

SAIMAA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Tourism, Imatra

Degree Programme in Tourism

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**OVERSEAS STUDENTS AS TOURISTS IN
SHANGHAI**

Bachelor's Thesis 2011

ABSTRACT

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Overseas Students as Tourists in Shanghai, 62 pages, 1 appendix

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With the economic development, the education level of China is improving day by day. Therefore, this attracts more and more overseas students choosing China as their study destination. As one of the most developed cities in mainland China, Shanghai has plenty of universities and colleges, some of which also offer English or other language courses for foreigners. In the year 2008, Shanghai had a number of 36738 overseas students in higher education school, ranked No 2 in China. When studying in Shanghai, many overseas students choose to travel to experience and learn more about China during their leisure time. As a sub-divided group, overseas students have their own preference in tourism consumption.

Based on the theories of customer centered product development, consumer behaviour and cross-cultural communication, this thesis attempts to describe Shanghai foreign students' preference in tourism consumption. The purpose of the thesis is to propose some ideas for China Youth Travel Agency to develop new products which can meet overseas students' needs. In the research, by distributing and collecting back the questionnaire, the thesis analyzes all kinds of factors that influence the overseas students' preference in tourism consumption, as well as the differences between students from Eastern and Western culture. Furthermore, the thesis gives some suggestions about meeting overseas students' needs and wants in tourism marketing.

Keyword: Overseas students, the preference of tourism consumption

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1 INTRODUCTION

With the vigorous development of China's economy, China's education level has been steadily progressing, and more and more foreign students choose to study in China. In 1978, there were just 1236 foreign students, but in 2009, the number of foreign students reached 223 500 students. According to the statistics issued by China Ministry of Education, the number of foreign students in 2009 made an increase of 14.32% compared to 2007. Among the foreign students in China in 2009, number of South Korean, American and Japanese students ranked the top three. These students study in the country's 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, 592 colleges and universities, research institutes and other educational institutions. (Republic of China Ministry of Education 2009).

Shanghai is one of the most developed cities in China and many universities are located in Shanghai. In 2008, there were 36738 foreign students studying in Shanghai, the number ranked second in the whole China. China, as one origin of oriental civilization, is of great attractions for foreign students. China has a long history, with ruins of many ancient civilizations, such as the Great Wall and the Forbidden City. With a huge span of longitude and latitude, China shows very different natural environments, such as Qinghai-Tibet Plateau in the west, Hangzhou West Lake in the east, Inner Mongolia grasslands in the north and Old Town of Lijiang in the south. China also has a unique biological environment and has rare animals such as panda and elk. All these attract overseas students to travel during their stay in China. Thus, the consumption of overseas students increases with the group growing. (Shanghai Education News 2009).

The partner of this thesis is China CYTS Tours, one of top three China tour

operators founded in 1980. It is one of the biggest foreigner-service providers in tourism and it has a team of over three hundred senior tour-guides speaking all various foreign languages, namely, English, Japanese, Russian, German, French, Korean, Indonesian, Hebrew, Laotian, Spanish and Hausa etc. (China CYTS Tours Holding Co., Ltd.). Its branches cover almost every big city in China including the most developed cities. Among their foreign customers, many are students.

The tourism market of foreign students in China is an emerging market and is growing bigger. If travel agents or tour operators aim to increase the competitiveness in the tourism market of foreign students, it is necessary to know the following questions:

- 1) What are the consumption preferences of overseas students when they go travelling in China?
- 2) Is there a difference between students from Eastern and Western cultures when they go travelling in China?

After knowing these, that is easier to understand foreign students' consumption preferences and demands of travel. The aim of this thesis is to provide CYTS knowledge of their customers that will help them when they are designing new tourism products and making marketing strategies. Finding out foreign students' preference in tourism will meet their needs of marketing and product designing.

2 CUSTOMER AS THE BASIS FOR TOURISM PRODUCT

In this chapter, the main theories concerning overseas students as tourists in Shanghai will be provided and presented.

When a company develops a product, the focus is the customer. No matter how a customer is defined in a different way, all efforts should be addressed to the customer. "A general guideline for an efficient product development process should be created with the overall objective-customer centric product development combined with an improved internal workflow." (Petschnig 2008, p.3).

"Contemporary authors, consultants and top management uses phrases such as customer orientation, customer-driven, listen to the voice of the consumer....." (Mello 2001, p. 4), which means the customers are becoming more influential as a factor in the product development process. The most successful companies consider some form of customer information in designing their products and services.

To meet the customers' needs usually is considered as one of the largest factors of business success. Customer centered product development is based on knowing what the customers' needs are. Those psychological factors can be hard to find and the changes of the mindset of the consumer are always present, therefore it is a difficult task to know what the customers' needs are.

Segmentation is a key instrument in knowing the customers' wants and preferences. Market segmentation consists of detecting, evaluating and

selecting homogeneous groups of individuals, whether they are consumers or not-with the purpose of designing and directing competitive strategies towards them (Francisco1996, pp. 58 - 74). The factors influencing segmentations are statistical facts such as demographic, geographic and non-tangible factors i.e. psychographic and behavioural patterns. Businesses from all industries sectors use market segmentation in their marketing and strategic planning (Wind 1978, pp.317 - 337).

Segmentation helps to define purchase habits and since the customer is the core of all decisions relating to the 4P's (product, price, place and promotion), those decisions will be both easier to make and more consistent with each other if a clear and detailed definition of the target segment exists. Successful development must determine the need for a product based on user needs and commercial success.

In this thesis, the segmentation is already clear, which is "overseas students in Shanghai". Therefore, the main task is to find out overseas' students needs and preferences. By knowing the significance of customer centered product development, there are two other theories that should be studied to implement to this researching.

2.1 Consumer Behaviour Theory in tourism

Consumer behaviour theory is defined as the study of when, why, how and where people do or do not buy a product. (Kassarjian 1971, pp. 409 - 418). Understanding consumer behaviour in tourism requires an insight into psychological and social factors that influence decision-making.

Figure 2.1 shows that the decision maker, located in the centre of the diagram, is affected by both internal and social influences. The internal psychological factors

that influence travel behaviour are perception and learning, personality, motives and attitudes. Travel decisions are affected by other people as well. Social factors have four major areas: role and family influences, reference groups, social classes, and culture and subcultures (Swarbrooke 2007, pp. 51 - 80).

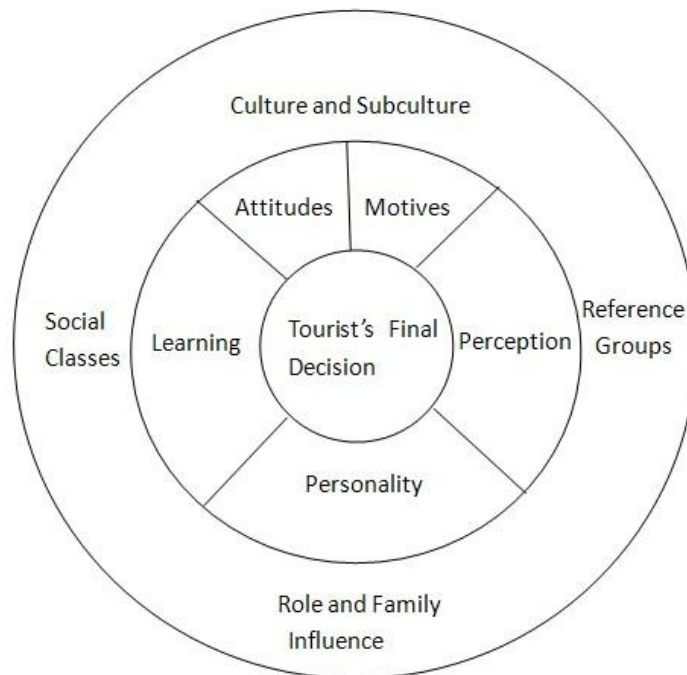


Figure 2.1 Consumer behaviour theory

Internal psychological factors

As mentioned above, internal psychological factors that influence travel behaviour are perception, learning, personality, motives and attitudes.

Perception and learning: Perception is the process by which an individual selects, organizes, and interprets information to create a meaningful picture of the world. (Kassarjian 1971, pp. 409 - 418). It is the reflection of objective things in people's mind. The more objective properties of things people feel, the more complete the perception is. For tourists, the perception is the direct reflection of scenery in mind. Tourist destination, distance, transportation, accommodation

facilities, food, time and risks are all objects of tourism perception. A certain perception produces correspondingly consumption preferences and impacts on specific travel decisions, travel purchase behaviour etc. (Moutinho 1987, pp. 5 - 44). For example, if a tourist has good feelings for a destination before going and he likes travelling by air, he is likely to choose the package including both this destination and airline. Learning is related to changes in an individual's behaviour based on experiences. From the last example, by observing and learning, if he also has good feelings for the tourist destination after leaving, he may visit the place again or recommend it to others. Otherwise, he would change his idea to consume the same products.

Personality. Personality is associated with the patterns of behaviour and the mental structures that relate behaviour and experience in an orderly way. (Kassarjian 1971, pp. 409 - 418). Individual characteristics of tourists include personality and demographic characteristics. The study of individual characteristics of a tourist is an important basis to design tourism products and develop tourism market. The individual personality of tourists is stable psychological characteristics. Tourists with different individual personality have different preferences. Stanley found that extrovert tourists are willing to go to undeveloped areas and get fresh experience and new joy. They often become the discoverer and advocate of new tourist areas. Introversive tourists like to go to a familiar place with all activities in plan. They often follow extrovert tourists and become tourists of a new scenic spot. (Moutinho 1987, pp. 5 - 44)

The demographic characteristics of tourists include age, gender, occupation, education, etc.

1) Age. Age is the main basis in the classification of life-cycle stages. Different age tourist groups are different in physical condition, mental status, income and

travel purchase experience. (Swarbrooke 2007, pp. 51 - 80) Therefore, they have different preferences and show different behaviour. Generally speaking, young people prefer the new, exciting and adventurous tourism activities, while old people prefer soothing and easy tourism activities.

2) Gender. The gender differences usually impact consumption behaviour in physiology. (Swarbrooke 2007, pp. 51 - 80). First, male and females have obvious differences in visual, auditory, and tactile and other sensory functions. They show different responses on the same tourism marketing. Secondly, men and women are very different in physical strength. In addition, males and females are born to be different in personality and have different tourism preferences, thus to have different tourism behaviour. For example, men like fitness in tourism while women enjoy arts and culture tourism.

3) Occupation. Occupation largely determines one's income and status in the social structure, as well as leisure time. (Swarbrooke 2007, pp. 51 - 80) Occupation reflects one's work and life experiences. Because of different occupations, people tend to choose different tourism products. People of complicated and intensive jobs tend to choose relaxing travel. For example, after the 1990s in Europe and the United States, many white-collar employees travel to "relax" and "escape", and prefer comfortable tourism projects rather than stimulating ones.

4) Education. The level of education plays a more important role in income and becomes a key decision factor at the level of household income. (Swarbrooke 2007, pp. 51 - 80). Education partly determines people's income and employment, thereby affecting people's purchasing behaviour. It also influences people's thinking, decision-making, as well as contacts with others. There is no doubt that education influences people's consumption style and

preferences.

Motives and Attitudes: Motives are thought of as internal energizing forces that direct a person's behaviour toward the achievement of personal goals. Attitudes consist of knowledge and positive or negative feelings about an object, an event, or another person. Tourists' decision-making consists of a series of psychological processes. (Swarbrooke 2007, pp. 51 - 80). Tourists receive knowledge and a variety of travel information from the social environment, on the basis of which, they get motives and form attitudes for travelling.

Social factors

Every tourist is a consumer living in a particular society. The social structure regulates the interactions between members of society to maintain the necessary social order. The social structure necessarily has a profound impact on consumption preferences of each member (Moutinho 1987, pp. 5 - 44). Social factors have four major areas: role and family influences, reference groups, social classes, and culture and subcultures.

1) Role and family influences. Family is a small cell of society and a most basic and important human union. The family not only has a direct impact on consumer behaviour, but also plays an important role in the process of children's growing up. Social culture, values and behaviour can be inherited from generation to generation. Purchase and consumption patterns are strongly influenced by people's attitudes and skills which are linked closely to family. In America, about two thirds of leisure travelling takes place in family. (Swarbrooke 2007, pp. 44 - 47).

2) Reference groups. Reference groups come with various degrees of

influence. Kassarian (1971, pp. 409 - 418) notes that primary reference groups come with a great deal of influence, for instance members of a fraternity. Secondary reference groups tend to have somewhat less influence, for instance members of a tourist club that one encounters only during week-ends, are likely to have their influence limited to consumption during that time period.

3) Social classes. Social class is a relatively stable group of people divided by economy, politics, education, culture and other social factors. (Swarbrooke 2007, pp. 44 - 47). Each society has social ranks and members belonging to the same rank have similar interests, preferences and behaviour because of similar economy, value and education. Reflected in the travel behaviour, they tend to choose the same type of brand and show common preferences. In general, tourists from upper-class basically hold the same positive attitude. They like elegant tourism products and prefer high-grade tourism projects, transportation, hotels, and reception which can show their status. On the other hand, lower-class tourists prefer irritating products, such as irritating activities and products with colourful appearance.

