

From the Great Wall to the Northern Light

An analysis of Mainland Chinese tourism in the Nordic Countries

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Abstract:	
<p>Tourism is gradually playing an increasingly important role the global urban economic development. Recent figures show that China may become world's largest outbound tourism market and last year, the total number of Chinese outbound visitors grew by 22%, among which the number of non-official tours abroad accounts for 91%. With this potential, the possibility of Chinese tourists visiting the Nordic could be huge, unfortunately very few Chinese know about the Nordic. This thesis researches both the potentials and resources the Nordic can offer Chinese tourists as well as the existing barriers stopping the development Chinese tourism in the Nordic countries. Further, potential target groups among Chinese tourists are identified through the usage of questionnaires and interviews. The result shows that the main resources the Nordic can offer are the nature resources. The current target group is made up of urban residents with higher income and good educational level. The main barriers that slow down the development of Chinese tourism in the Nordic are the price level of the Nordic, the lack of knowledge about the Nordic countries, the Nordic climate and the Visa application process.</p>	
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Abbreviations

ADS-visa Approved Destination Status visa, in Schengen group visa issued to members of tourist groups of at least 5 persons, with maximum stay of 30 days. Must be applied for through ADS-accredited travel agencies.

CAGR Compound Annual Growth Rate, a business term for the annual profit of an investment during a given time period.

EUR Euro, the official currency of the Eurozone. Includes 17 of the 27 EU member countries.

GDP Gross Domestic Product, the market value of all goods and services produced within a country during a given period.

GDP per capita Gross Domestic Product divided by the number of citizens in the country. This is however not a measurement of exact personal income.

HDI Human Development Index, a United Nations measure of well-being in a country. Launched 1990 HDI is a comparative measure of living standards in a country.

PRC Short form for the People's Republic of China

RMB Ren Min Bi, also known as Yuan, the official currency of the People's Republic of China since its introduction 1948.

1 INTRODUCTION

With the development of society, the tourism industry has become the one of the most important and largest of industries. Tourism is gradually becoming to play an important role in urban economic development. Obviously, tourism has increasingly boosted the urban economy, and improved the social employment; and even promoted the role of culture. *Annual Report of China Outbound Tourism Development 2012* shows that China may become world's largest outbound tourism market. Last year, the number of China's outbound visitors grew by 22% year-on-year. Among them, the number of non-official tours abroad accounts for 91%. At present, China has established organized tour business with 113 countries and regions (World Travel Online).

More than 6000 kilometres – that is the distance between the People's Republic of China and the Nordic countries. This distance can easily be defined in travel time, which is either roughly eight hours flying, using a direct non-stop line, or several days on a train. This long distance has led to the huge differences in both culture and the natural landscape. This significantly different culture and nature is perhaps what often brings us the interest of each other's cultures and countries. This is truly the reason why I personally chose to come to Finland for studying, and also why the Nordic countries could become a popular destination for Chinese tourists; the difference gives us reasons and topics to explore.

With the great population of China, the possibility always exists that there could literally be hundreds of millions of people that have seen images of the Nordic countries, and based on how different this would be from China – seen these pictures as both dreamy and beautiful. Unfortunately, a short discussion with everyday Chinese on the street would most probably show that the information about the Nordic countries is rather limited. Therefore; Nordic countries have a great but exciting task to not only challenge the expectations from the travellers, but to create them. Nowadays, there are so many people comes to Scandinavian countries for a short-time visit every year. In the past decennium, the total amount of visitors from Asia increased faster than any other group, for example, the Chinese visit Denmark when they travel to Europe. In 2010 alone, the number of Chinese overnight stays increased by 28 %, and thus, the growth in Chinese

tourists in Denmark has been the highest compared to the number of tourists from other countries, explained by the Director, Flemming Bruhn to the daily newspaper Børsen (Copenhagen Capacity). The Finnish tourism administration and related tourism enterprises attached great importance to develop the Chinese tourism. In order to attract more Chinese tourists, the Finnish tourism administration and other travel related businesses have already done a lot of preparation for developing tourism promotional activities. In 2010, that fact that both leisure and business travel in Finland has 3%, China and Japan are set to see healthy growth rate, at a CAGR 8% and 7% (Euro monitor). Finland has in other words officially become a tourist destination for Chinese citizens and the number of Chinese tourists is expected to steadily increase. According to the official statistics of Visit Finland, from January to July 2008, the number of nights that Chinese tourists stayed in Finland was 52,000, an increase of 16% year-on-year (51766.com). In 2011, Chinese tourists in Finland totally reached two hundred fifty thousand (Finnish Tourist Board). China's soaring economy has contributed a huge potential market and many undeveloped opportunities need to be discovered and operated in this market.

