gift from The Japanese city of Hiroshima co., LTD in China. From now on the garden has become a must-see attraction for both national tourists and international visitors (Wuhan China 2013).

Wuhan Yangtze River Bridge
The Wuhan Yangtze Great Bridge (simplified Chinese: 武汉长江大桥; pinyin: Wuhan Changjiang Daqiao), is a double-deck road and rail bridge across the Yangtze River in Wuhan and in Central China. It is commonly known as 'First Bridge of the Yangtze' which began in 1955 and was completed in 1957 (Baidu Wikipedia). The upper level of the bridge is a two-way, four-lane automobile highway, while the lower level is a double-track railway on the Beijing-Guangzhou railway line (Wuhan China 2013).

Length of the bridge is 1,6 kilometres overall beginning from Turtle Hill in Hanyang District to Snake Hill in Wuchang District, from the north to the south Yangtze. Since the first construction was undertaken in 1910, the whole process was gone through for five programmes (Wuhan China 2013).

Wuhan Museum
Located in the west of Hankou railway station, Wuhan Museum was prepared to be constructed in 1984 and opened officially on October 2001. The total floor area is 17,834 square metres with 6000 square metres exhibition areas and 10,000 square-metre exchanging exhibition halls. Inside the solemn and magnificent architecture there are over thousands of elegant oriental culture and modernized spectaculars. In addition to these, Wuhan Museum has the function in cultural relic collection, academic reach, publicity and education, cultural exchange and recreation and entertainment (Wuhan Museum). Since Wuhan is famous as a historical and cultural city in China, the aim of

the museum is to exhibit the cultural history of Wuhan as a city in detail, realistic and direct way (Wuhan China 2013).

Chu River and Han Street

Chu River and Han Street (simplified Chinese: 楚河汉街; Pin Yin: Chu He Han Jie) is the combination of a street and a river in the city centre of Wuhan. It is constructed to celebrate the centennial of the Xinhai Revolution which took place in 1911 in China. The Street is an essential part of Wuhan Central Cultural Zone which is located in downtown between East and Shahu Lake in Wuchang District, the educational centre of Wuhan. The total floor space is 210,000 square metres, including 1, 9 square Total floor space is 210,000 square metres, with officially launched and opened in 2011 (Wuhan China 2013).

Hankou Custom House

Hankou Custom House is regarded as one of the significant historical landmarks in the development of Wuhan. It was accomplished in 1924, and the construction style was similar to the buildings in the period of classic Greece and the Renaissance (Wuhan China 2013).

In 2012, the Wuhan Municipal Government and Wuhan Customs signed an agreement, so as to the Hankou Customs House will be renovated and turned into a museum (Wuhan China 2013).

Hubu Lane (the breakfast street)

Hubu Lane, so called 'the breakfast lane', is a 150-metre long small lane which occupied large amounts of small food and drink traders in the Wuchang District of Wuhan. The lane is located next to Yangtze River. Since 1940s, Hubu Lane of Wuhan city has a long history and is known for various kinds of Hubei local breakfast. In 2003, the lane has taken on an entirely new looking – it is similar to the Ming and Qing dynasty architectural style (Wuhan China 2013).

5.4   SWOT analysis based on the theories

SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) is a popular method for facilitating strategic destination marketing and management. The strength and weaknesses illustrate the internal environment of the destination marketing, while opportunities and threats are connected to the external atmosphere. The external environment includes not only elements of the general environment (i.e. the external technological, political, social, cultural and physical environments of tourism systems), but also an analysis of competing destinations or businesses (Lawton & Weaver 2010, 194-196). It is important for a city to make a SWOT analysis before any marketing activities. The organizer must find out where and who the customers are, and how it can give them added value and to solve problems (Moilanen & Rainisto 2009).

Before going deeply to the case study about Wuhan, it is time to briefly analyse Wuhan as a tourist destination based on the theories. Table 2 gives a SWOT analysis about Wuhan as a tourist destination based on the theories.

Table 2. SWOT analysis of Wuhan as a tourist destination

Strengths	Weaknesses
Humanity resources Local culture (language, cuisine) Location Education	Objective factors (climate) Image of Wuhan Tourism infrastructure (environment, facilities, local friendless …) Marketing strategies
Opportunities	**Threats**
Local culture Education	Distinctive image of Wuhan Similar cities (e.g. Chongqing) Limited tourism resources (nature) Lack of comparative advantage Limited business opportunities

Strengths

According to the map (appendix 1), location of Wuhan is in the central China. According to China National Tourism Administration, main travel resources in Wuhan are humanistic /cultural resources and cultural /historic sites, for instance the Yellow Crane Tower and Chu River and Han Street which stands for the 'Chu' culture. As Wuhan is called 'The nine Provinces' Leading Thoroughfare', it is pretty convenient to access to Wuhan by bus, train, air and ferry. Inside the city public transportations are also convenient. With bus, taxi, metro and ferry tourists are available to go anywhere in Wuhan. Renting bicycle and car are welcomed of travelling. Since large amounts of students from other cities studying in the universities of Wuhan, they are one of the major types of visitors. Visitors who are interested in Chu culture and historical background of Wuhan are attracted by this city. Besides these, night lives are very attractive. When the evening comes, streets begin to alive surrounded by small retailers and people. Bars and pubs are opened in the night and people will invite friends to enjoy the leisure time. All in all, humanity resources, location, local culture and education are four strengths for Wuhan in the viewpoint of tourism.

Weaknesses

Except unavoidable factors such as climate, there is no instinctive image in the tourism point of view. Additionally, construction of travel infrastructure is still incomplete. For instance, it is difficult for a visitor who comes to Wuhan the first time to find any information stands or staffs. Surfing travel information on the official site of Wuhan tourism Bureau, both designing and information are out of date. It is also a challenge for foreigners visiting Wuhan since English is not widely spoken in this city. All the tourism facilities are only available in simplified Chinese. Sluggish development of travel services (e.g. accommodation, entertainment, shopping availabilities and food) cannot reach the standards of modern tourism.

Opportunities

Although Wuhan does not have comparative advantages, it still has potentials to develop tourism industry. Historical development is important in the Chinese culture. As Chu culture stands for the historical Wuhan, it is definitely important tourism resources. The government and tourism bureau could find out potentials and branding

the new image of Wuhan based on the origin of Chu culture. Hosting events and activities could be one way of attracting people. In 2013 the golden Rooster and Hundred Flowers Film Festive will be held in Wuhan with grand scales of national and international exhibiting. At the same time, responsible organizations are looking for new images and styles of Wuhan as a tourist city. Commissioned by propaganda department of Wuhan and Educational Bureau, an event which was related to the new logo of Wuhan's image was held successfully from September till 31st October 2012. Several designing were pretty successful, for instance figure 10 under below which looks like the shape of Yellow Crane Tower and flying red-crowned cranes, a fabulous bird from history of Wuhan.

中國·武漢
WUHAN CHINA

Figure 10. One image of the selected logos (CJN 2012)

Threats

Combining with current Wuhan, there are several threats attracting Chinese people come to visit Wuhan. The first factor is the climate and natural environment. As Wuhan belongs to one of the 'Four Furnaces', in the summer the maximum amount of temperature is around 45 °C. Comparing to hot cities such as Chongqing and Nanjing, Wuhan does not have as much as attractions. Additionally, lacking of publicity and marketing will lose potential customers. Language problem is another issue preventing visitors coming to Wuhan. Residents in Wuhan prefer speaking local language comparing to the official mandarin.