4) Culture and subcultures. Every tourist lives in a cultural environment in particular society and one group shares the same culture. People growing up in different cultural environments appear to be different in behaviour. Moutinho (1987, pp. 5 - 44) and Swarbrooke (2007, p. 255) both point that culture can exist independently and affects the behaviour of several generations deeply. Thus culture influences tourists' consumption preferences more profoundly than society. Differences in cultural background also lead to diversification in tourism demands and consumer preferences.

By learning consumer behaviour theory in tourism, we could have a better understanding of what factors are influencing consumers' behaviour. When it

comes to overseas students, internal and social factors should be both taken into consideration.

2.2 Cross-Cultural Communication Theory in Tourism

According to Geert Hofstede (2003, p.9), culture is “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.” Since the segmentation has been clarified as overseas students in Shanghai, it is necessary to find out if there is a cultural difference. Hofstede has done a famous research on cultural differences which is called cultural dimensions. His model proposes 5D of culture as follows:

- **Power Distance Index (PDI)**: the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally.
- **Individualism (IDV)** vs. collectivism: the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups.
- **Masculinity (MAS)** vs. femininity: the distribution of roles between the genders which is another fundamental issue for any society. This refers to how much a society sticks with, and values, traditional male and female roles.
- **Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)**: a society’s tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity
- **Long- Term Orientation (LTO)** vs. short-term orientation: virtue regardless of truth.

By Hofstede’s research results of different countries, some of the roots of cultural differences are pointed to the grouping of county. Many other scholars have written about cultural differences between the West and the East due to Hofstede’s cultural dimensions. Qiutian Lu (2003, pp. 45 - 89) claims that there

is a general view of Western and Eastern culture. According to Hofstede's model, he analyzed the general characteristics of Western and Eastern culture:

Eastern Culture:

1. High power distance index. Asian countries are typically respective of Eastern culture. There is usually a clear hierarchy gap in society. Leadership or the higher level people have a strong impact on the lower levels' behaviour.
2. Low individual index. Eastern culture's people tend to be more collective. Historically, the culture is based on the formation of family-centered, emphasizing the establishment of close interpersonal distance values of collectivism.
3. High masculinity index. Since ancient times, men have had higher control in many Eastern culture countries. Even though it has been changing nowadays, in some countries such as Japan, women have lower position in society.
4. High uncertainty avoidance. People in Eastern culture have a higher degree of uncertainty avoidance for the future. They always try to avoid risks and follow the rules to keep a certainty in life.
5. Long-term Orientation index. It is mostly found in East Asian countries, in particular in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea.

Western Culture:

1. Low power distance index. In western culture countries, people believe in equality. Governments are more open to their citizens. A hierarchy system usually does not exist or it is not obvious. Lower levels can rebut their superiors.
2. High individualism index. Western culture people concentrate more on their personal interests than collective norms and values. Individualism is the core

concept of society; people have more freedom in Western culture.

3. Low masculinity index. In western culture countries, females can have the same treatment as males. For example, decision-making can be shared between sexes.
4. Low uncertainty avoidance index. For the future western culture people have lower uncertainty avoidance. They commonly have positive attitudes to arranging their current life and seldom worry about tomorrow. They prefer to accept new things and experience differently.

Based on Hofstede's study, Qiutian Lu (2003, pp. 45 - 89) also claims that the culture differences between Eastern and Western countries are just a general concept, there are obviously some exceptions due to various histories of different countries.

Comparison of my target countries by using Geert Hofstede's model

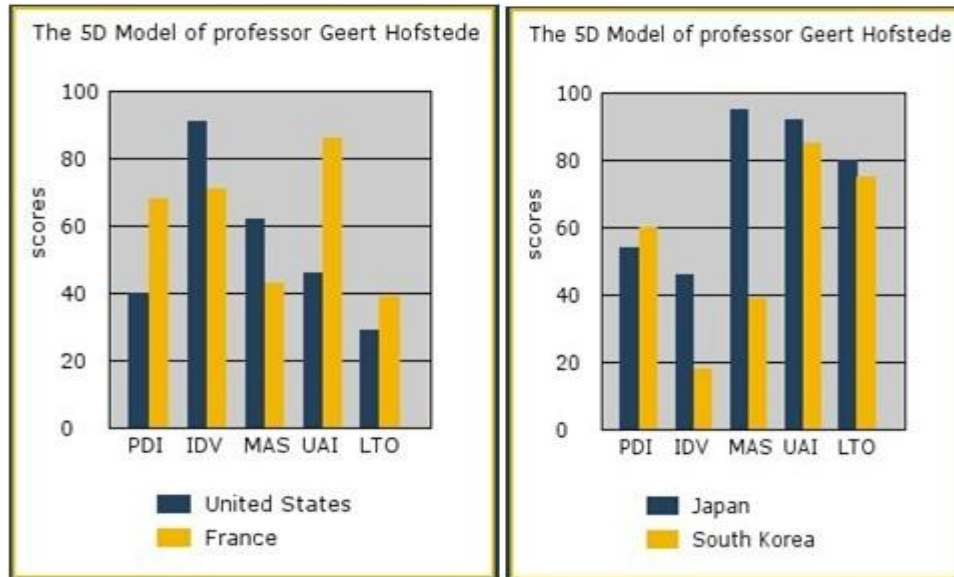


Chart 2.1 The 5D Model of professor Geert Hofstede

Here we can obviously see the differences between these four countries, but when connected with tourism, the research should find out if they still have differences to influence students' consumption behaviour.

With the understanding of culture differences, cross-cultural communication theory should be learnt as it is a phenomenon which definitely would happen.

Cross-cultural communication refers to the fact that people with different cultural backgrounds engage in the process of communication. Travel includes contacts between different cultures and sub-cultures. (Gao 2007, pp. 127 - 129). In tourism activities, tourists carry the culture where they come from and become satisfied on their travel by feeling a different culture. This is a collision between two kinds of regional culture, that is the origin culture and destination culture.

Tourists' curiosity and desire for strange cultures make tourism to be cross-cultural. Once people can afford the time and money, their curiosity will drive them to go out to feel different cultures. The cultural differences between source country and destination country attract people to travel. (Crotts 2004, pp. 83 - 88). Cultural differences mean that people in different environments develop unique forms of national sentiments, national consciousness and cultural atmosphere, which is reflected in the differences of language, knowledge, life values, ethics, thinking, customs. (Litvin et al., 2004, pp. 29 - 37).

Of course, there are many types of tourists, not all of them take experiencing a different culture as their main purpose. But it is true that cross-cultural processes would definitely happen whether it is a short trip or a long distance journey. There is an obvious feature in tourism that people leave their resident place for another place.

In terms of communication in tourism, firstly, from the objective view, the purpose of many tourists includes communicating with the local people. The officer of tourism commission in the Cuban embassy said: "Tourism is a good way to

understand a country's culture and how the local people's life is like, for instance how they are thinking, what they are singing, how they are dancing and so on." (Ma 2001, pp. 17 - 18).

The famous American tourism professor named Robert Woodrow McIntosh (2000, pp. 61 - 69) also pointed out that the motivation of travel has four aspects: health, culture, social interaction and prestige. Apart from health, the other three obviously contain some kind of communication.

In the survey by Yao Feng Ma (2005, pp. 96 - 99), it was also found out that travelers from the United States, Britain, Germany, France, Australia and Japan always take communication with local people, and learning the local culture and life style as one of tourism motivations. Tourists usually have more than one motivation in tourism activity. Even if not as their main motivation, tourists still expect to get satisfaction of knowledge and experience from local people.

From the subjective point, there must exist communication while travelling occurs (Ma 2005, pp. 96 - 99). Tourists need a tour guide and other types of service such as food, accommodation and transportation in the destination, which can only be provided by the local people

Academic research results show that tourists from different cultural backgrounds appear different in consumption behaviour and characteristics. The differences of norms, values, perception, social interaction and other aspects of culture between source country and host country impact on tourists' consumption behaviour and preference. (Ma 2005, pp. 35 - 38). In the study of various factors influencing tourist's consumption preferences, I believe that the most important ones are: value, social norm and the way of thinking.

Ruijie Gao (2007, p. 76 - 79) stressed that social norm is the criteria of people's behaviour. It includes a wide range of customs, ethics, and religions. Value is the enduring faith of what people think is the best. It is the core of the culture which influences many people's behaviour. Way of thinking is a cognitive process which is based on a certain logical order. In terms of tourism, tourists with different social norms, values and ways of thinking would have quite a different behaviour and consumption preferences while travelling.

3 RESEARCH METHOD AND DATA COLLECTION

A research can be done as a quantitatively or qualitatively depending on the research purpose. Quantitative researches are aimed at gathering data and by drawing conclusions, and not opening to the same level as qualitative research. Qualitative research is focused on a deeper level of problem solving, the aim is to gather data that is open for interpretation and there is no intention for establishing statistical validity.

3.1 Research method

The quantitative method is both structured and formal, as well as gives researcher a rather high degree of control. The researcher is also objective in the study. Using a quantitative method means that information from each object is collected, but on the other hand many objects are studied, which means that it is possible to draw conclusions and generalize. In this research, a questionnaire-based survey was used to collect data as the purpose of my thesis

is to find out what the overseas students' consumption preferences are and what the differences between Western and Eastern culture are. The main point is to gather enough information from plenty of students to draw conclusions.

When using a qualitative method, one or a few objects are studied in depth, and the main purpose is to receive a better understanding of the problem studies, as well as to gain profound knowledge. The qualitative method makes it hard to generalize, has a low degree of formalization, and is characterized by closeness between the source and research. The last little question of the questionnaire is an open one to ask the respondents to tell anything about that travelling experience. Part of my information also comes from free talking with the respondents when they were filling in the form. The aim is to gain a better understanding while analyzing the huge data collected by using quantitative method.

This research is quantitative as 250 samples have been studied and the purpose is to get conclusions of overseas students' travel preferences and the differences between students from Western and Eastern cultures. It is not only to describe the phenomenon studied, but mainly to make the generalizations. The qualitative method used in this research is to complement the quantitative method to answer the research questions.

The questionnaire was written in English and Chinese and the interviews of foreign students were also done in English and Chinese. Thus, there is the problem that the foreign students who do not speak English or Chinese may be excluded from the sample group of foreign students, which leads to a bias. But foreign students who speak neither English nor Chinese do not account much among foreign students in China. Besides, when I did my survey there were few foreign students who do not speak English or Chinese. So, the respondents in

my survey can represent the overall foreign students generally.

3.2 Respondents and data collection

Information collecting is concentrated on the overseas students in China. According to Ministry of Education of China, there were over 223 thousand foreign students studying in China in 2008. (Republic of China Ministry of Education, 2009) It is a high number and I took Shanghai as an example to study the whole group. Thus I focused on foreign students in Shanghai. When considering the overseas students in Shanghai, it is also impossible to take all the students into consideration. Therefore I picked up universities which have more foreign students to make the research as valid as possible. Students from Japan, South Korea, the USA and France take a big share in foreign students and the number is growing. Meanwhile, students from these four countries represent both western culture and eastern culture. Hence, I paid special attention on students from these four countries.

Besides the huge data collected by surveys, searching for secondary data is probably the quickest and most economical way to gather information. My partner company CYTS keeps their own database or library containing market data. Some data I obtained from them. Other sources of information are public libraries, newspapers, books, government documents, information agents and public database. For example, the number of the overseas students I gathered from the China Ministry of Education.

The questionnaire has three parts. The first part is the survey of basic information. The informant should provide information of gender, nationality, age, education background, travel fund resources and other necessary information.

The second part is the survey of travel preference. For example, the frequency of travel, budget of time and money, travel motivation, residence transportation style and information resources are asked. Many detailed questions are in the questionnaire to portray the travel preference. The second part is the most important and will take the most time to answer.

The first two parts are choices questions. Thus the third part will be open questions in case some important information is missed. The distribution and collection of the questionnaires are shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 The distribution and collection of the questionnaires

	copies distributed	copies recovered	invalid copies	valid copies
E-mail questionnaire	50	38	6	32
Paper questionnaire	East China Normal University			
	91	91	11	80
	Shanghai Jiaotong University			
	56	56	6	50
	Fudan University			
	51	51	3	48
	Shanghai International Studies University			
51	51	11	40	
Total				250

I used two ways to distribute and collect the questionnaires, e-mail questionnaire and paper questionnaires. Via e-mail, I distributed 50 copies and received 38 copies back. After deleting 6 invalid copies, I had 32 valid copies. The paper questionnaires were mainly distributed in the four universities which have more foreign students. With e-mail questionnaires and paper questionnaires together, I have 250 valid questionnaires.

4 OVERSEAS STUDENTS AS TRAVELLERS

The group of foreign students in Shanghai is composed of students from different countries. They are different from foreigners working in Shanghai. Being students and having limitation and periodicity in time and money, they have common features of consumption behaviour and habits.