I am a Chinese student in Finland for almost three years and I clearly know about Chinese culture, Finnish and the rest of Nordic countries' culture. I will try my best to achieve the goal of my thesis which is to cover the Nordic countries tourist industry for mainland Chinese tourists. I will try to conduct a comprehensive study of the subject.

1.1 Background

“The Nordic countries”

In order to understand the framework for this, we firstly need to define the meaning and usage of the “Nordic countries”. In English the term ‘Nordic countries’ is often wrongly used with reference to the Scandinavia (Nordic Travel Guides). In this thesis, I have chosen to define the “Nordic countries” as the region in Northern Europe consisting of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden - and their associated territories; such as the Faroe Islands, and Greenland. Meanwhile, the word Scandinavia will in this thesis strictly be defined to refer to only Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.

The term Scandinavia is usually used as a cultural term, but in English usage, it is occasionally confused with the purely geographical term Scandinavian Peninsula, which overlaps with Scandinavia (Nordic Travel Guides).



Figure 1. Map of the Nordic Countries (Kerry's Family History Research pages).

1.2 Research aim

This thesis is written for the purpose of analysing mainland Chinese tourism in Nordic countries (as already defined). The aim of the thesis is to introduce and analyse the current situation of both the tourism resources existing in the Nordic countries tourism as well as the Chinese outbound tourism market. The secondary aim of this thesis is to explore and assess the main obstacles hindering potential Chinese customers to visit the Nordic countries. The third aim is to suggest a strategy to develop the mainland Chinese tourism in Nordic countries.

1.3 Methodology

There are two basic approaches for the data collection when writing a thesis or scientific article; quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research is structured and calculating. It is used for studying statistically measurable areas or questions. A qualitative on the other hand, cannot be measured. A qualitative research is useful when the problem or area of study is already known, and the researcher wants to understand it even deeper. Based on the questions and aims of this thesis, a qualitative research approach has been chosen for this thesis.

1.3.1 Data collection

Collected data can be classified into Primary or Secondary data. Primary data is gathered by the author through interviews and questionnaires (Zikmund, 2000), secondary data is already collected earlier by other researchers. This thesis uses both primary and secondary sources, where the primary sources come from interviews and the questionnaire.

1.4 Research questions

In short, the aim of the thesis is to find out that how the mainland Chinese tourism develops better in Nordic countries.

- **Research question 1:** what are the Nordic countries' current resources when it comes to attracting mainland Chinese tourists and what are these resources' pros and cons?
- **Research question 2:** What is the target group for Nordic tourism in mainland China?
- **Research question 3:** What barriers stop the mainland Chinese tourists to visit the Nordic countries and how to solve them?

1.5 Thesis structure

The theoretical framework provides the necessary theoretical background, and shows key concepts in the researched area. This part is based extensively on secondary sources, and it forms the foundation for analytical part of the thesis. The analytical methods, their use, importance, and validity of their results are described here. Moreover, basic description of the service and the market on which it is offered is included in this section.

1. Analytical section – comprises of application of analytical tools of strategic management on the data collected from publicly available sources (mainly press and Internet) and serves as a basis on which the results of the results section are judged and decisions are drawn in the discussion section.
2. Primary data analysis section contains analysis of collected empiric data. A questionnaire has been designed to collect the first hand information by interviewing respondents in different ways.
3. Discussion section integrates results of both present market research analysis and strategic analyses and draws conclusions on research questions. Suggestions on further research finalize the thesis.

1.6 Scope and limitations of the thesis

The scope of the thesis is geographically limited only to the Capital area of the Nordic countries. References to other geographic areas are only included to provide additional

insight. The scope of the target group- mainland Chinese tourist indicates the tourist with Chinese citizenship and currently living in mainland China; citizens of Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan are hence excluded from this study.

This thesis does not include financial analysis. It is not intended as a business plan, but as further market analysis, where the actual business is created already. Due to language barriers, the amount of the information available to the author (who does not speak any of the local languages) is smaller than the collectible information available to a person speaking any of the Nordic languages. This could influence accuracy of certain claims, however not the validity of the assertions this work makes as a whole.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Tourism resources of the Nordic countries

2.1.1 Situation of the current tourism resources of the Nordic countries

What is the definition of tourism resources? According Adrian Bull's *the economics of travel and tourism*, the tourism resources refers to everything which can attract tourists travel motivations, and may be used to carry out tourism activities in a variety of natural, cultural objects or other factors can be referred to as tourism resources (Bull, 1995). According to the basic properties of the tourism resources, tourism resources can be divided into two major groups; natural tourism resources, and cultural tourism resources (Bull, 1995). The Nordic countries Natural and Cultural tourism resources and have the following characteristics.