6 Research approach and methods

6.1 Research methods

Research is 'the systematic, controlled, empirical and critical investigation of hypothetical propositions about presumed relations among natural phenomena (Kerlinger 1970, 8, in Matthews. B & Ross. L. 2010, 8).' The aim of research is to gain knowledge by understanding certain investigation (Matthews. B & Ross. L. 2010, 8). All the collected data should be examined during the process of research. In general, there are three types of research: *qualitative, quantitative and mixed research*.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research is the method which connects to stories and accounts including subjective understandings, feelings, opinions and beliefs. As mentioned by Kerlinger (1970, 8, in Matthews. B & Ross. L. 2010, 141-144), qualitative data is gathered when the data is the word of expression of the research participants themselves. However, qualitative method is more restrictive in testing hypotheses since it is time consuming, costly and it is limited in the research subject.

Quantitative research

Quantitative research is the method which is basically about gathering and working with large amounts of structured and numerical data. It usually relies on the collection of statistics that are then analysed through a variety of statistical techniques (Lawton & Weaver 2010, 337-339). Quantitative researches are typically 'data condensers that yield a relatively small amount of information about a large number of respondents or observations (Ragin 1994, in Lawton & Weaver 2010, 337-339).' In this research, quantitative research is the method in the form of questionnaire. Since numerous quantitative research methods are widely used in the tourism study (Lawton & Weaver 2010, 337-339), it is more believable to get a more specific opinion about image of Wuhan.

Mixed research

Mixed research method is the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. This method is used especially in the primary and secondary data.

6.2 Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability of the selected data collection method must be critically examined, not depending what method was selected, but to determine to what extent the method is likely to be reliable and valid (Bell 2006, 117).

Validity

As mentioned by Bell, validity is 'an altogether more complex concept (Bell. J 2006, 117).' Validity of certain research examines the research what it supposed to measure and to describe. A researcher should choose the appropriate data retrieving method and suitable sample to ensure the research to be valid (Bell. J 2006, 117).

There are two types of examining validity in the research: internal validity and external validity (Goetz & LeCompte 1984, in LeCompte. M & Preissle. J 1994, 141-163). Internal validity is the validity to the extent of actual observation and measurement which are made by researchers, while the second type is defined as 'to what extent are abstract constructs and postulates generated, refined, or tested by scientific researchers applicable across groups?'

In quantitative data validity is improved through rigorous sampling, appropriate instrumentation and proper statistical treatments of the data. However, it is not possible to guarantee 100% validity in the data results. A standard error is permitted in the quantitative research which is acknowledged (Cohen. L, Manion. L & Morrison. K 2007).

During the research of Wuhan's image, there are certain factors affecting the validity of questionnaires. Since there are 12 questions including three open-ended questions, respondents may lack of patience answering each question one by one. Moreover, while the questionnaires were allocated in the educational bureau and via internet, it is hard to calculate how long time do respondents spend on each question. However, there are still certain advantages since the questionnaire was translated in Chinese and English in both ways, as a result respondent could choose their preferred language.

Reliability

Reliability is 'the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions (Bell. J 2006, 117).' For instance, the concept of reliability has to do with how well the researcher has carried out the research project. If another researcher is doing the same type of research, the question should be in the same setting, the results should look almost the same. If so, the work of the research could consider reliable (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight 2002).

Since image research is an already existing topic in the tourism, there are already certain amounts of research about image of Wuhan being made by both official and non-official organizations. In the future there will be different answers from respondents related to the image of Wuhan. This is because of the changes and developments of Wuhan as a tourist destination and changes of policies made by tourism bureau and government of Wuhan. The tourism related organizations and corporations may change their policies and directions obeying to the official decisions. No matter how, the final aim is to attract more and more visitors come to visit Wuhan.

6.3   Data collection alternatives

There are several methods of collecting data. In general most of the data collection can be applied to both qualitative and quantitative research. As mentioned by Kumar (2011), the classification of a method into quantitative or qualitative category depends upon the answers to the following questions:

- What philosophical epistemology is underpinning your approach to research enquiry?
- How was the information collected? Was it through a structure or unstructured /flexible format of data collection?
- Were the questions issues discussed during data collection predetermined or developed during data collection?
- How was the information you gathered recorded? Was it a descriptive, narrative, categorical, quantitative from or on a scale?
- How was the information analysed? Was it descriptive, categorical or numerical analysis?

- How do you propose to communicate the findings? Do you want to write in a descriptive or analytical manner? (Kumar 2011)

According to Matthews and Ross (2010, 8), there are several examples of quantitative approaches during data collection:

- *Surveys and questionnaires*: same questions are asked through large amounts of people or cases
- *Secondary quantitative data*: secondary quantitative data are usually available after primary quantitative analysis
- *Content analysis*: counting the number of cases of different words or ideas in written or spoken materials
- *Observation*: counting the number of occurrences of different events
- *Case records*: case records/formats usually processed with ready structured information

In this thesis the main data collection method is based on quantitative foundation. Since the main target is to get a general idea of Wuhan's image as a tourist destination, it is more concrete and believable to draw the conclusion of people from Wuhan and have visit experiences than analysis particular opinions from limited amounts of people.

6.4 Questionnaire design

A questionnaire is a set of questions which can be answered by the research participants in a set of ways (Matthews & Ross 2010, 201-217). Mostly the questionnaires are designed to gather structure data and included a set of answers which are chosen by respondents. Some of the questionnaires include open questions which give a range of answers to the respondents. Same questions are asked to all the respondents in the same order.

Question design is the most important process in the image research of Wuhan as a tourist destination. Once the questionnaire is designed, questions should be deter-

mined, the answers from the respondents are not able to come back and get further in-formation. As a result, thinking about the research topic and designing a questionnaire to gather data should pay attention to the issues below:

- *What do you want to know?*
- *Who will be able to answer the questions?*
- *Will they understand the questions?*
- *How will they answer the questions?*
- *Will they be able to give the answers they want to give?* (Matthews & Ross 2010, 206)

During the questionnaire designing, the striking feature of the questions is concentrating on the opinions and comments about image of Wuhan as a tourist destination from the viewpoints of Wuhan citizenship and Chinese visitors. All the questions designed surrounding this topic. In general, the structure of the questionnaire is derived from three main sections:

Background information
In this section, several questions are included: personal information and understanding of Wuhan. Personal information (e.g. gender and age, current occupation, residential situation) are the first segment. Marital status and monthly income are not required since they do not effect on the image formation of Wuhan.

The rest of the background information includes levels of understanding about Wuhan- have you visited Wuhan? What is the most appropriate slogan of Wuhan? How do you know about Wuhan? What is the main purpose of visiting Wuhan? By collecting the background information, it is clear to get a primary idea about basic information of respondents.

Closed-ended questions
In this section, respondents need to ask 2 close-ended questions which are related to the strengths and drawbacks of Wuhan in 12 aspects. Each aspect is valued from1 to 5, 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest. The aim of the questions is to get the satisfaction

level about tourism of Wuhan, and what are the pull-and-push factors of Chinese visitors travelling Wuhan. This section will get a deeper understanding about reasons of attracting Chinese people visiting Wuhan.

Open-ended questions

Open-ended question is the last section. Based on the idea that questions should not be tedious and numerous, total amount of open-ended questions is 3. The questions are based on respondents' feelings of Wuhan whether he or she is a native respondent or external visitor. Besides it, it is important to make comparison between Wuhan and cities which are in similar situation or even in better development, such as Chongqing. The main aim of open-ended questions is to get feedbacks from both citizens and visitors.

Except following factors of questionnaire designing, the ethical issues should be taken into consideration. In any type of research, it is crucial for researchers to maintain a careful transparency around the work and to analysis data and to report findings faithfully (Clough & Nutbrown 2012, 22). Several questions should be considered when doing a research:

- *What ethical issues should be taken into account in researchers' intent to make their research persuasive?*
- *What ethical issues underpin the purpose of any research study?*
- *In what ways dies the positionality of a researcher determine ethical responses to their research?*
- *If all research is, in one sense or another, political, how does this manifest itself in ethical responses to an enquiry* (Clough & Nutbrown 2012, 22)?