By the survey I have 250 questionnaires and their basic information are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 The overall characteristics of the sample

Gender		Time staying in China	
Female	44%	less than 1 month	
Male	56%	1-3 months	
Nationality		4.5 months	
America	23%	above 6 months	
France	12%	Times of visiting China	
Japan	23%	once	
South Korea	27%	twice	
Other	15%	three times	
Age		four time	
Under 18	64%	five times or more	
18-24	20%	Source of money for travel	
25-30	8%	parents	
31-35	4%	scholarship	
36-40	4%	salary of part-time job	
41-45	0%		
Above 45	0%		
Education Level			
exchange student	36%		
visiting scholar	10%		
bachelor	20%		
master	12%		
doctor	8%		
language learner	14%		

4.1 Overseas students as decision-makers

Sources of tourism information

In Chart 4.1 we can see that 43% of foreign students obtain tourism information on the Internet while making a decision. Thirty percent of foreign students obtain tourism information from friends and classmates. Twelve percent of foreign students obtain tourism information from travel agents. Thirteen percent of foreign students obtain tourism information from a variety of tourist brochures. The remaining 2% of foreign students obtain tourism information from e-mail ads and public travel posters. With the popularity of the Internet and the growing number of Internet users, the Internet gradually becomes a convenient and comprehensive platform to exchange information.

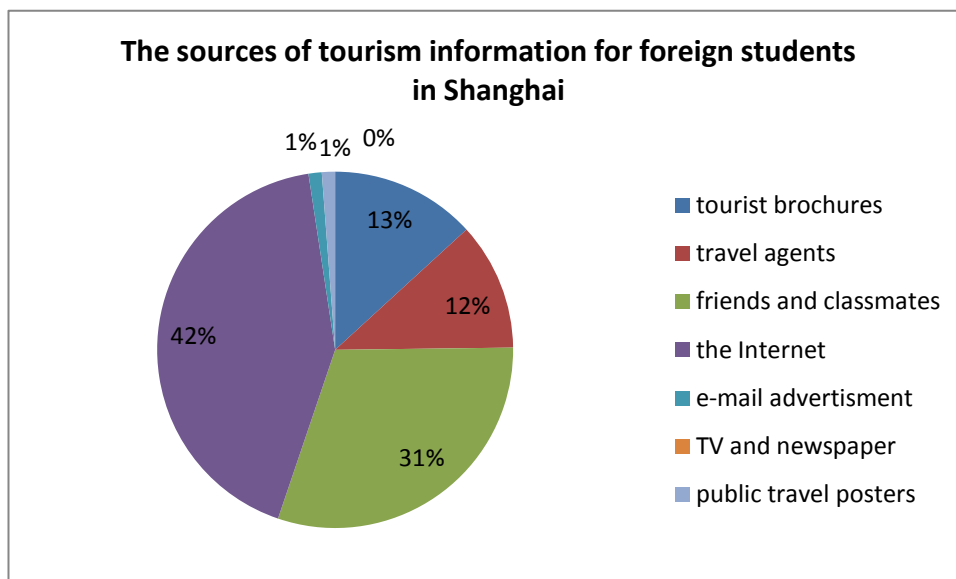


Chart 4.1 The sources of tourism information for foreign students in Shanghai

Accepted tourism marketing

In Chart 4.2 we can see that more than a half of foreign students in Shanghai accept buzz marketing and the percentage is for 54%. About 31% of foreign students trust media advertisements for tourism destination marketing promotion.

About 7% of foreign students accept mail and e-mail advertisements for tourism marketing promotion respectively. Only 1% of foreign students accept face-to-face marketing.

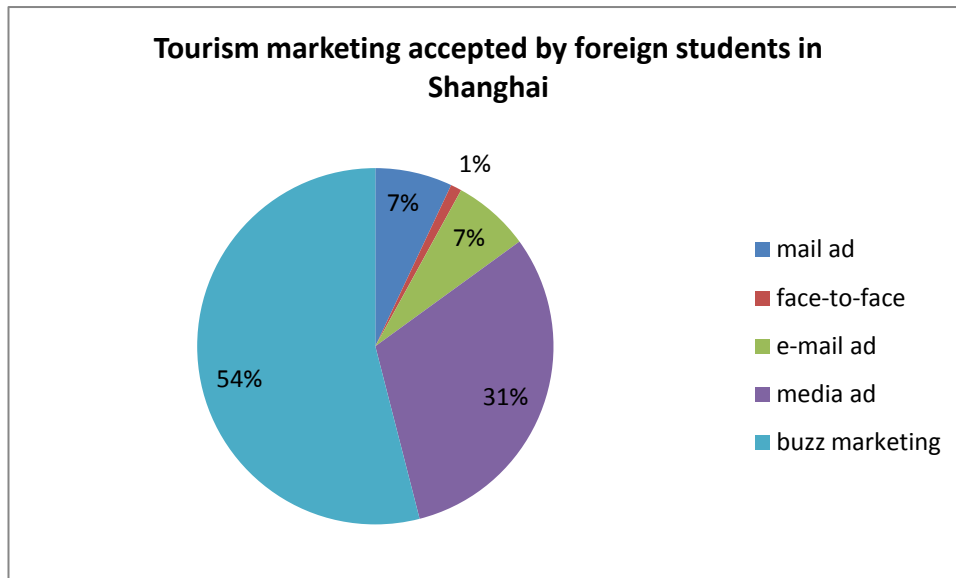


Chart 4.2 Tourism marketing accepted by foreign students in Shanghai

Buzz marketing is that buyers transfer product information to their friends, family and colleagues mouth-to-mouth and then promote purchase decisions. The most obvious feature of buzz marketing is reliability. Being foreigners, they tend to trust their friends' recommendation, because their travel experience may be of the biggest value. Media is also an acceptable platform of tourism information and communication. Face-to-face selling is most unacceptable among foreign students.

Travel plans

In chart 4.3 we can see that 40% of foreign students in Shanghai consider and prepare the travel plan for a long while before making a decision to travel. The other 60% of students are fast decision-makers. They do not spend too much time on considering and preparing. They make the decision in a short time and travel immediately.

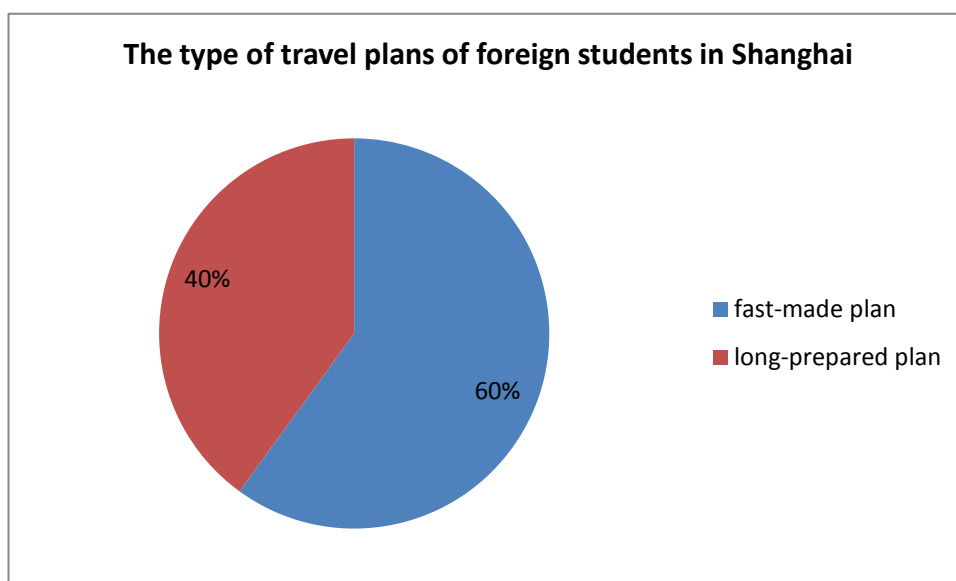


Chart 4.3 The type of travel plans of foreign students in Shanghai

Most of Shanghai foreign students investigated are young people aged between 18 to 30. In a certain stage of life, young people have their own unique consumer psychology which is different from the middle-aged and the older people. Reflected in consumer psychology, young people are not rich in life experiences and their abilities of analysis and judgment are not yet fully mature. Their thoughts, interests, personality are not very stable, so they are often emotional and even have impulsive behaviour. The performance of such psychological characteristics in consumer behaviour is that young people are prone to impulse buying. That is what we can see in chart 4.3. As long as they like, they will find out ways to make quick purchase decisions. They would not spend a lot of time on selecting a travel destination. The travel destination they choose may come from a magazine or from a free chat with friends.

Consumption patterns

In chart 4.4 we can see that, nearly half of foreign students are conservative and thrifty. Forty-eight percent of students are concerned about their spending and save money consciously, for they think as students they have no income.

Twenty-eight percent of foreign students are neutral and they do not save money or overdraw consciously. Twenty four percent of the foreign students consume over. They overdraw credit cards or use the money for future plans to meet current consumption needs.

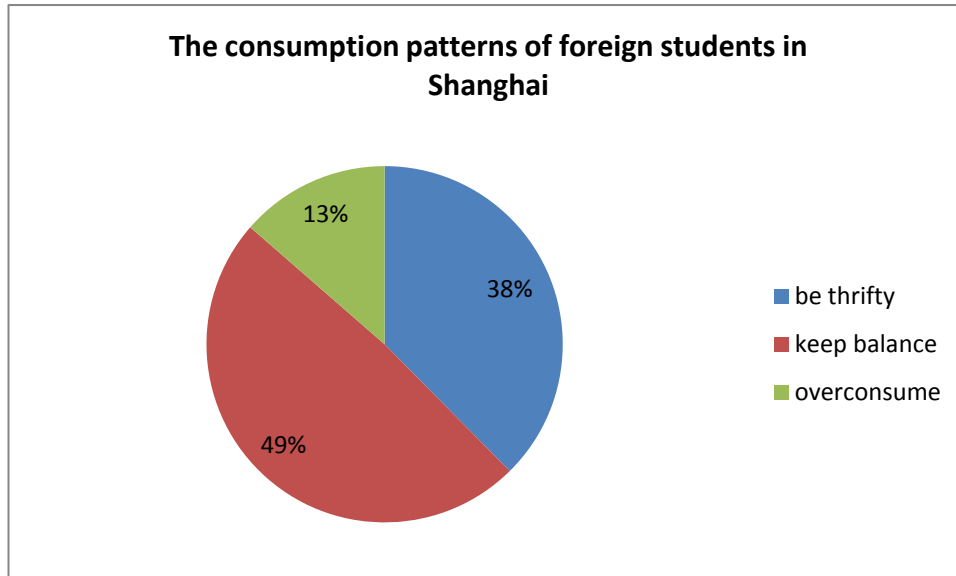


Chart 4.4 The consumption patterns of foreign students in Shanghai

As students, they do not have regular income. According to the latest statistics of Ministry of Education, foreign students without scholarships are for 72.1% among all the foreign students. Among foreign students in Shanghai surveyed in this paper, around 70% of them need to get money from their families to travel. Foreign students' income depends on family totally or partly, which makes foreign students have to consider budget while making consumption decisions and they tend to choose cost-effective products to meet their unique needs.

From the survey of Shanghai foreign students' consumption patterns we can see that foreign students have a strong desire to travel but at the same time they are limited by budget. That is what we can see in chart 4.4. Thus, nearly half of foreign students maintain a consumer habit of balanced payments. Some foreign students have a sense of active deposits and accumulate money for tourism.

4.2 Travelling preferences of Shanghai foreign students

The time choosing to travel

In chart 4.5 we can see that the time foreign students chose for travel is scatterly distributed. One third of foreign students choose to travel on weekends, 24% of foreign students choose to travel on summer holiday or winter holiday. The proportion of foreign students travelling on statutory holiday is 21% and the proportion of foreign students travelling on the working day with no classes is 22%. Because of different kind of study and numbers of courses, they are different in the choice of travelling time.

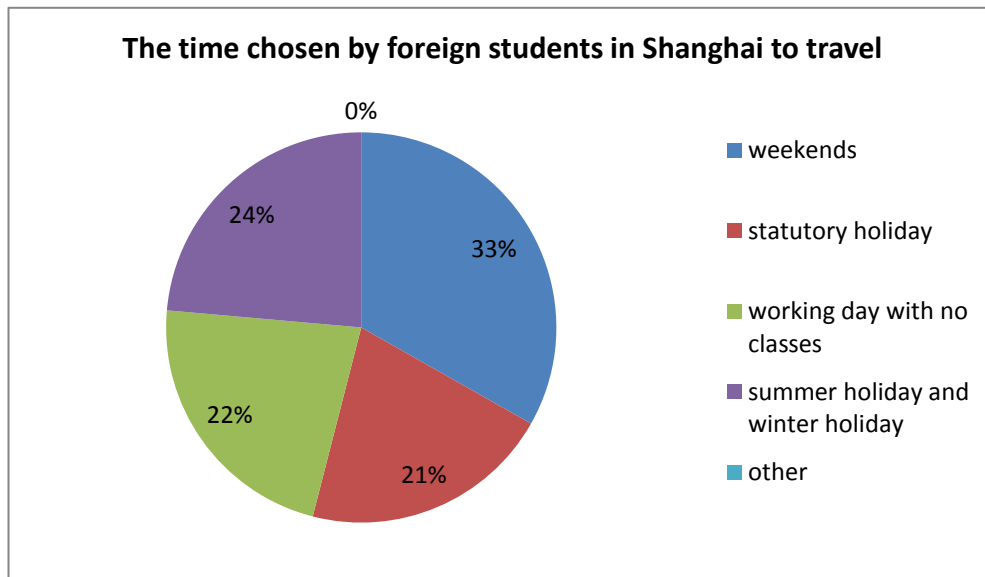


Chart 4.5 The time chosen by foreign students in Shanghai to travel

The length of travelling time

In chart 4.6 we can see that 72% of foreign students travel less than 3 nights. The proportion of foreign students travelling for two nights is 36%, the proportion of three nights is 24%, the proportion of one night is 4% and the proportion of travelling not overnight is 8%. The foreign students of travelling with a longer length account for 28%. The proportion of foreign students travelling for 4-7

nights is 12%, the proportion of 8-14 nights is 4% and the proportion of over 14 nights is 21%.