A. Comprehensive

Natural tourism resources are composed of different elements, such as mountain chains, flat landscapes, and forests. Cultural tourism resources have comprehensive features too, such as an ancient villages formed by a wide range of material or immaterial elements together.

B. Regional

Regional refers to the tourism resources located in a specific geographical area. Regional tourism resources are caused by the following aspects; firstly the regional differentiation factors (Latitude, topography, land, and sea location), the impact of environmental factors such as climate, hydrology, flora, and fauna, which regionally leads to natural tourism resources. Secondly, the close contact between the cultural landscape and the natural environment, such linkages in the region's agricultural society and its historical periods, which shows a strong dependence of the natural landscape, leads to regional cultural landscape.

C. Immovable

Compared with other resources, which easily can be moved to other locations for utilization through the development of transportation, tourism resources are generally geographically fixed. This immovable character of tourism resources can be understood from the following aspect. Firstly, natural tourism resources are local masterpieces of nature and fixed in a special natural and geographical environment, often quite due to their size or the closely connected to the geographical environment (Bull, 1995).

D. Reproducibility

Most of other resources cannot be reused; the resources will be consumed after the customer completes the consumption. On the contrary, the tourism resources would be long-term repeatedly used in the case of proper protection. Tourists usually cannot take away the tourism resources (apart from some tourist goods); instead just get the travel experience and impression. Therefore, tourism resources can be reused.

E. Appreciable

The most important difference between tourism resources with other resources is its aesthetic characteristics. Although the travel motivations vary from person to person, but to enjoy and appreciate the tourism resources is an indispensable element, sometimes it is the core content of all tourism activities.

2.1.2. Natural and cultural tourism resources in Nordic countries

The natural resources can be summarized as topography, hydrology, climate, biology (Bennett, 2002). Climates and temperatures differ in the Nordic countries. Just like many other areas have their special natural resources, which they often promote themselves with as well, as being mentioned even in travel guides (Masters, Atkinson, Bain, 2011).

Looking at the culture, there are three unrelated language groups in the Nordics:

- The North Germanic branch of Indo-European languages, which covers Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Icelandic and Faroese (World News).
- The Baltic-Finnish and Sami branches of Uralic languages, including Finnish and Sami, spoken by the native peoples of Lapland (Encyclopædia Britannica).
- The Eskimo-Aleut language, which is spoken by the native people from Greenland (Native-languages.org).

2.1.2 SWOT – analysis Nordic countries tourism resources

The SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a project or in a business venture (Fine, 2009). For this analysis I will use the SWOT-analysis as a tool to assess both the internal and the external aspects the Nordic countries' tourism resources, and their current situation.

- **Strengths:**
 - A. **Rich natural and cultural resource:** As we discussed in the previous chapter, the rich natural and cultural resources are the foundation to attract tourists. Those resources bring the different sensory experience to the tourists.

- B. Local governments and the relevant department carry out the strong support and attention to the tourism industry.** Recently the Nordic countries have increased their interest in the tourism industry (Thule Institute). As a promising industry, tourism is a low resource-consummated, reusable, and can be sustainable developed. Nordic countries are pioneers to develop the environmental friendly industries, therefore there are many initiatives were implemented to support the local tourism industry, for example the Chinese speaking guide in Stockholm City Hall, the Chinese signs in many tour attractions (Stockholm official homepage).
- C. Local tourism resources are properly protected to keep in good condition, the tourism market is standardized.** Rational development and utilization of tourism resources, obviously is an important factor for the development of health tourism. There is a reasonable requirement to ensure that the tourist attractions not to be overused, such as many attractions have specific open time (Tourism Institute, Xinjiang University 2007).
- D. Diverse tourism products.** The development of various tourism products for the different characteristics of natural, as well as the seasonal tourism products. The market segmentation to the tourism products is an important tool to maintain the tourist's interests. Since tourists have different needs, a wide range of tourism products will be necessary for the customers. Nordic countries are very good for seasonal variety of tourism, i.e. aurora tours at winter and the birds-watching tour at summer in Iceland.
- E. Nordic countries have very stable political and economic situation,** which is the first condition for the development of tourism (Baidu). Security is the first factor to be considered when the tourists select tourist destination. What travelers looking for in a trip is the good experience, no one would put themselves at risk For example: Egypt's vital tourism industry, crippled by political turmoil, will suffer a 25% drop in revenue in 2011 (Egyptian Ministry of Tourism).
- **Weaknesses:**