Based on following questions, there are certain issues were considered when designing the questionnaire. Firstly is the personal privacy (e.g. age, gender, current occupation). In the introduction part of the questionnaire, list of sentences were printed to remind respondents that all the results will be kept in secret and not be used in public situation. Furthermore, to fill the questionnaire or not is totally based on the personal willing of respondents, they were not forced to fill it.

7 Data analysis and key results

This chapter is focused on the analysis of findings and results about Wuhan image survey. The first section begins with demographic factors which includes basic background information. Besides that the second section takes a look at close-ended questions. The last section is the open-ended questions analyses.

7.1 Demographic factors

The survey is done through paper copies, sending email (via Word document) and online survey tool (Survey Monkey). Most paper versions were sent under the help of Hong Shan Educational Bureau. 45 respondents filled in the survey via internet, while the rest 95 results were from replying emails and filling paper copies. 126 respondents are residents of Wuhan and other cities of China. The rest 14 are foreigners of several nationalities. They are German, Scotch, American, Finnish, Canadian, Macedonian and Italian.

In the background information section, there are 6 questions which aimed to know about motivation of visiting Wuhan, knowing about Wuhan sketchily and from which channel they get to know Wuhan. Although the most questions were designed for visitors, it is still important to collect natives' opinions since it is necessary to know about the image of Wuhan in the viewpoint of residents. Additionally, the background questions divided respondents in several categories by gender, age, current occupation and nationalities. Researcher could analysis the result based on those criteria.
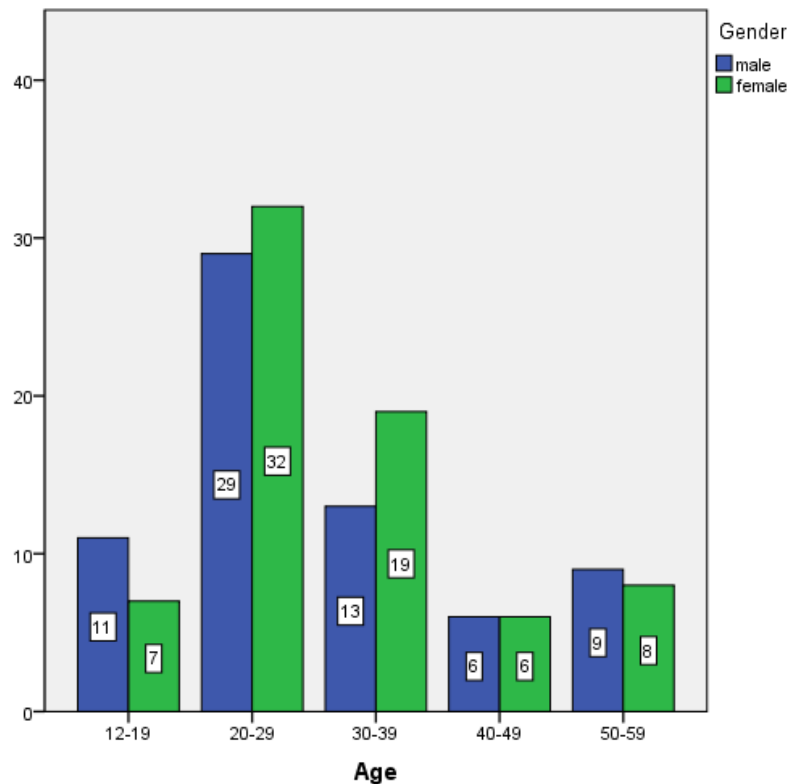
Figure 11. Age and gender of respondents, n=140

According to figure 11, there are 140 respondents answered the two questions. According to the figure, 68 respondents are male and the rest 72 are female. Based on the population of Wuhan, the proportion of gender is reliable[7]. The difference between the amount of male and female are not obvious. However, the proportion of male is still beyond female, which could be explained that male is more vibrant and active in the social activities compared to female in China.

The two groups were divided into five age groups. Taking a look at the figure, the largest group is from 20 to 29 which occupy almost half of the whole age groups (43.6%). Respondents from 30 to 39 are following closely after young respondents which are 32 (22.9%). There are 18 respondents from the group 10-19 which occupy 12.9%. 12 respondents (8.6%) are from age 40 to 49 which is the smallest, while there are 17 respondents from age 50 to 59 (12.1%). Based on the figures, youngsters and youth are

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[7] According to the official statistics of Wuhan Municipal Bureau in 2011, there are 9,785,392 permanent residents in Wuhan, while 5033093 (51.43%) are male and 475299 (48.57%) are female (Baidu Library 2011).

the largest group because the survey was commissioned by educational bureau. It is understandable that most results were gathered from it.
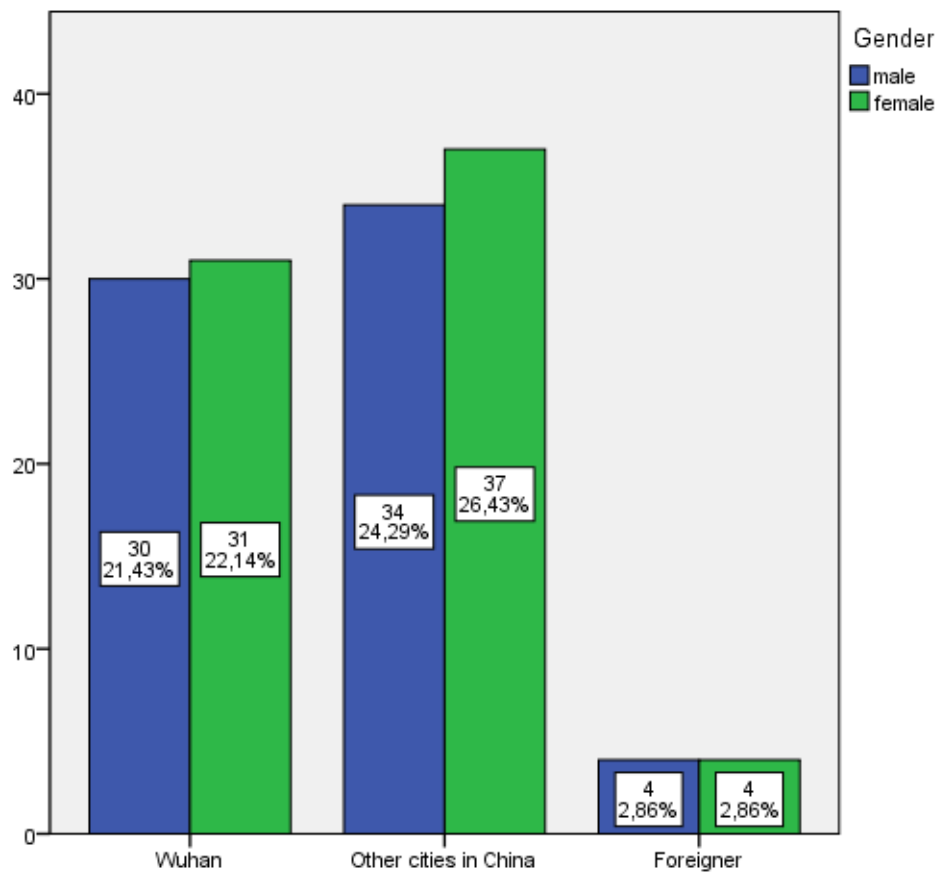