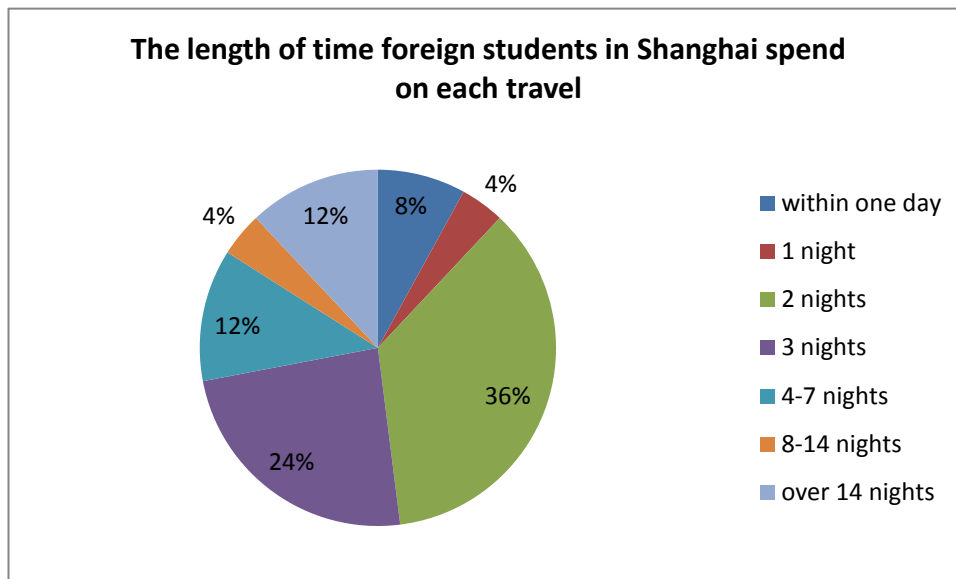


Chart 4.6 The length of time foreign students in Shanghai spend on each travel

Because of the occupation of student, they have to take courses and study. The time spent on study limits the time spent on travel. Thus, the amount of discretionary time is also an important factor impacting on travel.

Frequency of travel

In chart 4.7 we can see that the proportion of foreign students in Shanghai travelling once or twice monthly is 68%, the proportion of travelling three or four times monthly is 24%, the proportion of not travelling monthly is 24% and nobody travels five times or more monthly. The data shows that most foreign students in Shanghai travel once or twice monthly. Foreign students in Shanghai have a dual identity, student and foreigner. Being students, they are restricted by courses in school. But the desire for exploration of different culture and the limited time in China, they have stronger tourism motivations than local residents and other foreigners who stay for long. Therefore, most foreign students in Shanghai travel monthly.

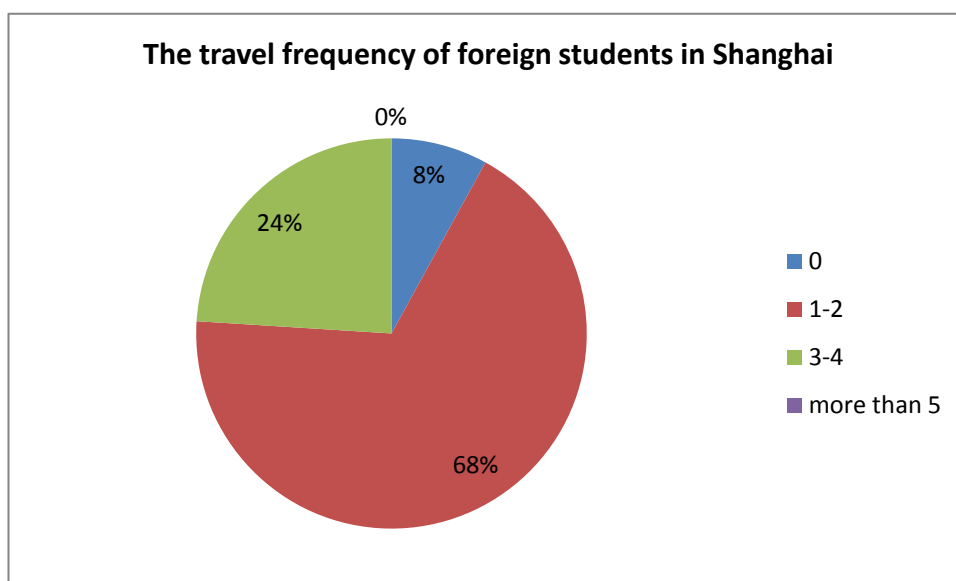


Chart 4.7 The travel frequency of foreign students in Shanghai

Young people are passionate, active thinking, full of fantasy and adventurous. As shown in Chart 4.7, Shanghai foreign students who travel once or twice per month account for 68%, which means younger students have a very strong desire and curiosity to explore the unknown things with the impulse and passion.

The average expense of travel

In chart 4.8 we can see that more than half of foreign students in Shanghai spend less than RMB 1000 on each travel. The proportion of cost between RMB 800 and RMB 1000 is 24%, the biggest. The proportions of cost between RMB 400 and RMB 600 and cost between RMB 1000 and 2000 are both 20%. The proportion of cost between RMB 2000 and RMB 3000 is 12%. The proportions of cost between RMB 200 and RMB 400 and cost between RMB 600 and 800 are both 8%. The proportions of cost between RMB 100 and RMB 200 and cost less than RMB 100 are both 4%. Travel expenses depend on income. Since most foreign students have no stable income, their travel expenses would be affected by many factors, showing scattered and uneven distribution.

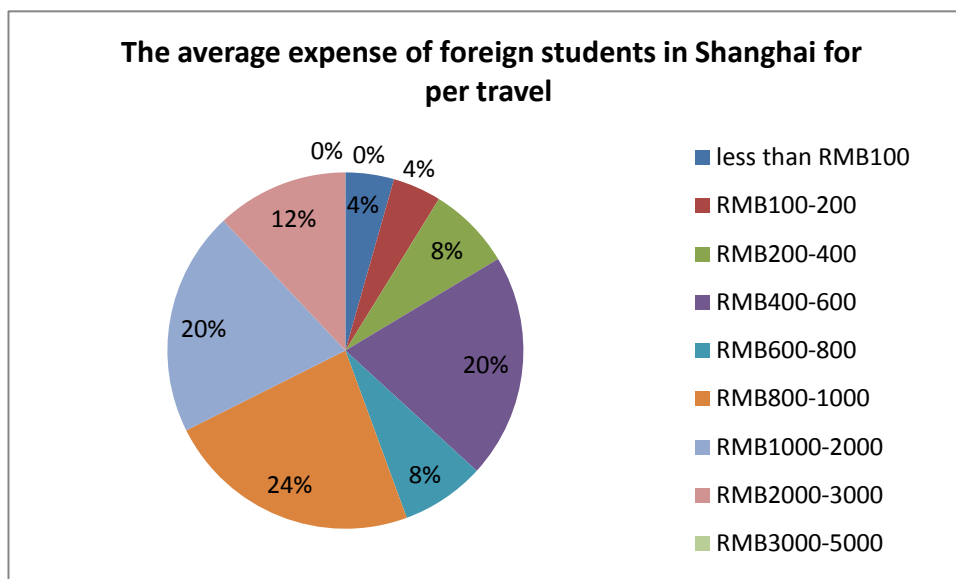


Chart 4.8 The average expense of foreign students in Shanghai per trip

Payment channel in travel

In chart 4.9 we can see that most foreign students choose to pay cash. The proportion of foreign students only paying by cash in travel is 72%, the proportion of only paying by credit card is 16% and the proportion of paying by both cash and credit card is 12%. From oral interviews, I learnt that most foreign students chose to pay by cash mainly because they found that many tourist attractions did not have electronic payment equipment or their foreign cards cannot be recognized on most POS machines in China. Most overseas students who prefer to pay cash are those who have experienced travelling in China. Besides, many students think cash is safer and more convenient than credit card while travelling.

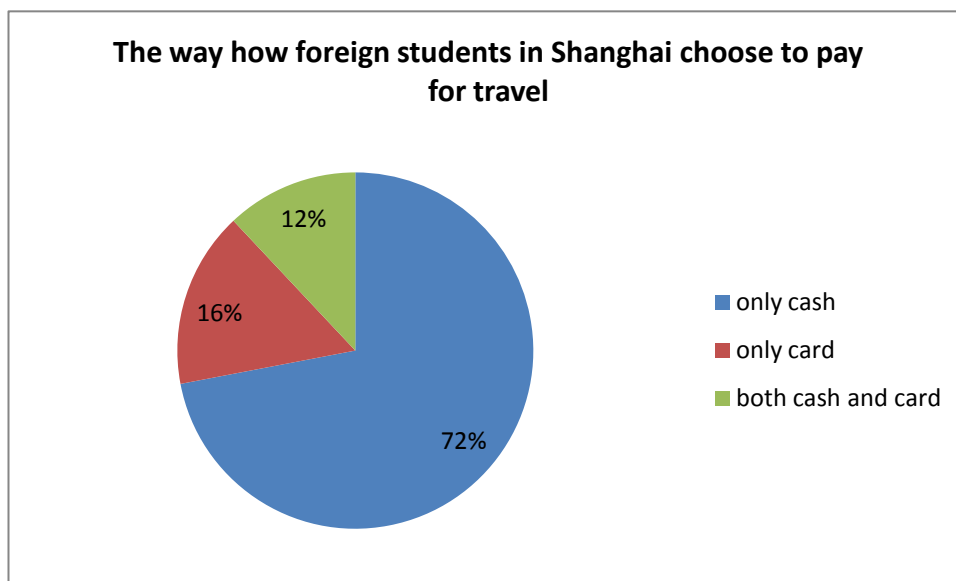


Chart 4.9 The way foreign students in Shanghai choose to pay for travel

4.3 Shanghai foreign students' tourism consumption preferences

While travelling, five kinds of consumption will be involved. They are food, accommodation, transportation, tour and shopping. In this part I will study Shanghai foreign students' consumption preferences of the five aspects respectively.

Food

In chart 4.10 we can see that 78% of foreign students in Shanghai choose food as special destination. Thirteen percent of foreign students would choose international popular food, such as McDonald's, KFC. The other 9% of foreign students would choose their homeland food to eat. As young people, they are full of fantasy and adventures. So they want to try a new life and experience local special food.

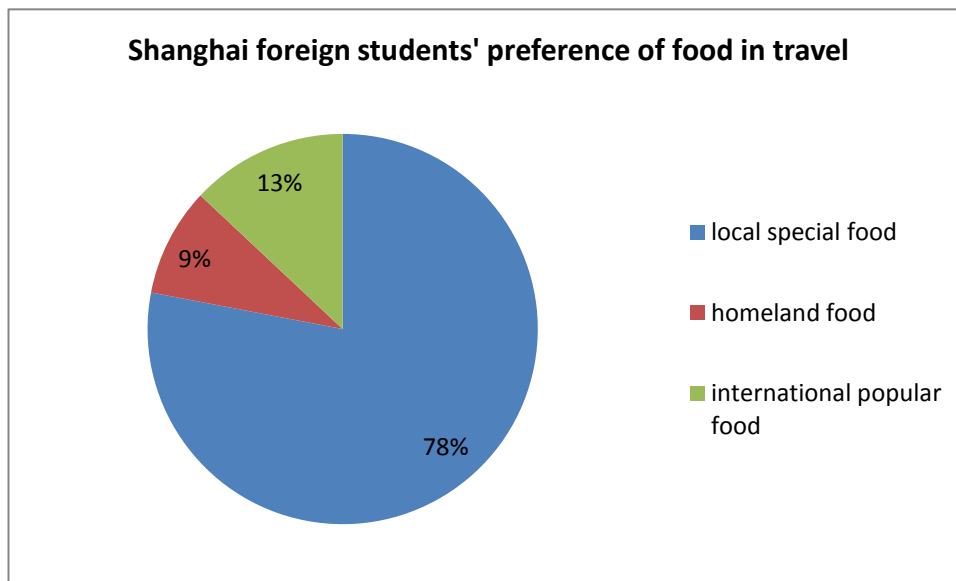


Chart 4.10 Shanghai foreign students' preference of food in travel

Accommodation

In chart 4.11 we can see that youth hostels and budget hotels are the most popular accommodation for foreign students in Shanghai while travelling, and the choice accounts for 34% and 30% respectively. Foreign students who choose to get an accommodation in their friends' or relatives' house account for 12%, as well as foreign students who choose to live in star hotels. About 9% of foreign students choose resort accommodation. Only 3% of foreign students choose private inns and nobody chooses camp as accommodation.