- A. Culture tourism resources are not competitive enough compare with other competitors.** While the Nordic countries could compete with other countries in continental Europe with its unique landscape and geography the Nordic countries' cultural tourism resources are relatively weak compare with their natural resources, especially compare with those countries with rich cultural tourism resource in Western, Eastern, and Southern Europe (Mice China).
- B. The local climate and weather issues.** Due to Nordic countries' special geographical location, the high latitude brings the long dark winter and short sunny summer. The weather problem leads to the fact that the tourism season is short and concentrated, that is a negative factor for hotels booking or vehicles arrangement (Mr Yang Yu, The First Travel).
- C. The high prices in Nordic countries.** According to National Statistic, R.O.C, Nordic countries enjoy very high HDI (Human Development Index) and GDP per capita The high incomes and taxes lead to the high prices, this fact will be a disadvantage in tourism industry (Huan Qiu).
- D. Tourism resources are relatively dispersed distribution.** When Chinese tourists travel in Nordic countries, it is seldom that they choose only one country as destination; usually the trips were well planned before (Mrs Lily Lu China Women Travel Service). Most of the attractions are located in the capital area, so the international transportation will be an important issue to consider about.
- **Opportunities:**

A. The increase of the target groups economic conditions and buying power. Our subject of study in this paper is the tourist from mainland China; therefore the Chinese economic development and situation will be of important concern. Until now the Nordic counties are still one of the most expensive places for Chinese tourists (China.com.cn). With the current development of the Chinese economy, the Nordic countries might become more popular to Chinese tourists.

B. The enhancement of awareness about Nordic tourism resources of Chinese tourists. With the development with the modern media and in the role of the in-

ternational host of world famous events and exhibitions such as the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, and the World Expo 2010 in Shanghai, China has become more aware of the outside world (China Value). This might as well has greatly widen people's vision about the Nordic countries

C. **At the present in the stage of early development, but with expectations of a better market.** To Chinese potential tourist the Nordic countries are still mysterious, less than 1% of Chinese have been to Northern Europe, but according to the statistic from The First Travel Beijing local office Mr Yang Yu, the number of Chinese tourist to Nordic countries in 2011, roughly increased 20% compared with 2010, and Mr Yang Yu remains optimistic about the Nordic travel market and believes this is just a start.

D. **Appreciation of RMB (Yuan).** Over the last six years, the appreciation of the Chinese Yuan has been as reliable as a clock (Forexblog). Since 2005, when China tweaked the Yuan-Dollar pegs, it has risen by 28%, or 4.5% per year. The Euro to Chinese Yuan exchange history was changed from 1 Euro to 10.2991 on 2007-01-01, to 9.4607 on 2009-01-01 and later reaches 8.1529 on 2012-01-01. Most Chinese tourist will bring Euro as currency when they travel to Nordic country ,and the data shows that Chinese RMB's appreciation increased the Chinese tourists buying power and this is a positive factor (Forexblog).

- **Threats:**

A. Fierce competition: The main competitors to Nordic countries in inbound travel market are the other European countries, especially France, Italy, Spain and other traditional tourism destinations (Jessica Zheng, Kyling Travel Shanghai). Their advantages over the Nordic are aspects such as climate, reputation, shopping, and price levels (Jessica Zheng, Kyling Travel Shanghai).

B. Awareness of the potential consumers. Chinese tourists' awareness of the Nordic countries is currently low (Bang). Base on the questionnaire attached and the telephone interview a big percentage of Chinese has very limited knowledge about Nordic countries' tourism resources, further their impression on Nordic

countries still remains on the words like cold, and dark, therefore the further effort of marketing and media cooperation is required to get better result.

2.2 Situation of mainland china's outbound travel market

2.2.1 Introduction of mainland Chinese outbound travel market

With the promulgation of “Measures for the Administration of the Overseas Tours of Chinese Citizens” in 1997, China officially marked the beginning of Chinese outbound tourism. After years of development, China’s outbound tourism has developed vigorously, and emerging into the fastest growing tourist-exporting country (Grin). Authoritative data from National Tourism Administration of People Republic of China shows that Chinas outbound tourism has increased 13% in 2011 and reaches 65 million passengers and total expense more than 55 billion dollars. At present, China has become the world’s largest tourism market, and the largest outbound tourist source country in Asia (Official homepage of the National Tourism Administration of the People’s Republic of China).

Present Chinese outbound tourism has the following characteristics.