Figure 12. Nationality of respondents, n=140

Figure 12 illustrates the nationalities of respondents. The primary target group was all Chinese, there were few foreigners filling the online survey who have visited or live in Wuhan for certain reasons. According to the figure, 94.3% respondents are from China, while the rest 5.7% were foreigners. In the Chinese group 61 respondents are native residents, and the rest are from different cities of China, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Chongqing and certain neighbour cities of Hubei Province. Nationalities of foreigners include German, Scotch, American, Finnish, Canadian, Macedonian and Italian.
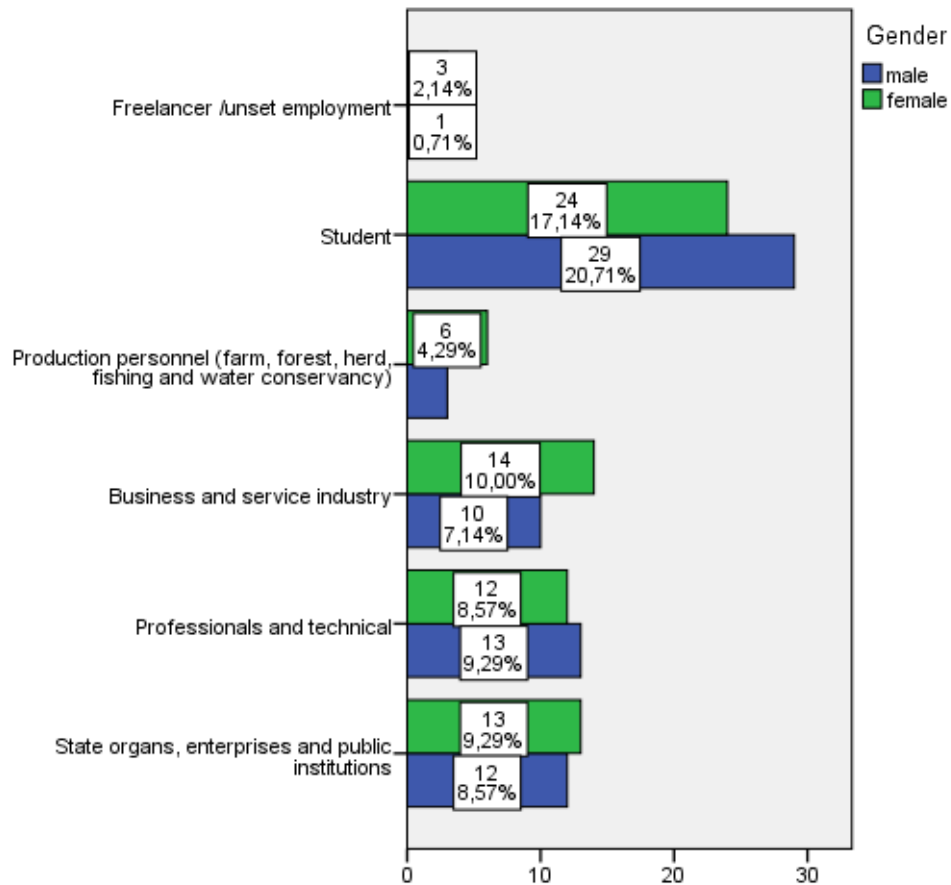
Figure 13. Current Occupation of Respondents, n=140

Figure 13 shows current occupations of respondents. As presented the categories are divided into six varieties. 53 respondents (37.85%) are student which occupy the greatest majority. Amazingly the respondent proportion of professional (17.9%), state organs (17.9%) and business are totally same, while there is vainly one less respondent in the business group which is 24 (17.1%). Nine respondents are from production industry (6.4%), and the least group is freelancer which is 4 (2.9%).
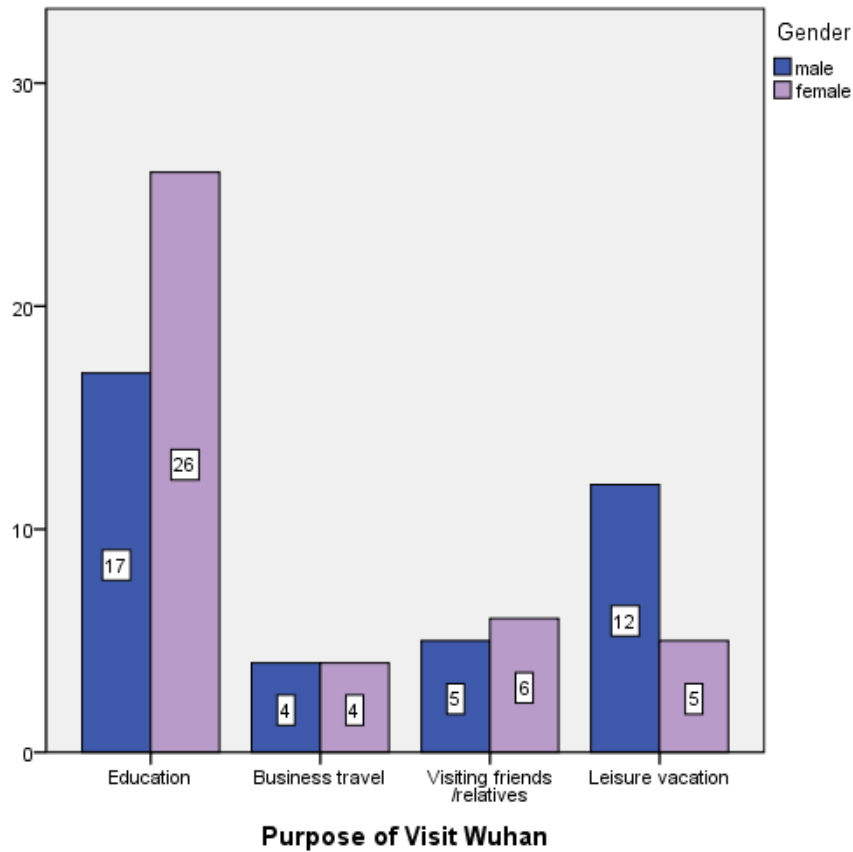
Figure 14. Purpose of Visit Wuhan, n=79

According to figure 14, 79 respondents answered this question. As mentioned by the questionnaire designer, native respondents do not need to answer this question since they are not the target group for this question. It is not surprise to see that over half percent of respondents (54.4%) come to visit Wuhan for education since Wuhan is famous for numerous famous universities (e.g. Wuhan University). Definitely students ranging from 10 to 29 are the main categories.