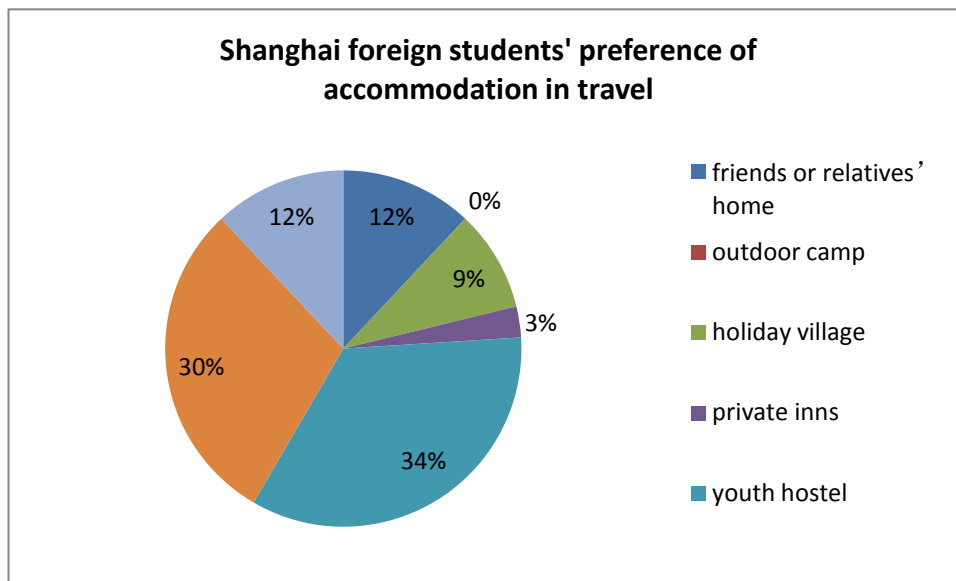


Chart 4.11 Shanghai foreign students' preference of accommodation in travel

Youth hostels have not been developed for a long time in China, but they are more popular in developed countries. The cost is low for students. Meanwhile, youth hostels' open and community-based accommodation makes it easy for young people to get to know and communicate with each other. Therefore many young backpackers choose to stay in youth hostels. Budget hotels have had a rapid rise and extensive development in China in recent years. Because of reasonable price, clean and comfortable accommodation and convenient location, budget hotels have also become one of the preferred accommodations. Students who choose star hotels always pursue high-quality accommodation and they are richer than other students. To reduce travel costs and visit their friends, some students choose their friends' house to stay. Some students select the resort for the accommodation, because they are just with simple purpose of leisure vacation. Among all accommodation types, least students choose private small inns, because the private small inns' conditions, environment and safety are not able to meet the needs of students.

Transportation

In chart 4.12 we can see that 45% of foreign students in Shanghai choose to travel by train. The second most popular transportation is plane because it is fast and convenient. About 15% of foreign students choose to travel by bus. Three percent of them choose taxi; about 2.5% of them choose bicycle and 2% of them choose ship and hiking respectively. Only 0.5% of foreign students choose to travel by self-driving.

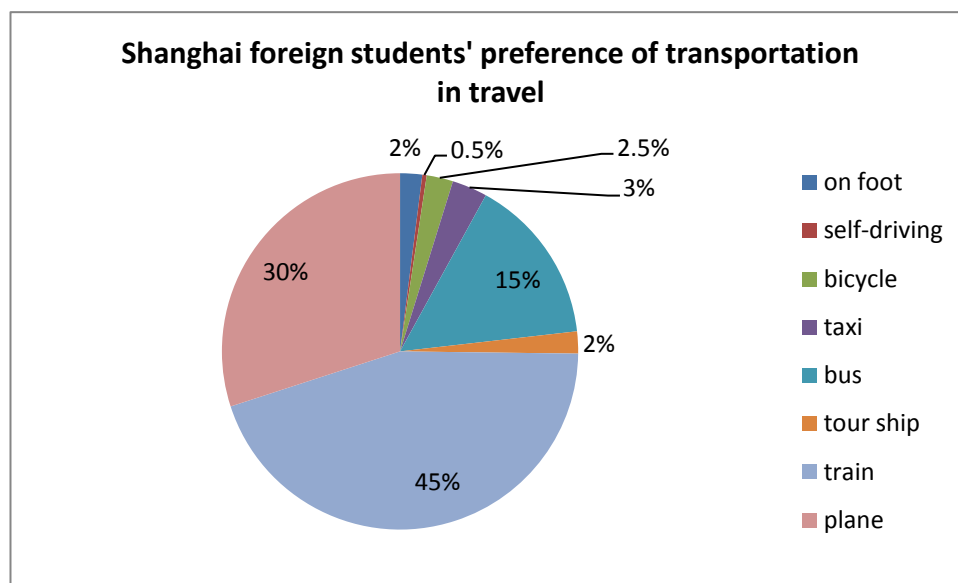


Chart 4.12 Shanghai foreign students' preference of transportation in travel

China's railway system is highly developed and most of the tourism cities are to be reached directly by train. From 1997 to now, China has increased the speed of train seven times. On some lines, train even takes almost the same time as plane. Besides, the price of a train ticket is cheaper than a plane ticket, so most students choose to travel by train. However, after interviewing many foreign students I found that some students' travel plans are limited because they do not know too much about the Chinese railway system, such as pre-order time difference between trains and holidays adjustment. During China's holiday, the travelling peak time occurs at the same time. Then it is really hard to buy a train

ticket. Therefore they have to choose the airline. This is one important fact how Chinese culture influences foreign students' consumption behaviour. Aircraft in China is still a non-popular mode of transportation and its price is slightly high for students. However, because it is popular in foreign countries and it is time-saving and comfortable, a part of students choose to travel by plane. The other means of transportation are related to personal preferences and travel distance.

Tour

Tourism includes travel options of many aspects. This section aims to study foreign students' preferences of travelling method, travel mates and tourist attractions.

Travelling method

In chart 4.13 we can see that foreign students' favourite method to travel is with friends and classmates and the proportion accounts for 65%. Thirteen percent of foreign students prefer to travel alone. Foreign students following others' plan accounts for 22% over all, of which 13% of students follow the plan of class or school, 6% of students follow the plan of travel agency and 3% of students follow the plan of club or association. Foreign students prefer to travel organized by themselves. Young students have strong personality and they prefer running things more independently. Besides, plenty of tourism information makes it convenient to organize a tour. Railway departments in China have a special website and hotline to provide inquiry of routes and trains. Airlines also provide inquiry and reservation on the Internet. In addition, many e-tourism companies provide all travel-related services.

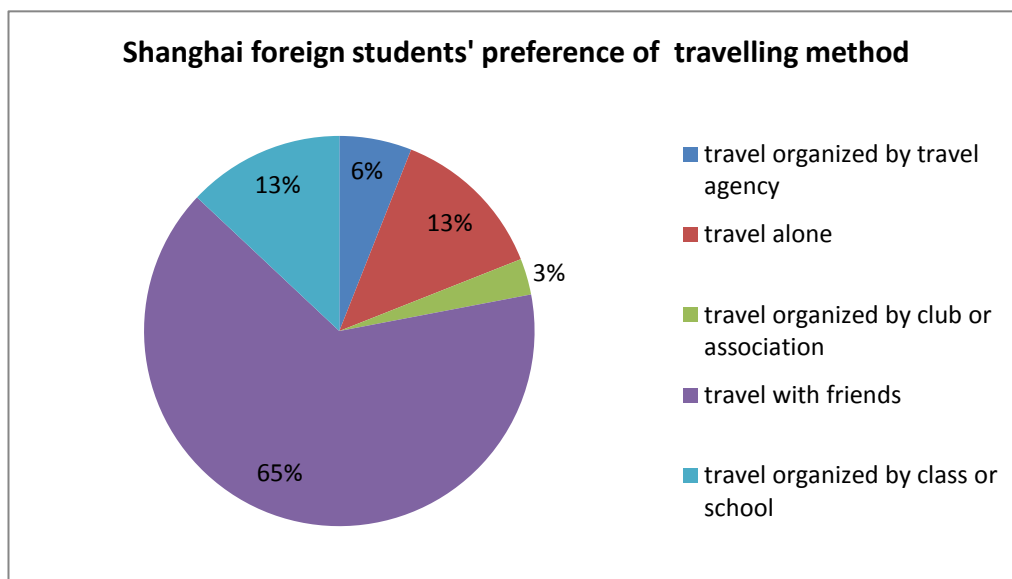


Chart 4.13 Shanghai foreign students' preference of travelling method

Travel mate

Taking into account that most foreign students come to China alone, the questionnaire also includes the question that they will choose as travel mates. In chart 4.14 we can see that most foreign students choose Chinese classmates or friends as travel mates, accounting for 33%. The result shows that foreign students think they will know China better with Chinese friends as companions. About 30% of foreign students choose other international students as travel mates because they have similar tourism motivations and can get to know each other's national culture during travel. Twenty-six percent of foreign students tend to choose friends from the same country as travel mates and this option ranks third. The remaining 11% of foreign students choose a professional tour guide as companion, which is because they trust the professional guide's abilities and want to have deeper travel experiences.

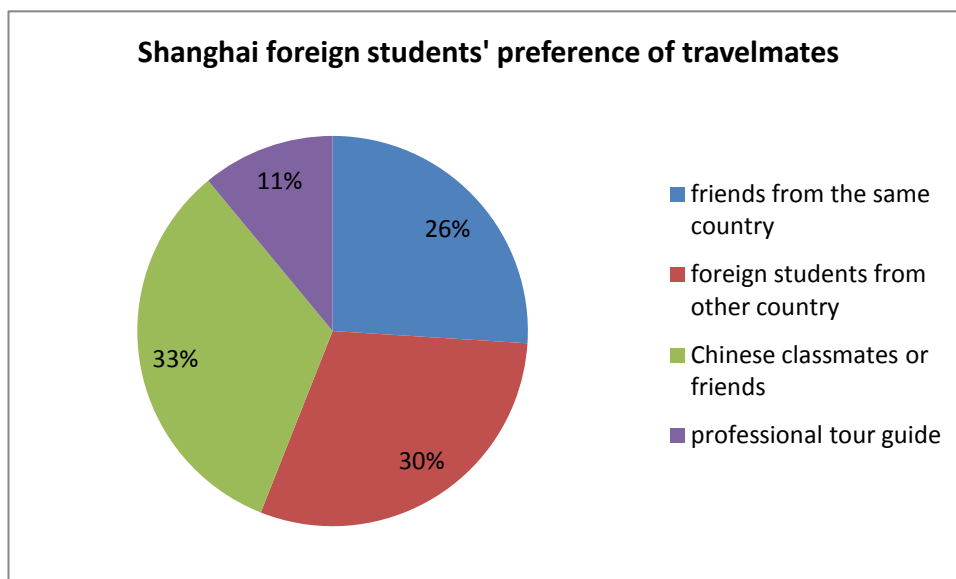


Chart 4.14 Shanghai foreign students' preference of travel mates

Travel motivation

In chart 4.15 we can see that the principal motivations of foreign students in Shanghai are sightseeing and Chinese culture exploring, accounting for 40% and 38% respective. The third-ranked tourism motivation is to visit relatives and friends, accounting for 11%. Besides, leisure tour (5%), shopping tour (3%) and religious tour (3%) are other motivations of foreign students in China.

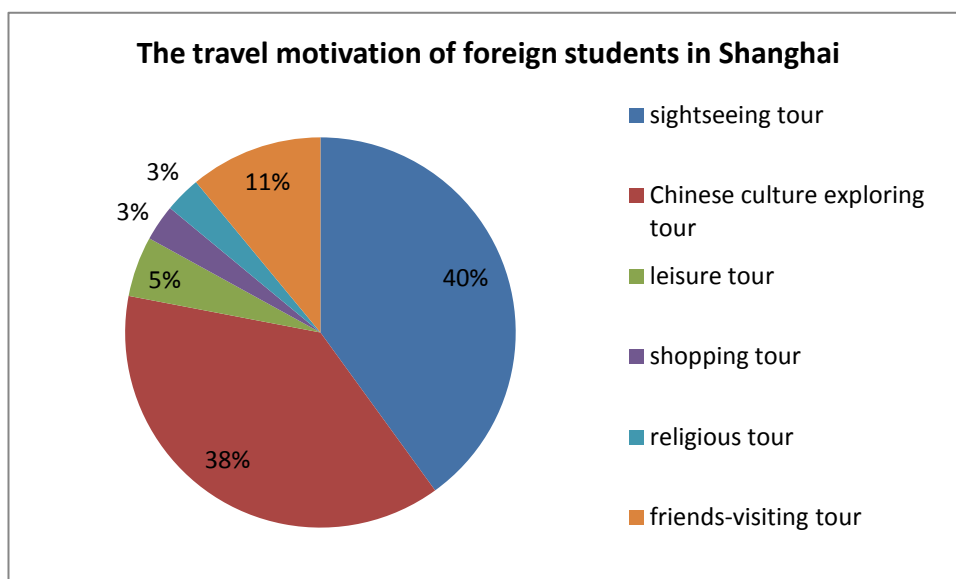


Chart 4.15 The travel motivation of foreign students in Shanghai

Tourist attractions

In chart 4.16 we can see that the top three types of tourist attractions are natural scenery (28%), historic sites (20%) and town gardens (20%). The top three occupies around 68%. Theme park, leisure and revolutionary sites have the same ratio 8%. The last two types of tourism attractions are religious sites and folk customs, accounting for 5% and 3% respectively.

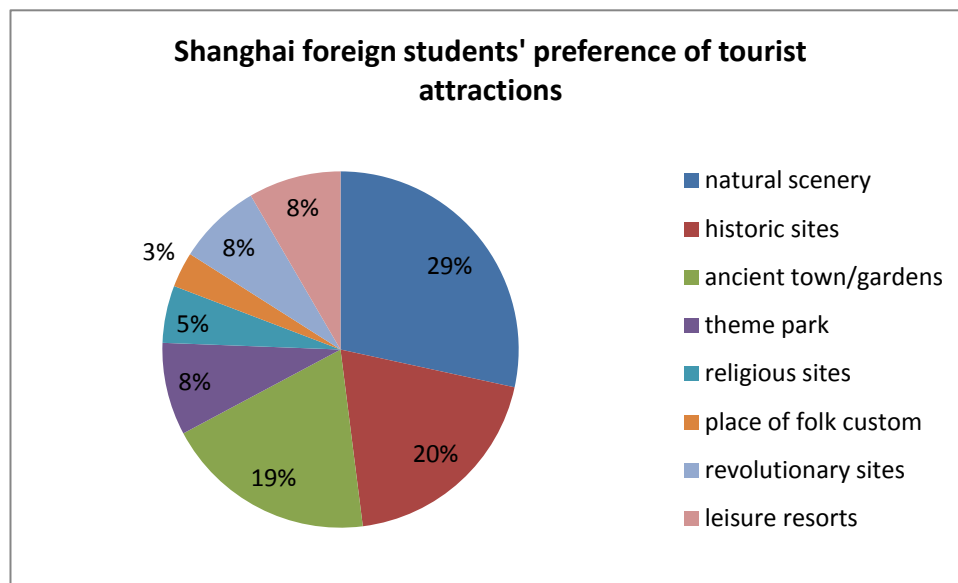


Chart 4.16 Shanghai foreign students' preference of tourist attractions

Shopping

In chart 4.17 we can see that most foreign students like to buy special local products in tourist attractions and the proportion reaches 43%. About 36% of foreign students like to buy local arts and crafts and the proportion is 36%. The proportion of clothing and medicine is 14% and 7% respectively.

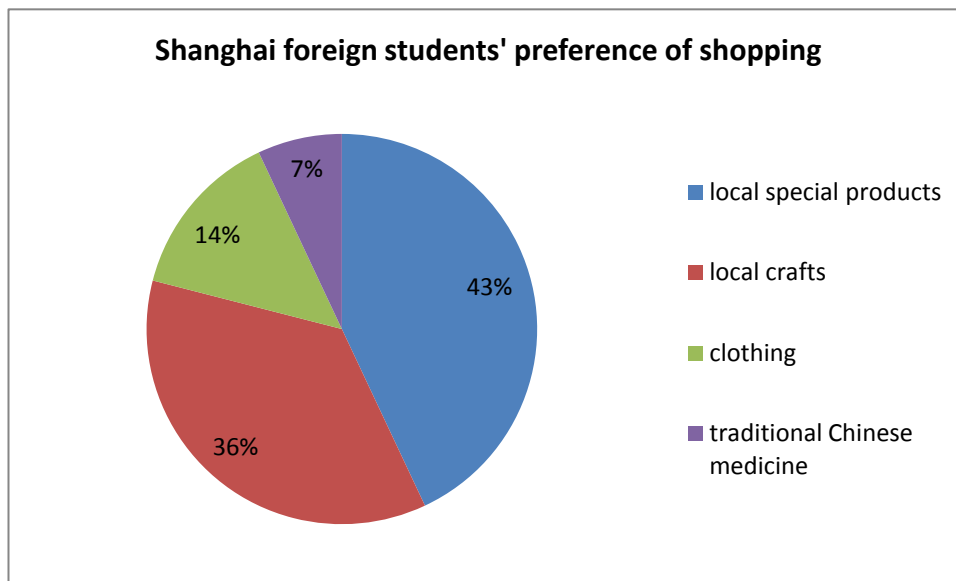


Chart 4.17 Shanghai foreign students' preference of shopping

4.4 Eastern and Western students' consumption preferences in tourism

Considering students from different countries and cultural backgrounds they may have different consumption preferences in tourism; the comparative analysis is handled in this section. Students from Japanese and South Korean are classified as the group to represent Eastern culture and students from France and the United States are classified as the other group to represent Eastern culture. In order to state conveniently, I use 'E-group' to represent the group of students from Japanese and South Korea and 'W-group' to represent the group of students from France and the United States.

Comparative analysis on food

In chart 4.18 we can see that both of the two groups tend to choose local food and the ratios are 72% and 76% respectively. They all show the least interest in international popular food. This survey result shows foreign students' curiosity and desire to explore exotic food and culture behind the food, no matter which

cultural background they are from. However, the two groups have small differences in the preferences for the three types of food. The W-group shows more interest in local food and less interest in home-country food than the E-group. International popular food is largely accepted by young students around the world, so the two groups only have very subtle difference on this option. Chinese food is famous in the world and is an indispensable part of culture. Foreign students who want to understand Chinese culture naturally want to try diets of different regions in China.

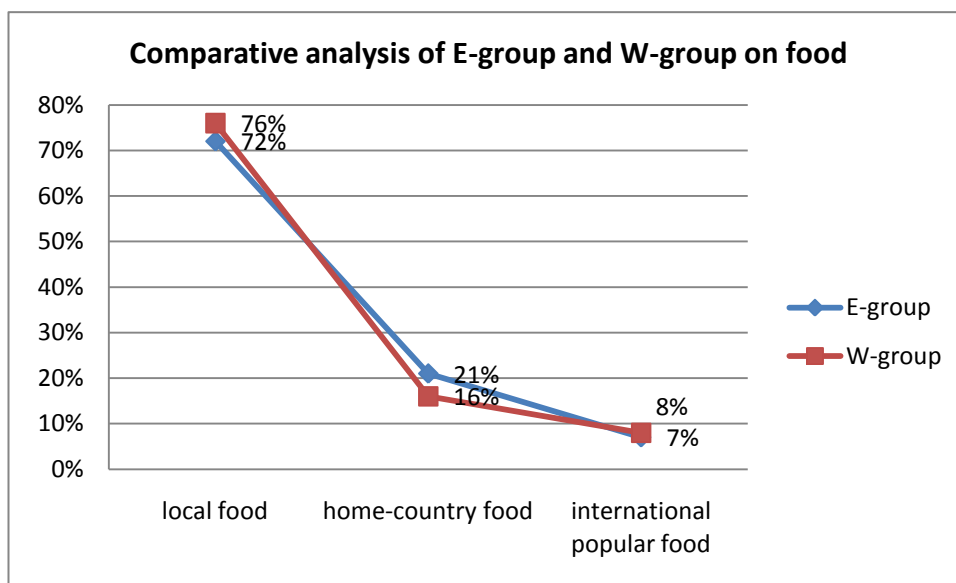


Chart 4.18 Comparative analysis of E-group and W-group on food

Comparative analysis on accommodation

In chart 4.19 we can see that the E-group is most likely to choose budget hotels as accommodation while travelling and the ratio of this option is 35%. Youth Hostel ranks second for the E-group and the ratio of this option is 20%. The E-group has no interests in small private inn and outdoor camp at all and the ratio in both is zero. For the W-group, Youth Hotel is the most popular choice and the ratio is 34%. They also have high preference on budget hotel and the ratio is 30%. Just like the E-group, the W-group does not choose camp as

accommodation. The main difference between the two groups is in selection of youth hostels. Regarding youth hostels, the selection ratio of the W-group is somewhat higher than that of the E-group, indicating that youth hostels in Europe and America have been long developed and are widely accepted by students from Europe and America.

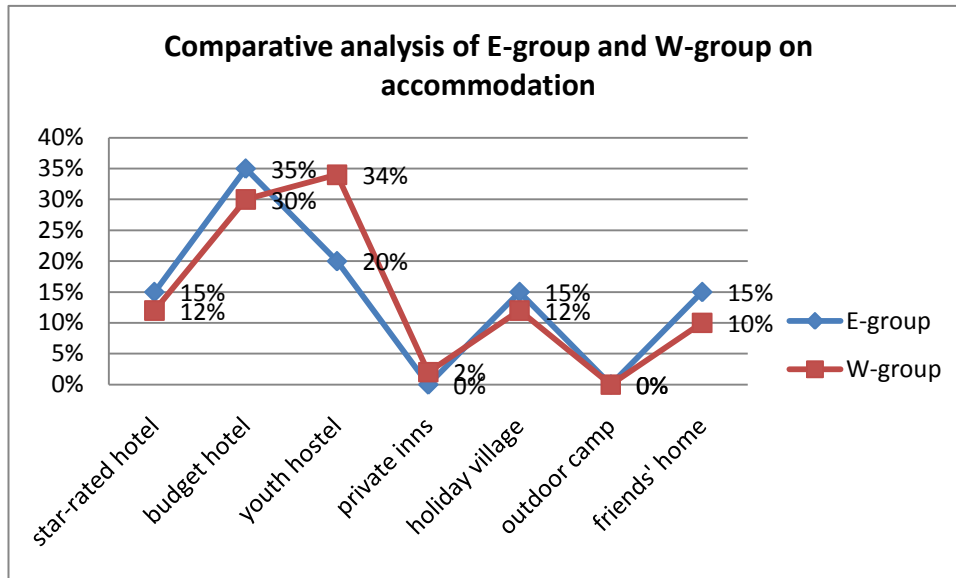


Chart 4.19 Comparative analysis of E-group and W-group on accommodation

Comparative analysis on transportation

In chart 4.20 we can see that while choosing transportation, the main differences between the two groups are on the statement of plane and the statement of train. The differences in other infrequently used transportation are not significant. The difference on statement of train between the two groups is the biggest with the difference of 8% digits. The E-group tends to take the train. On the statement of plane, the W-group has the selection ratio 5% units higher than the E-group.

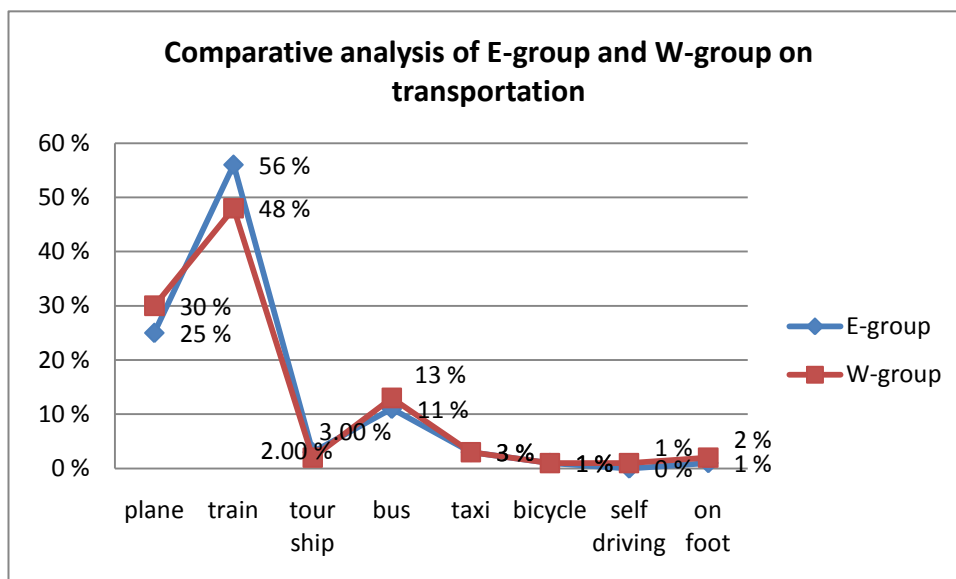


Chart 4.20 Comparative analysis of E-group and W-group on transportation

Comparative analysis on tour

Travelling method

In chart 4.21 we can see that the two groups both prefer to travel with friends and classmates and the selection ratios are both over 60%. The two groups are similar in the option of 'travel organized by club or association' and 'travel organized by travel agency'. While in the option of 'travel alone', the W-group's selection ratio is 9% digits higher. On the option of 'travel with friends and classmates' the E-group's selection ratio is 5% digits higher, which means that Japanese and Korean students prefer group activities and American and French students show more independence. Most western young students have strong personality and they prefer running things more independently. Besides, the abundance tourism information makes it convenient to organize a tour. Railway departments in China have a special website and hotline to provide information of routes and trains. Airlines also provide information and reservation on the Internet. In addition, many e-tourism companies provide all travel-related services.