Following by education motivation 17 respondents (21.5%) come to visit Wuhan for leisure and spending vacation which is a pity to see. Compared to famous historical cities such as Beijing and Chongqing, Wuhan lacks off the competitive advantage and attractions. 11 respondents (13.9%) come to visit Wuhan to see their friends or relatives. 8 respondents come to Wuhan to search for business opportunities. According to the statistics, Wuhan is not the first choice of doing business probably because of economic condition and location.
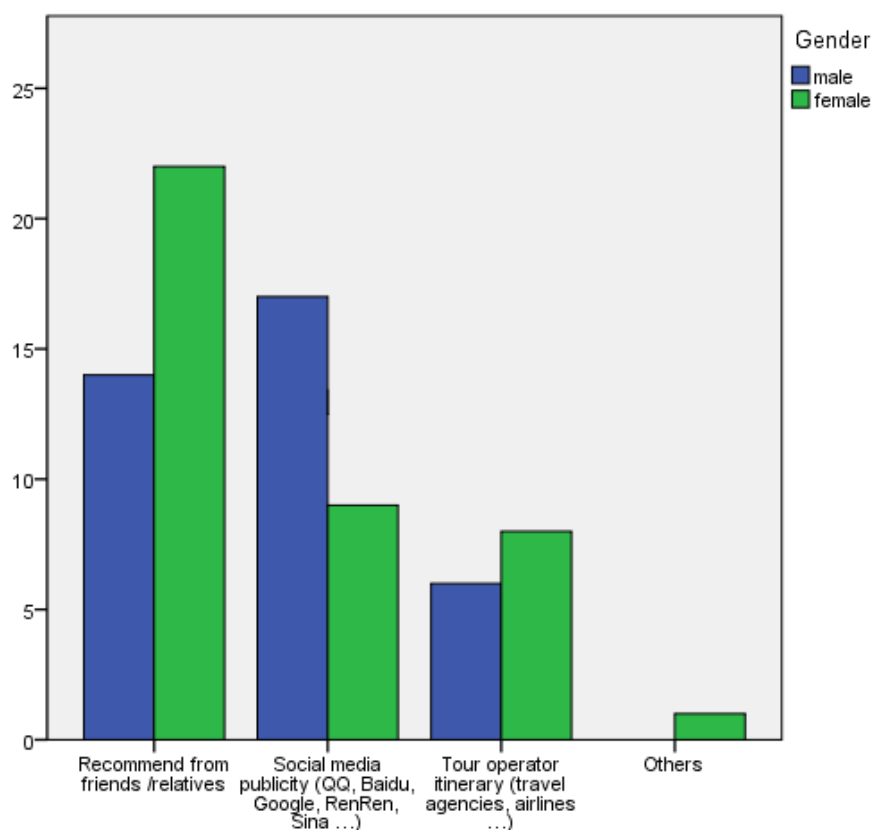
Figure 15. Channels to know Wuhan, n=77

Figure 15 illustrates several channels of respondents getting to know about the city Wuhan. 77 respondents answered this question. According the statistics, there are three main channels of knowing about Wuhan. 37 respondents (26.4%) are recommended by friends and relatives, which is the biggest group. 26 respondents (18.6%) get further information about Wuhan through social media, such as Baidu (biggest Chinese searching engine), QQ (biggest online chatting system) and Sina micro blog. 14 respondents (10%) visit Wuhan via the introduction of tour operators (e.g. travel agencies).

It is interesting to see that female respondents are more active in searching travel information, while male are much more enthusiasm on online engine. No matter in which channel to get to know about tourism of Wuhan, personal experiences are usually believable compared to official publicity. Since internet is developing nowadays, the power should not be ignored. In the close future there will be more and more people checking travel information via internet.
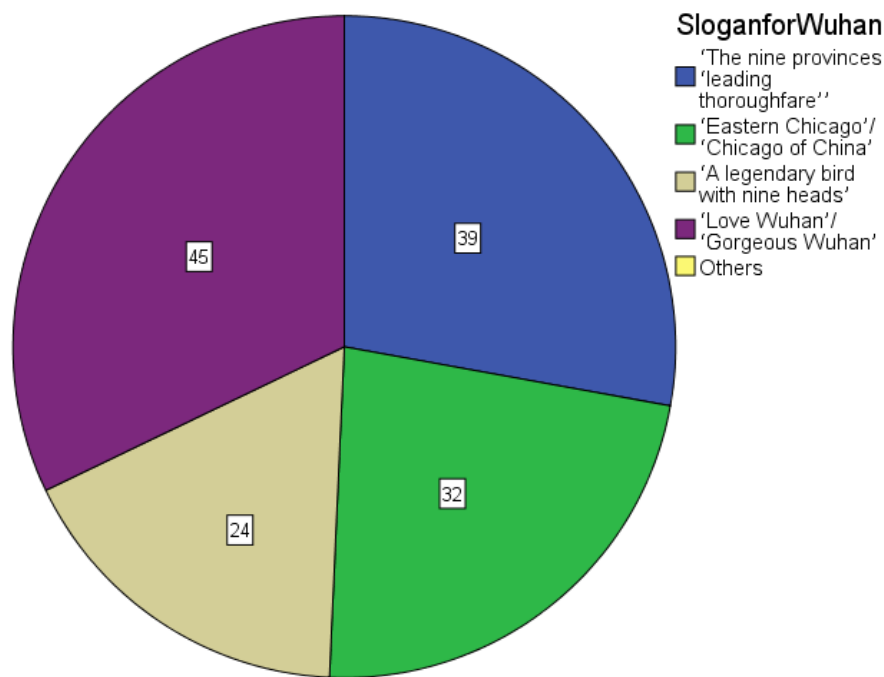
Figure 16. Slogan of Wuhan, n=140

Based on the living and travelling experiences in Wuhan in the figure 16, all the 140 respondents answered the question. The aim of the question is to see the image of Wuhan as a tourist attraction in the form of slogan. 'The nine provinces 'leading thoroughfare'' stands for the importance of Wuhan's transportation, 'Eastern Chicago' is an analogy of city category because there are certain similarities between Wuhan and Chicago; 'A legendary bird with nine heads' in Chinese means residents of Wuhan are intelligent in a negative style, or even crafty. The last one 'Love Wuhan /Gorgeous Wuhan' is a new slogan, which shows the branding-new and welcoming style of Wuhan. During the decades Wuhan is developing amazingly, new image construction has becoming an urgent affair. Commissioned by Educational Bureau, the question in certain cases could help looking for great ideas.

According to figure 16, the amounts of four slogans are almost the same. However, 'Love Wuhan' is slightly more welcomed compared to traditional slogans. 45 respondents chose the new slogan which occupied 32.1%. The slogan 'the nine provinces 'leading thoroughfare'' was chosen by 39 respondents (27.9%). 32 respondents (22.9%) chose 'Eastern Chicago' and 24 (17.1%) chose 'a legendary bird with nine heads'.

7.2 Analysis of close-ended questions

In this section there are two close-ended questions which include superiority and imperfection of Wuhan as a tourist destination in 12 impacts on five-point scale. 1 equals to least important/satisfied and 5 equals to most important/satisfied.
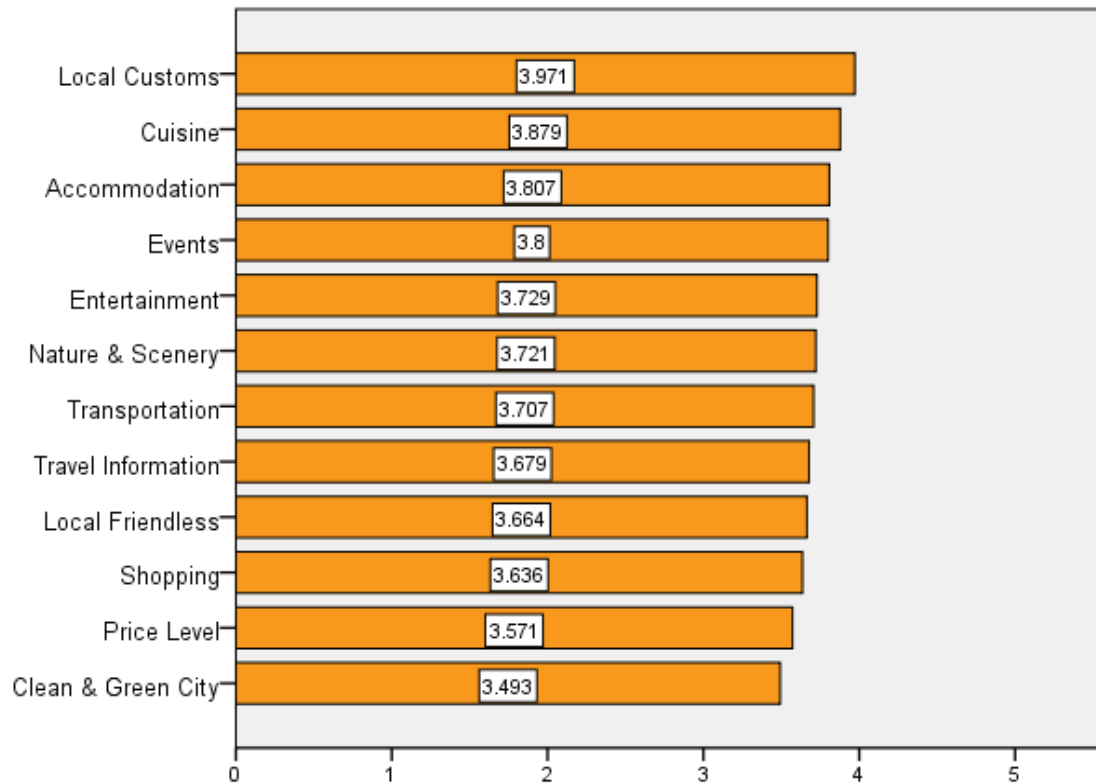
Figure 17. Importance of Wuhan as a tourist destination (1 = least important, 5 = most important, n=140)