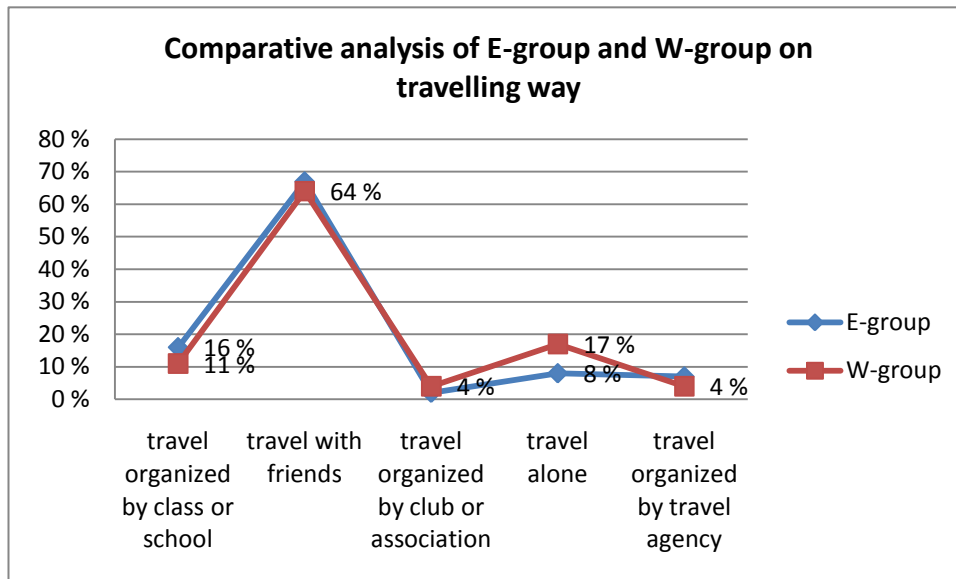


Chart 4.21 Comparative analysis of E-group and W-group on travelling method

Travel mate

In chart 4.22 we can see that the two groups have obvious differences when choosing travel mates. The E-group's selection ratios on the option of 'friends from the same country' and option of 'professional tour guide' are higher, while the W-group's selection ratios in the option of 'Chinese classmates or friends' and option of 'foreign students from other country' are higher. This phenomenon indicates that American and French students have stronger wish to maximize exposure to travel in a foreign culture and make travel in China become a cross-cultural experience.

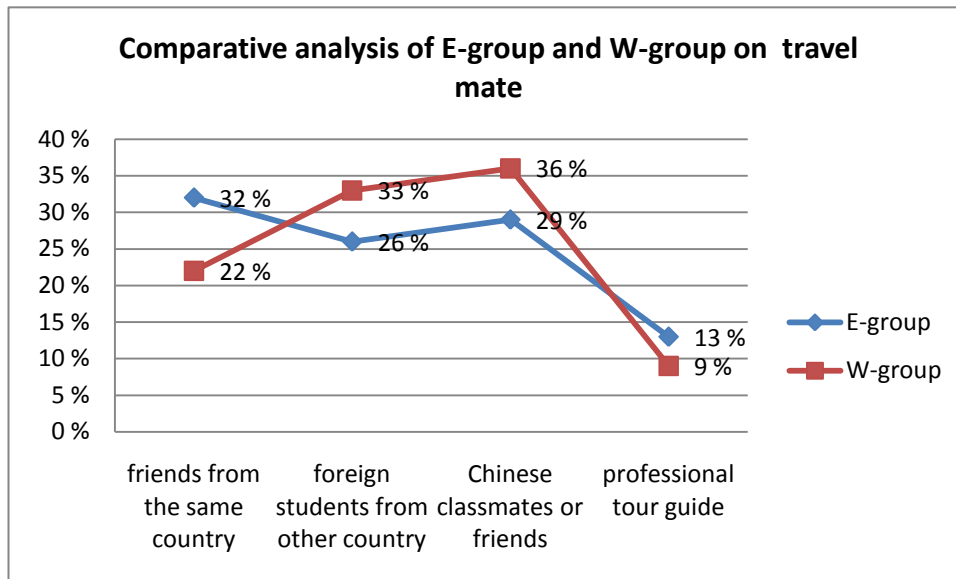


Chart 4.22 Comparative analysis of E-group and W-group on travel mate

Travel motivation

Chart 4.23 shows that both of two groups most prefer sightseeing and Chinese culture exploring. Meanwhile, the largest differences between the two groups are also on these two options. The E-group most prefers Chinese culture exploring and the selection ratio is 44%. Japan, South Korea and China have inextricably linked culture. While exploring Chinese culture, Japanese and South Korean students have motivation to search the roots of their own culture which gives them a cultural identity and sense of belonging. The W-group most prefer sightseeing, the selection ratio is 42%. America, France and China are located on different continents, and the geographical features are largely different. The East-specific delicate and beautiful scenery has a strong appeal to American and French students and they enjoy the visual impact brought by the beauty of China. Japanese and South Korean students' selection of the option of 'friends-visiting tour' is significantly higher than American and French students. Because of adjacent location, similar culture and China's rapid economic development, more and more people come to China from Japan and South Korea. That leads to rapid growth in the number of foreign students from Japan and South Korea. A part of the Japanese and South Korean students' travel

motivation is to visit relatives or friends who live in another city on business.

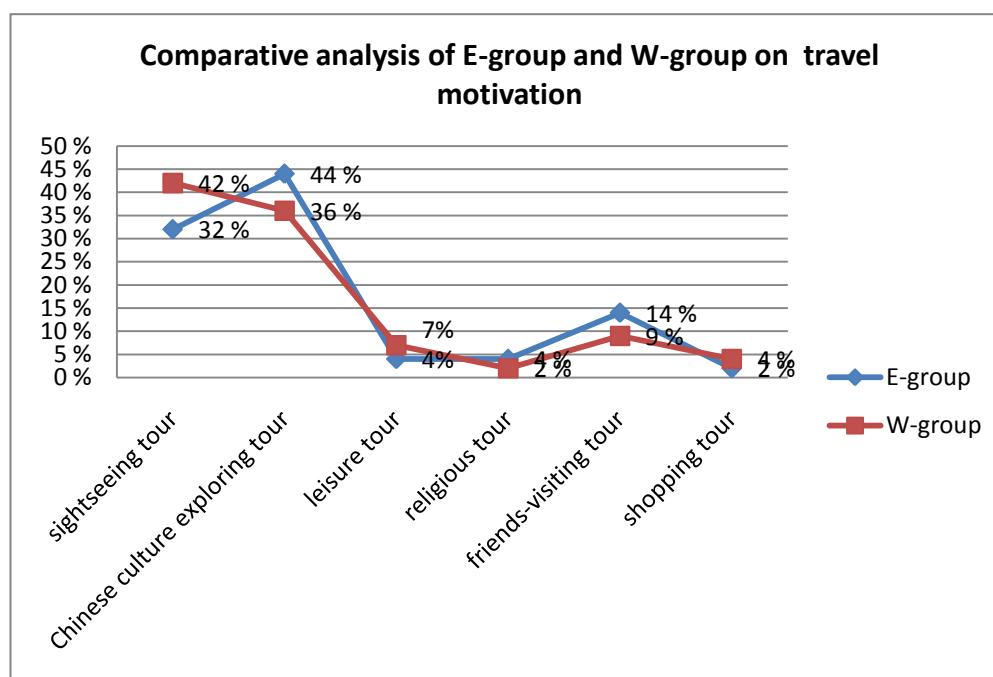


Chart 4.23 Comparative analysis of E-group and W-group on travel motivation

Tourist attractions

In chart 4.24 we can see that the main differences of tourist attractions are in natural scenery, historical sites and theme parks. With different travel motivations, the two groups have different preferred tourist attractions. Japanese and South Korean students most prefer historic attractions, their interests in exploring Chinese culture leads to their selection of historical sites as tourist attraction. Similarly, American and French students' preference on sightseeing leads to their selection of natural scenery as tourist attraction.

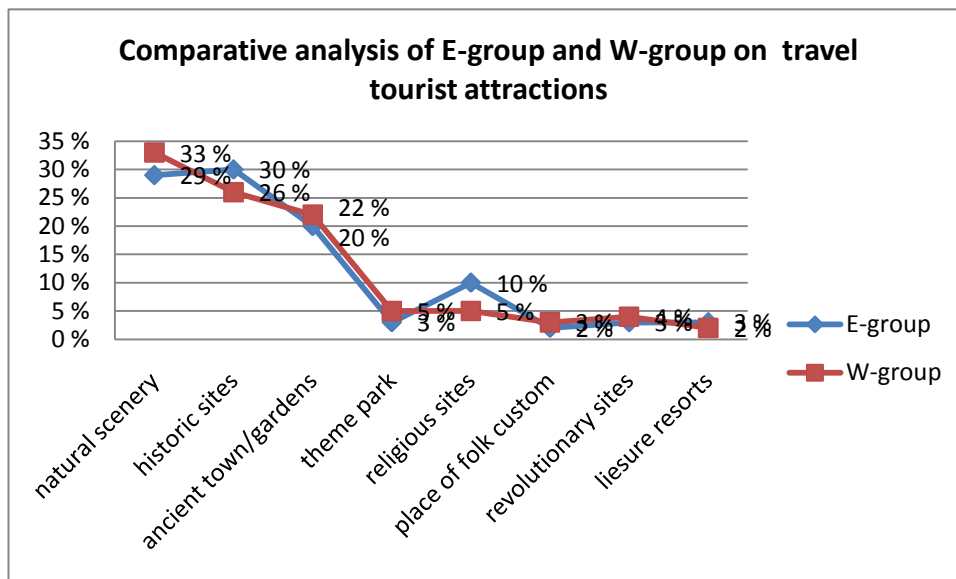


Chart 4.24 Comparative analysis of E-group and W-group on tourist attractions

Comparative analysis on shopping

In chart 4.25 we can see that both of the two groups show high preference for local special products and local crafts. Japanese and South Korean students most like local special products. That is because their dietary habits are similar to China and they are used to purchasing local food as tourist souvenir and gift for friends. American and French students most like to buy local handicrafts as tourist souvenirs. Chinese handicrafts are very different from Western handicrafts in shape and drawing, and show a strong oriental flavour. W-group think Chinese handicrafts can best reflect Chinese culture. The two groups still show different preferences for traditional Chinese medicine and clothes. American and French students' preference for traditional Chinese medicine is less than Japanese and South Korean students. That is mainly because Western people do not know a lot about and even misunderstand traditional Chinese medicine. American and French students' preference for clothes is more than that of Japanese and South Korean students. That is mainly because Chinese clothes are cheaper for them. Japan and South Korea are of great richness in fashion clothes which makes Japanese and South Korean students

show preference for clothes not so much as American and French students.

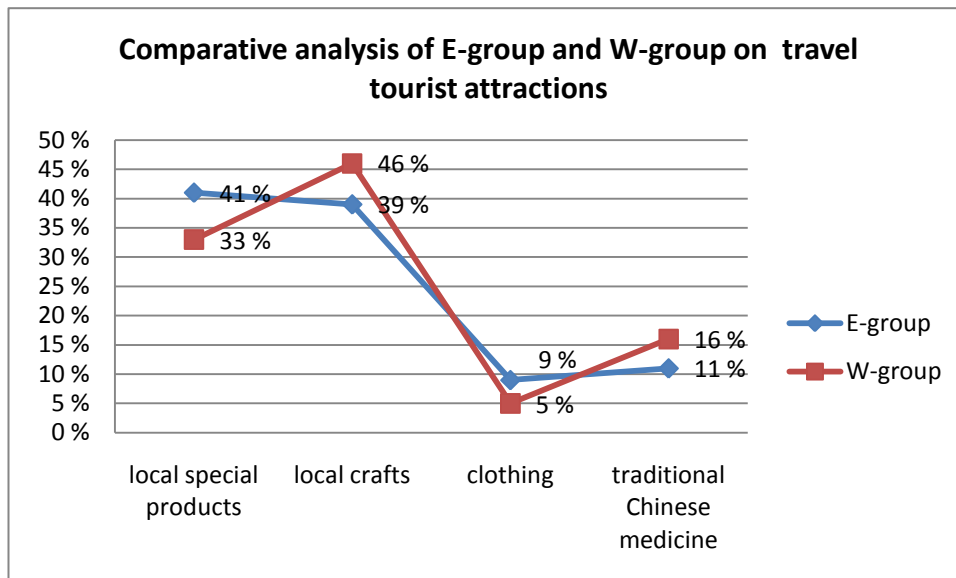


Chart 4.25 Comparative analysis of E-group and W-group on shopping

To sum up, because of different geographical environments and different cultural backgrounds, people from different countries show differences in character traits, eating habits and cultural preferences. Such differences are more evident in travelling. In general, Easterners are introverted and Westerners are extroverted. These two types of personality show different behaviours in travel and these behaviour characteristics are similar to the findings obtained from the survey of students from Japan, South Korea, America and France.

5 SUMMARY AND PROPOSALS TO CYTS

When researching what the consumption preferences of overseas students in Shanghai are, it was found out that as decision-makers, overseas students mainly obtain tourism information on the Internet. Besides, they also make decisions depending on the information from friends and classmates. The most accepted tourism marketing for overseas students is Buzz marketing and media advertisements. For overseas students, Buzz marketing is the most reliable. They tend to trust and consider their friends' recommendations. As young people, most overseas students are fast decision-makers. They are often emotional and do not spend too much time on considering and preparing. They make an impulsive decision and travel immediately.

Most overseas students seldom overconsume. They tend to choose cost-effective products to meet their unique needs. They would pay RMB1000 for one travel in average. Most foreign students choose to pay by cash. Cash is the common way of payment while travelling. Besides, some foreign students will take card in case the card can be used in hotels and shops.

Most of them will take two or three days per travel. Being students, they have to take courses and study and that limits their time for travel. Meanwhile, because of the desire for exploration of different culture and limited time in China, they have stronger tourism motivations and most foreign students in Shanghai travel monthly. They can travel any time out of class, such as on weekends, on summer holiday or winter holiday, on statutory holiday and work day with no classes.

While travelling, five kinds of consumption are involved. They are food, accommodation, transportation, tour and shopping. Most foreign students in Shanghai choose food as special diet of destination. Young people want to try new things and that is a good way to experience Chinese culture. Youth hostels and budget hotels are the most popular accommodation. They are cheap and convenient. Train and plane are the most popular transportation. If not too far to go, overseas students will also take a bus or taxi to travel. Overseas students mostly like to participate in travel organized by friends. They want their travel mates to be friends or classmates from motherland, another country or China. Their travel motivations are mainly sightseeing and Chinese culture exploring. The most appealing tourist attractions for overseas students are natural scenery, historic sites and Chinese town gardens. During travel, they mostly like to buy local special products and crafts.

In this study, students from Japan, South Korea, America and France represent different cultural groups. Japan and South Korea represent Eastern culture, the United States and France represent Western culture. Cultural differences between the East and the West have a significant impact on the communication behaviour and pattern. Reflected in tourism, the differences of the five kinds of consumption are as below:

Most foreign students tend to choose the local special food while travelling. However, students from the Western culture show a little more interest in local special food and less interest in home-country food than students from the Eastern culture. Westerners are more open and receptive to new things. Asians are somewhat conservative.

The main difference in accommodation between students from Eastern and Western cultures is of youth hostel and budget hotel. These two kinds of

accommodation are most popular with overseas students. However, Eastern students prefer budget hotel and Western students prefer youth hostel. Many Eastern students like backpacking and the youth hotel is good for them. A budget hotel is somewhat private and acceptable to the Eastern.

The main differences between the two groups are in the statement of plane and the statement of train. Eastern students show a little more preference for train and Western students show more interest in plane. The differences on other infrequently used transportation are not significant.

Because of different cultural backgrounds, Eastern students prefer group activities and Western students show more independence. Compared to Western students, Eastern students are more reluctant to travel alone. Western students have stronger wish to try different things and experience different culture. So they are more willing to have Chinese friends or overseas students from another country as travel mates. With similar cultural background with China, Japanese and South Korean students show more interest in historic sites and religious sites while American and French students show more interest in natural scenery.

China, Japan and South Korea all belong to Eastern culture and have similar handicrafts. Thus Japanese and South Korean students show less interest in local crafts than American and French students from Western culture. American and French students' preference for traditional Chinese medicine is less than that of Japanese and South Korean students. That is mainly because Western people do not know a lot about and even misunderstand traditional Chinese medicine.

5.1 Proposals

According to CCPD Theory, it is necessary for companies to know customers' needs and preferences while developing products. After knowing the consumption preferences of overseas students and the differences between Western students and Eastern students, I give some proposals to CYTS about products design and marketing.

Products

The tourism products provided to foreign students should focus on the characteristics of foreign students' tourism consumption.

- **Price:** Most overseas students are thrifty or keep balance and the average expense on each travel is around RMB1000. Thus it is proper to develop products with price around RMB1000. In China, if a traveller moves by train or bus, sleep in a budget hotel and goes to a place within a hundred kilometers, he will spend about RMB1000 on this travel. Besides, such type of travel suits foreign students well. Most foreign students can afford it and they can travel on every free weekend. Foreign students seldom overconsume, thus it is not good to develop products they cannot afford. Therefore, products with price below RMB2000 are the most important part needed to be focused on.
- **Time:** Most overseas students will take 1-4 days to travel. They mainly travel during weekend, summer holiday, winter holiday and statutory holiday. Short-term weekends products should be pay more attention to. Generally, weekends are suitable for short trips. Students have a lot of weekends and they may travel on any free weekend. Statutory holidays are always about one week and students could take the free week to go farther and have a

longer trip. However, the fact is that during statutory holidays it is crowded in any tourism attraction and most foreign students do not like to travel on statutory holidays. Summer holiday and winter holiday always set students free for more than one month. Then they will have enough time for a long trip. Thus, it is a good idea to provide long trips during summer holiday or winter holiday and short trips during weekends.

- **Package product.** When designing the package product, the elements should be the most popular ones. Food should be local special food. Meanwhile, international popular food can be provided as a second option if some foreign students do not like to eat local special food during the whole trip. Accommodation is to be at budget hotel or youth hostel. Transportation is to be train or plane. If not too far away, bus is also a nice choice. While arranging a tour group, CYTS can mix Western students with those who are from other countries; But better gather Eastern students who are from the same home country together.

Marketing

Foreign students are young people and they are more independent and autonomous. They do not like to travel following the tourism products' fixed routine. It is easy for them to change ideas and have impulse conduct. Thus, foreign students like to make travel plans on their own and do not need travel product packages, thus tourism marketing is especially important.

- **Sources of tourism information**

The Internet is the most important source for overseas students to obtain tourism information. Meanwhile, the attraction of traditional media to young people is

declining. The Internet is now the most attractive media for university students. As a special product of service, the tourism product is purchased and consumed in different places and consumers cannot perceive the product in advance. That makes the tourism products most suitable to be inquired about and purchased on the Internet. Currently, most of the Internet users are young people. Besides, university students form a large proportion of young people. For foreign students living and studying in China, although they have access to television, radio, outdoor advertising and other media, language barriers make them more dependent on the Internet to get information. Students spend a lot of time on the Internet, which makes the Internet become the most effective marketing tool. For tourism products providers, it is necessary to know the frequently visited websites and forums among foreign students and to take advantages of such virtual communities to strengthen the visibility of brand and marketing.

- ***Accepted tourism marketing***

More than half of the foreign students in Shanghai accept buzz marketing and they tend to trust their friends' recommendations. So CYTS can find foreign students as agents. The agents can spread and gather information among foreign students. They can even do marketing and sales. With foreign students as agents, the marketing is more acceptable because they are more aware of foreign students' needs and they can communicate with other foreign students freely.

Another way to enhance buzz marketing is to sponsor foreign students' associations and activities. The group of foreign students is composed of students from different countries and their main communication platform is foreign associations and various activities. Travel agencies can provide funds to foreign associations and foreign students' activities to access campus resources and the naming rights, which can enhance their visibility among foreign students.

Providing sponsorship to foreign students' associations is a type of tourism marketing strategy, it does not aim to promote the short-term sales but improve the publicity and the visibility of the brand among foreign students.

- ***Fast decision-maker and travel frequency***

Many overseas students are fast decision-makers. They do not spend too much time on considering and preparing. They make the decision in a short time and travel immediately. That means CYTS should keep buying unobstructed and deal with overseas students' bookings quickly. Besides, most overseas students travel several times every month. So some continuing marketing strategies can be made to increase the viscosity of a customer.

5.2 Implications for further research

This thesis has not covered all the aspects involved in tourism. In this study, I just divide foreign students into two groups: students from Eastern culture and students from Western culture. However, besides Eastern culture and Western culture, there are still many students from Africa and Latin America. Thus, we can do more research according to students from different cultural backgrounds. So one of the further interesting researches can be:

- What are the consumption preferences of overseas students from Africa and Latin America?

In addition, apart from classification according to cultural backgrounds, we can also divide foreign students into two groups according to gender: male and female. As we all know, the male and the female have significant differences in behaviour and personality. In general, the males are more open and adventurous, but the females like safety and comfort more. Reflected in the

tourism, the males may like to do all the tourism-related things all by themselves and the females may tend to follow others. Then we can have another interesting question:

- Are there any differences between males' and females' consumption preferences?

As time goes by, people migrate more commonly and change places to live in more frequently. More and more foreign students will come to China and travel. Knowing what they need in travel will help tourism agencies to provide better services and enhance competitiveness.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire:

Dear friend,

My name is Echo. I am a student from Saimaa University of Applied Sciences in Finland and major in tourism management. Now I am working on final thesis for my bachelor's degree. The subject of my thesis is 'Shanghai overseas students' preferences in tourism consumption'. I need your help to fill on this questionnaire to help me collect necessary data. There are no private questions and I promise I won't disclose your information. It will take you about 5 minutes to answer all the questions. I appreciate it so much.

Please notice that all the questions are about your preferences when you travel in China. Mark the answer most close to your situation.

Part 1 Personal Information

Q1. What's your gender?

male female

Q2. Where do you come from?

Korea Japan U.S.A France other_____

Q3. How old are you?

Under 18 18-24 25-30 31-35 36-40 41-45 Above 45

Q4. What's your education level in China (or what is your purpose of study in China)?

short-term exchange student visiting scholar bachelor
 master doctor language learner

Q5. How long have you studied in China?

less than 1 month 1-3 months 4-5 months above 6 months

Q6. How do you get your travelling supports?

from parents from scholarship from salary of part-time job

Q7. How many times have you been in China?

once twice three times four time five times and more

Part 2 Travel Consumption Preferences

Q8. How many times do you travel in China per month in average?

0 1-2 3-4 5 and above

Q9. What's your average expense on one trip in China?

less than 100RMB 100-200RMB 200-400RMB 400-600RMB
 600-800RMB 800-1000RMB 1000-2000RMB 2000-3000RMB
 3000-4000RMB 4000-5000RMB 5000-7000RMB 7000RMB and more

Q10. What's your upper limit of the whole budget for a short-distance trip in China?

less than 100RMB 100-200RMB 200-300RMB 300-400RMB 400-500RMB
 500-600 RMB 600-700RMB 700-800RMB 800-1000RMB 1000RMB and more

Q11. What's your upper limit of the whole budget for a long-distance trip in China?

below 1000RMB 1000-2000RMB 2000-3000RMB 3000-4000RMB
 4000-5000RMB 5000-7000RMB 7000-10000RMB 10000RMB and more

Q12. Which description fits you best?

- I am not a person who always follows others.
- I like adventure.
- I am a conservative person most of the time.
- I am a quiet person and I like quiet environment.
- I am a lively person. I like joining activities.
- Other _____

Q13. What kind of consumer are you?

- Spend tomorrow's money. (E.g. borrow money from bank)
- I do not save money but also never borrow money.
- I am an economical person. I always save money.
- other _____

Q14. How do you always make your travel decision?

- I always take a long time to decide and prepare for a travel.
- I always make a fast decision about travel and implement it very soon.

Q15. When do you usually travel in China?

- The weekends.
- Festival holiday (such as China National Day holiday (7 days)).
- During the working day but having no classes.
- Students' annual summer or winter vacation.
- Other _____

Q16. How long does your trip always take in China?

- One day (not stay overnight)
- 1 night
- 2 nights
- 3 nights
- 4-7 nights
- 8-14 nights
- More than 14 nights

Q17. What kind of travel do you like in China?

- Self-organized travel
- Travel agency packaged travel
- Only book tickets and hotels in travel agency.

Q18. Which kind of transportation do you prefer?

- Airplane
- Tour ship
- Self-driving car
- Public bus
- Train
- Bicycle
- By foot

Q19. Which kind of travel group do you like to join?

- Travel organized by school or class
- Friends' or classmates' travel group
- Travel organized by club or association
- I like to travel alone
- Other

Q20. Which kind of travel mates do you prefer?

- People from mother country
- Overseas students from other countries
- Chinese classmates or friends
- Professional tour guide
- Other

Q21. What's your travel motivation in China?

- For sightseeing
- For Chinese culture learning
- For leisure
- For religion and spirit exploring
- For visiting friends or relatives
- For shopping
- Other

Q22.What kind of accommodation do you always choose while travelling in China?

- Star-rated hotel Budget hotel Small private inn
 Youth Hostel Holiday village Outdoor camp
 Friends or relative's home Other

Q23.Where does your travel information come from?

- Travel brochures Travel agency Friends and classmates
 Websites E-mail advertisement TV and newspaper
 Public travel posters Other

Q24.What kind of travel marketing can you accept?

- Mail advertisement Face-to-face marketing E-mail advertisement
 Public media advertisement Buzz marketing Other_

Q25.Here are some elements that you may consider while taking a tour in China, please mark their importance level.

1=not important at all; 2=not so important; 3=between 2&4; 4=important; 5=very important

- cost 1 2 3 4 5
time 1 2 3 4 5
security 1 2 3 4 5
language 1 2 3 4 5
food 1 2 3 4 5
accommodation 1 2 3 4 5
life style 1 2 3 4 5

Q26.Whilie choosing a travel agency in China, which factor will you consider?

- Price
 Content of the tour package(such as tour line design)
 Reputation of the agency
 Service quality
 If or not they can communicate with you freely (e.g. staff who can speak English)
 Other_____

What's the importance level of above factors?

1=not important at all; 2=not so important; 3=between 2&4; 4=important; 5=very important

- price 1 2 3 4 5
content of the tour package 1 2 3 4 5
reputation 1 2 3 4 5
service 1 2 3 4 5
communication 1 2 3 4 5

Q27. What is your biggest problem while travelling in China?

- Language Cultural difference Food Travel fee Transportation
 Personal security Accommodation Life style Other_____

Q28.What kind of tourism attractions do you prefer?

- Natural scene Historical resort Old towns or garden Religious place
 Theme park Folk-custom resort Old revolutionary city (such as Yan'an)
 Holiday village in mountain or near sea Other_____

Q29.What kind of tourism souvenir do you always buy while travelling in China?

local food local handicraft Chinese medicine clothes other_____

Q30.How do you always pay the money while travelling in China?

cash credit card other_____

Q31.What kind of food do you prefer during your travel?

local food home-country food international popular food(such as Mcdonald)

Part 3 Open questions

Q32.Is there anything you want to say about your travel experience in China?