According to figure 17, 12 standards were listed based on the notion of city as a tourist destination. The aim was to check important components of Wuhan as a tourist city. Mean values were mainly taken into consideration when measuring each indicator. According to the results calculated by SPSS, the mean values of 12 indicators are quiet compact and similar, and all the mean values are over 3.

Local customs gets the highest value (avg. = 3,971), which can be explained as Chinese people prefer experiencing special culture of Wuhan. This was because most respondents are students, and they would like to have much mentally travel experiences. Following local customs cuisine and accommodation are two other important factors. Ac-

commodation (avg. = 3,807) is raised highly since there are availabilities of accommodation choosing. In Wuhan there are over 83 star-rating hotels including 13 five-star hotels, international hotel brands and qualified youth hostels. The reason why cuisine (avg. = 3,879) is attractive to respondents is because the food and breakfast culture in Wuhan is famous and welcomed in China, such as hot dry noodle.

Shopping (avg. = 3,636), price (avg. = 3,571) and green city (avg. = 3,493) are three least importance of Wuhan. Comparing to tasting delicious food and visiting famous universities, it is understandable that shopping was not the motivation when visitors travelling Wuhan. Since Wuhan is the capital of Hubei Province, the price level is higher than neighboring cities. Cleanness was considered least important of Wuhan as a tourist city. Since Wuhan is a second-tier city locating in the middle China, the construction of tourism industry and the whole city is still on the way comparing to certain first-tier cities (e.g. Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong).
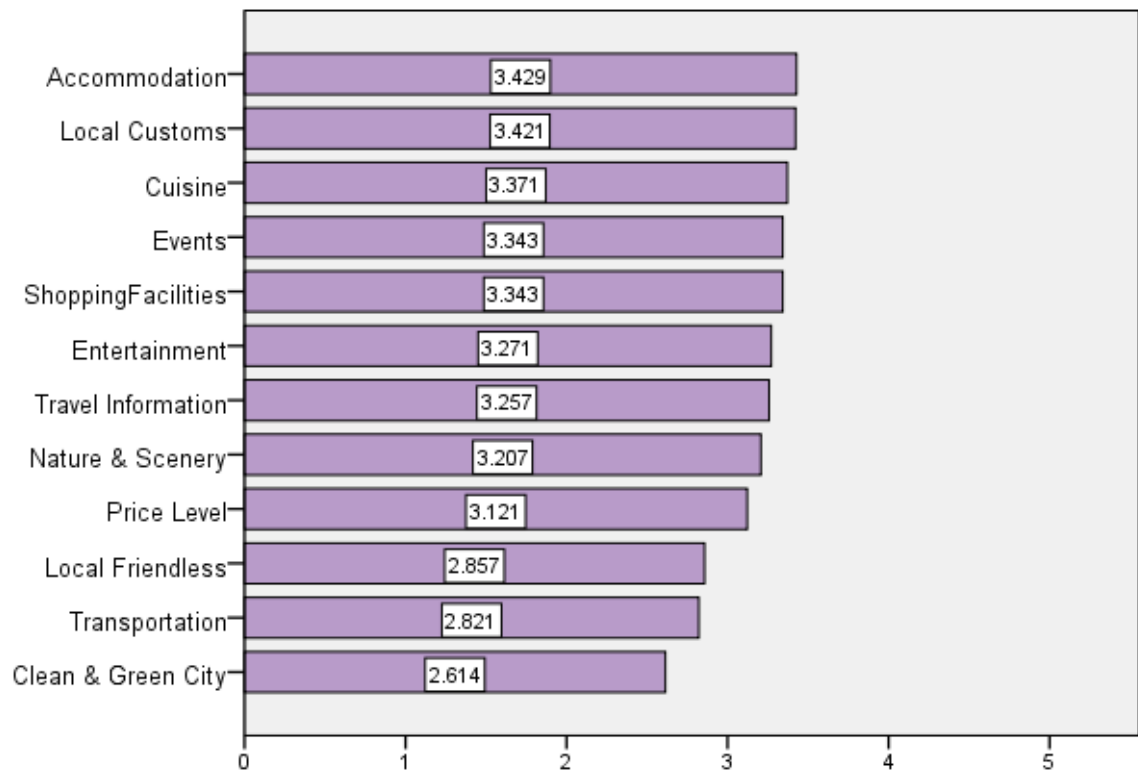
Figure 18. Satisfaction rate of Wuhan as a tourist destination (1 = least satisfied, 5 =most satisfied, n=140)

Figure 18 illustrates the rank of satisfaction level of Wuhan as a tourist destination based on the results of figure 18. According to the SPSS statement, accommodation and cleanness are the most and least satisfied standards when treating Wuhan as a tourist city. As analyzed in the previous section, the quality of accommodation in Wuhan is high rated. Cleanness is still need to be improved in the common sense of Wuhan citizenship and outside visitors. Transportation and local friendless are pretty low rated which are under the average 3. It is widely agreed by visitors outside Wuhan that native speakers of Wuhan are less patient and impolite, and sometimes in unpolished manners. It is a pity to hear the facts and not surprised that it is ranked low (avg. = 2,857). Travel information is ranked at eighth. The reason could be that Chinese visitors are preferred to travel via tour operators such as travel agencies. Unfortunately transportation (avg. = 2,821) and natural environment (avg. = 2,614) are not liked by respondents. Traffic jam has been nerve-wracking for long time, so as to the natural pollution. The government must find ways and solution to solve the problems if Wuhan would like to be constructed as a qualified tourist city.

Comparing two figures, it is illustrated that there is a gap between desired and current Wuhan as a tourist city in the impacts of local friendless, price level, transportation, cleanness and natural scenery. Taking a looking at current landscape and appearance, the result is basically truthful. In the appearance of the official Aerial documentary 'Love Wuhan', a branding-new Wuhan is shown to all the people who would like to know more about Wuhan especially the tourism of the city. Honestly the city is still on the way of building the new image of Wuhan as a more welcoming tourist destination.

7.3 Analysis of open-ended questions

In this section there are three open-ended questions which get deeper ideas about opinions about image of Wuhan by reference objects.

In the first question a combination of five images which stand for the image of Wuhan is given to the respondents (appendix 3). They need to realize if they are familiar with the pictures, and do they think these pictures could stand for Wuhan. If there are other options, they could add in the blank.

Surprisingly Wuhan University (pct. = 88, 6%) is the first attraction when imaging Wuhan as a tourist destination. The reason is probably because the main respondents are students from 20 to 29 year-old. Yellow Crane Tower (pct. = 72, 1%) is the second attraction which stands for the primary image Wuhan as a tourist city as a historical site. Hubu Lane (pct. = 71, 9%) is one of the most important motivations for visitors coming to Wuhan, whilst it is the choice of enjoying breakfast for many natives of Wuhan. East Lake (pct. = 67, 1%) is widely known within both natives of Wuhan and tourist from other cities, surrounding by certain natural sites which is welcomed by visitors. The Yangtze River Bridge (pct. = 58, 6%), which is known as 'First Bridge of the Yangtze', is the best view point of the city of Wuhan.

Rest of impressive attractions standing for Wuhan are Wuhan Jiang Tan (pct. = 43, 6%), Wuhan Customs (pct. = 24, 3%) which might be a potential image of Wuhan, To Yuan Temple (pct. = 23, 6%) which is a Buddhist temple locate in Wuhan, Ancient Lute Platform (pct. = 16, 4%), Chang Chun View and Qing Chuan Pavilion (pct. = 7, 9%).

Taking a look at the results, Yellow Crane Tower, Wuhan University, East Lake and Hubu Lane are four main attractions standing for the primary image of Wuhan as a tourist destination, which could stand for sites of history, education, nature and cuisine. One impressive answer from a USA thought that there is nothing really impressive about Wuhan as a tourist city, besides he added *'hot city'* in the blank. Additionally, Yellow Crane Tower and Wuhan University are the two most welcomed options for Chinese tourists.

In the second question which is about unique features of Wuhan, 25 respondents answered this question, including 5 natives and 20 Chinese and international respondents. There are certain examples of their answers:

'Yellow Crane Tower'
'Lively and Hilarious Wuhan'
'Hot dry noodles and snacks of Wuhan'
'Wuchang Bream'
'Night lives, food and local culture of Wuhan'
'Shopping facilities (e.g. Hankou shopping street)'
'People's government of Wuhan'
'History of Wuhan'
'Sakura Park in the Wuhan University'
'Night market and civil culture in Wuhan'
'I want to see the how natives live in Wuhan'
'Drivers of Wuhan'
'Locals are enthusiastic, especially the taxi drivers of Wuhan.'

Additionally, 10 respondents gave certain suggestions and complaints about Wuhan according to their travel experiences:

'The local hot dry noodle is part of the city which belongs to the image of Wuhan. Old traditional Wuhan buildings also represent the city, even though Wuhan is becoming more and more westernized.'
'Well…the transportation sucked me when I was crossing the road… both driver and passengers sometimes ignore the traffic lights!'
'I wish I could understand the local language (Wuhan Hua), it is hard for me to understand…'
'There should be more tourist information facilities to help visitors.'
'I am from Chongqing, and the city is quiet similar to my home city. However, the environment and traffic problem in Wuhan are worse, in my opinion. Where is the traffic polices?'

Regarding to the opinions about new image of Wuhan (e.g. official marketing video 'Wuhan', new logo image), 21 respondents gave positive answers, three respondents answered 'no', and one respondent 'have no idea'. The reasons are listed below:

'There are much more potential attractions of Wuhan, not only presented sites in the video. Moreover, East Lake is not the best attraction standing for Wuhan.'
'The video is in certain case over the imagination. Wuhan still needs to put many efforts on the construction of basic facilities of tourism.'
'So-so'

When it comes to the question 'would you come to visit Wuhan again', 18 respondents answered 'yes', while 7 respondents thought they will not visit again next time. Reasons of rejections are listed under below:

'Traffic jams and urban planning'
'Inconspicuous urban planning'
'Environment'
'Unfriendly locals'
'Low quality of local travel agencies'

Besides that, there are few suggestions provided by several respondents:

'The Local tourism Bureau needs to do more marketing about Yellow Crane Tower.'
'Wuhan is definitely different than other Chinese cities because of local life. However, Wuhan is still a traditional old city. It is a pity that governments change it by building skyscrapers. One day it will only be a copy of cities like Shanghai and Beijing.'

As a conclusion, historical background, local lives and education are special components of Wuhan comparing to cities such as Chongqing which is also a historical city. However, with the construction of modernized buildings, it is also important for local govern to keep the original tastes of Wuhan. This city should not be a copy of others such as Shanghai and Guangzhou.

8 Conclusions and future suggestions

Wuhan is pretty convenient in the accessibility. There are multiple ways of transportation, such as aviation, land transport and ship transport. Accompanying with the construction of metro, the urban transportation system of Wuhan is becoming more and more convenient for both residents and visitors. As one of significant members of 'Love Wuhan' tourism programme, Hong Shan Education Bureau plays the role of giving assistance to the Tourism Bureau of Wuhan.

Wuhan is a city which centrally locates in the mainland of China. With a history that dates back more than 3,500 years, it is strength for Wuhan to become a historical tourism city. Since 1861 Wuhan has already been the trade center with foreign countries for central and western China.

Strong educational resources has becoming the second reason that people visit Wuhan or to stay temporarily. Led by key universities (e.g. Wuhan University, Huazhong University of Science and Technology), students and educator come to Wuhan to study and to gain working experiences. Consequently, the Education Bureau should raise the quality of education and related construction. Additionally, marketing should be continued by the educational bureau with the supporting from tourism bureau of Wuhan.

The cuisine culture is another significant factor attracting people visiting Wuhan. Not only because of delicious snacks, having breakfast already become part of daily lives in the viewpoints of Wuhan residents. Since food is part of culture, what educational bureau and other stakeholders should do is to put efforts on marketing activities.

Wuhan is instinctively not a so-called tourist city because of the climate and does not have an official image as a tourist city. Wuhan does not have much natural attractions, and the natural environment is unsatisfied, comparing to cities such as Chongqing, Beijing and Nanjing. Additionally, sluggish development of travel services (e.g. accommodation, entertainment, shopping availabilities and food) cannot reach the standards of modern tourism. Traffic jam decreases the satisfaction of tourists, which is commonly agreed by local residents. An additional problem during the tourism development of

Wuhan is out-dates infrastructural facilities construction, which is urgent for local government to put efforts on it. Travel information is classified and clear to check in the website totally in Chinese language, while it is much less to find in English.

In order to build a green Wuhan, it is important to improve natural and humane environment. It is urgent for the government and managing department of Wuhan to solve the basic problems, such as traffic jams. One issue should be taken into consideration is to find the balance between maintenance of local culture (e.g. native language, traditional civil culture, local customs) and construction of modernized tourist Wuhan.

Since internet is emerging as a mainstream media outlet that will eventually rival or even exceed television or newspapers and magazines, it is a creative method as a promotional tool and a distribution channel (Weaver & Lawton 2010, 203). Tourism Bureau of Wuhan has start put certain efforts on the social medial, for instance the official micro blog was opened in Sina, which is one of the most welcomed social media in China nowadays. By following this blog followers are able to check what is going on in Wuhan, especially the tourism events.

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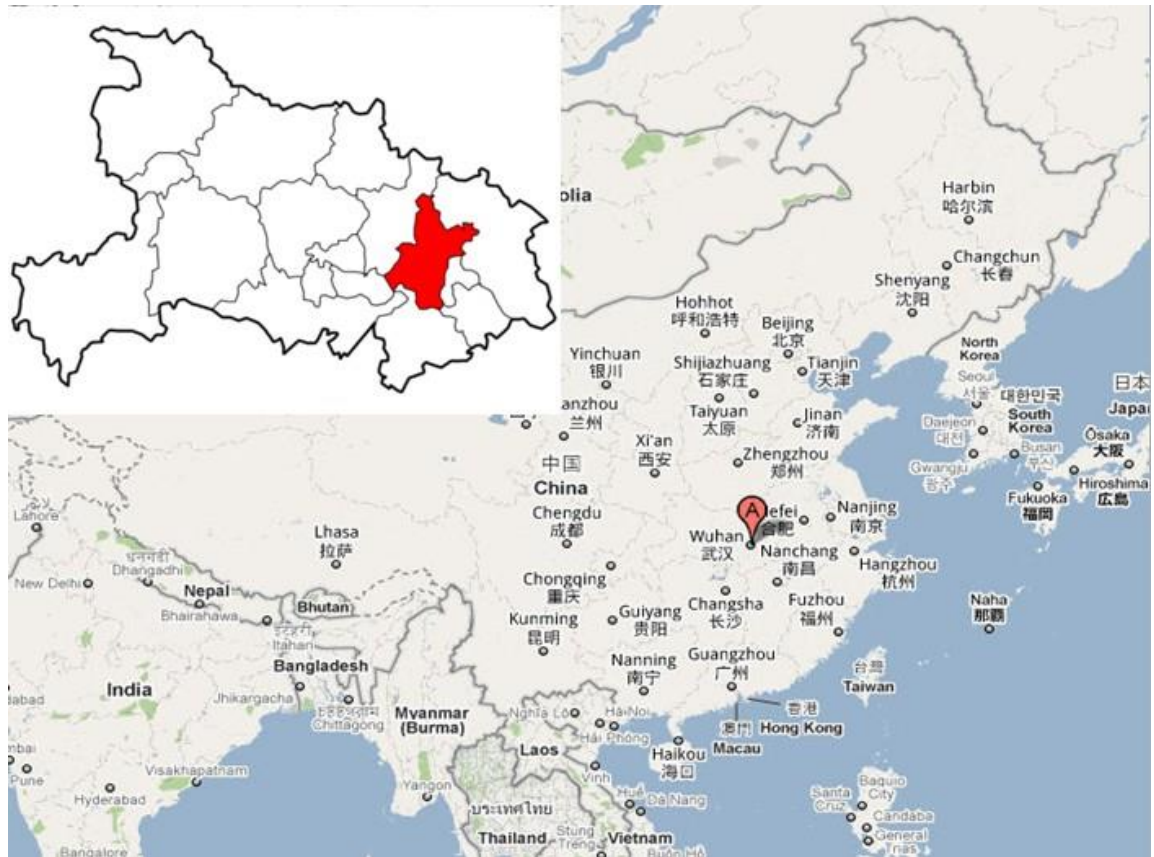
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Attachments

Attachment 1. Administrative divisions of Wuhan (Wikimedia Commons)

Attachment 2. Location of Wuhan and Hubei province on the Google maps (China Travel Discovery)

Attachment 3. Wuhan historical chronology

Shang Dynasty (1500 BC)	The Shang Dynasty established Pan long town, a water transport hub, in a suburb of present Wuhan
Three Kingdoms Dynasty (222 CE)	The king of Wu starts to build the town Wuchang
Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)	Hankou starts to be developed as the main city in the area. Two new cities Wuchang and Hanyang began to be built at the junction of Yangtze River and Han River
Qing Dynasty (1616-1911)	The Governor of Hubei and Hunan Zhang Zhidong started the modern industry of China and Eastern Asia by setting up factories in Wuhan and the town is changing from a trading town to a manufacturing town.
1911	Wuchang Uprising
1927	The city is named Wuhan and the three towns, Hankou, Wuchang and Hanyang come under one administrative system and named Wuhan.
1957	For the first time can cars and trains cross the Yangtze River when the Yangtze River Bridge is opened.
1986	Wuhan was appointed to a "China famous historical and cultural city" by the State Council.
1995	Opening ceremony of the second Wuhan Changjiang River Bridge

Attachment 4. Image Research of Wuhan as a Tourist Destination

Dear respondent,

I am a student majoring International Tourism in Finland. I am writing a thesis about sustainable tourism development in Wuhan. Kindly spend 10 minutes filling this questionnaire. It will be absolutely useful and valuable to my thesis research. I will be appreciating for the coordination! The personal will ONLY be used in the thesis analysis and will not be in public.

If you want to know more about Wuhan, you are also available to watch the official advertising video 'Love Wuhan' in YouTube:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iza5NLqMnFo.

Personal information

1. What is you gender?   Male   Female

2. How old are you?

          12-19   20-29   30-39

          40-49   50-59

3. What is your current occupation?

          State organs, enterprises and public institutions

          Professionals and technical

          Business and service industry

          Production personnel (farm, forest, herd, fishing and water conservancy)

          Student

          Freelancer /unset employment

4. Are you a permanent resident of Wuhan?

          Yes, I am from Wuhan. Which district?

          No, I am from other city. Which city?

          I am a foreigner, which country?

5. If you are not a resident of Wuhan, what is the main purpose of coming here?

        Education   Business travel   Leisure vacation

        Visiting friends /relatives   Others

6. From which channel you get to know Wuhan?

        Recommend from friends /relatives

        Social media publicity (QQ, Baidu, Google, RenRen, Sina …)

        Tour operator itinerary (travel agencies, airlines …)

        Others

7. Which slogan in your opinion would be the best describing Wuhan?

        'The nine provinces 'leading thoroughfare"

        'Eastern Chicago'/'Chicago of China'

        'A legendary bird with nine heads'

        'Love Wuhan'/'Gorgeous Wuhan'

        List if you have other opinions: _____

Close-ended questions

8. Using the following scale of 1-5, which are the important components of Wuhan as a tourist destination? (1 is the least important, 5 is the extremely important)

	Least important			Most important	
Accommodation &services	1	2	3	4	5
Clean &Green city	1	2	3	4	5
Cost/price level	1	2	3	4	5
Local culture	1	2	3	4	5
Entertainment	1	2	3	4	5
Friendless of local people	1	2	3	4	5
Price	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of food	1	2	3	4	5
Scenery /natural attractions	1	2	3	4	5

		1	2	3	4	5
Shopping facilities		1	2	3	4	5
Tourism information support		1	2	3	4	5
Events &activities		1	2	3	4	5
Local transportation		1	2	3	4	5

9. Using the following scale of 1-5, what should be improved in order to make Wuhan more attractive as a destination? (1 is the least satisfied, 5 is the most satisfied)

	Least important			Most important	
Accommodation &services	1	2	3	4	5
Clean &Green city	1	2	3	4	5
Cost/price level	1	2	3	4	5
Local culture	1	2	3	4	5
Entertainment	1	2	3	4	5
Friendless of local people	1	2	3	4	5
Price	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of food	1	2	3	4	5
Scenery /natural attractions	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Tourism information support	1	2	3	4	5
Events &activities	1	2	3	4	5
Local transportation	1	2	3	4	5

Open-ended questions

Watch the images under below which are from Wuhan:

10. Do you think those images stand for the image of Wuhan and tourism of Wuhan?

If yes, what other opinions come to your mind?

_____

If no, can you tell the reason?

_____

11. Competing with cities such as a Chongqing and Guangzhou, what would be distinguishing Wuhan differently?

12. How do you look at the new image of Wuhan? (e.g. official marketing video 'Love Wuhan' and new Logo)

13. Would you recommend Wuhan as a tourist destination to others?

If yes, what will be your recommend?

_____

If no, what could be improved?

_____

Attachment 5. Pictures of tourist attractions in Wuhan

Image of Yellow Crane Tower (Wuchang Civilization Office 2008)

In front of Hubu Lane

East Lake Scenic Area (East Lake Scenic Area 2011)

Wuhan Yangtze River Bridge

Cherry Blossom Garden in Wuhan University (Baidu Wikipedia)

Main entrance of Wuhan University

Main lobby of Wuhan Museum

Chu and Han Street