- Maintain a high speed of growth. After the accession of WTO in 2001, Chinese outbound tourists increased more than five times.
- Change of the destination countries. Ten years ago the main destination countries for Chinese tourists are Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand, Singapore, and Malaysia. Nowadays Korea, Japan, Australia, France, Germany are getting popular in Chinese outbound tourists’ wish lists.
- Change of the structure of the outbound tourism. The majority of outbound tourists changes to private tourists instead of official visitors and business visitors.
- Outbound tourism becomes a new growth point to travel agencies. Due to the late start of Chinese outbound tourism, there is a great space to further development and compare with inbound and domestic tourism; outbound tourism shares much higher margin. (Yes trip).

- High expense in destination countries. Chinese outbound tourist belongs to the high income group in mainland china. Due to the high import tax Chinese tourist prefer to consume foreign products aboard. According to statistic Chinese tourists spends more than average tourist's expense level in destination countries (Facts and details).
- The positive influence of the appreciation of Yuan (RMB). Since china adjust the currency policy from July 2007, the faster appreciation of Chinese Yuan brings the bigger buying power in western countries (Forex blog).

2.2.2 Target groups in China tourism in the Nordic countries

Target group is a group of customers that the business has decided to aim its marketing efforts and ultimately its merchandise. Mainland Chinese can be divided into groups of individuals separated by distinguishable and noticeable aspects.

- **Geographical segmentation:**

Although the gap between the Chinese urban and rural is narrowing, the major groups of outbound tourism are still concentrated in urban area, especially to the Nordic market (Jessica Zheng, Kyling Travel Shanghai). Even the cities' sizes play an important role in classifying target groups. Around 60% residents in bigger urban areas such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou have planned to travel outbound in the past year, but there is much lower figure among rural area. According to *Annual Report of China Outbound Tourism Development 2012*, Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin are the top three outbound tourist source regions in China. Residents in urban area are often with higher income and education level, the Nordic countries' rich natural and cultural resources are usually reasons to attract them. Compare to residents in countryside who surrounding by natural and often with lower income and education level, to see nature and experience a different cultural is not the first concern for them to choose tourism destinations.

- **Demographic segmentation:** Demographic segmentation, variables mainly consist of demographic factors such as Gender, Age, occupation, income, education level, family composition etc. certainly these factors play important roles in outbound

tourism market. Income is a key point to classify the customer groups. There are different requirements of different travel routes for tourists' economic capacity. The Nordic countries are all listed on top at Price Level Indices (PLIs), and these indices provide a comparison of the countries' price levels with respect to the European Union average. Having a sound economic base is the premise to travel to the Nordic countries. Education level is also an important element to influence the choices of destinations of tourists. A research from the National Tourism Administration of PRC shows that people with higher education levels are more focused on the cultural and natural resources of destinations, as well as the routes diversification and personalization. To them, the mental experience is also an important factor in choosing tourism destinations. On the opposite, people with low education levels focus more on the number of attractions, the popularity of tourist attractions, and price. Gender affects the choice of tourism destination too (Graduate School for International Development and Cooperation, Hiroshima University); the research shows that the starting point of choosing a tourism destination is different for males and females. Females concern more about shopping and enjoyment in the destination which they are going to choose. Instead, males focus more on getting a new experience of adventure and novelty. The Nordic countries are not considered as the most popular tourist destinations, even not in the top 20 list according to the *Annual Report of China Outbound Tourism Development 2011*. The research also shows that those tourists who choose non-majority and alternative tourism destinations are often the young and middle age group with medium or high income as well as with medium or high education background. The research also shows that age groups actually do not bring a great impact in tourists' decision making (Official homepage of the National Tourism Administration of the People's Republic of China).

- **Psychographic segmentation:** life style and personality are two important factors to influence the tourists' tourism destination choosing. Travel is not just a kind of physical experience; furthermore it is a way to experience a different life style. Encountering scenery is just appearance, but encountering a way of life, to make people reflect on the present life style is more meaningful. People with active life style and passive life style will make different decisions in choosing tourism destinations. People with active life style often think words like adventure, to experience,

excited are primarily considered when they make decisions to choose tourism destinations. On the other hand people with passive life style prefer those tourism destinations bring them an easy and convenient experience. People always try to looking for an environment which is different with their current life in subconscious. The Nordic countries are famous of their natural and cultural tourism resources, the beautiful landscapes and unique history attract tourists from all over the world. People with active but busy life style, active, looking forward to experience a peaceful and modern life style, even those with environmental friendly concern are those are really interested in Nordic countries travel (WZTA).

Conclusion: The target group of the Nordic countries tourism market in mainland China is people with medium and upper income with good education level and willing to experience a different life style in all age in urban area.

2.2.3 Development trends of outbound tourism in mainland China

After interviews with Mr Yang Yu (Senior Manager of The First Travel) and Mrs Hu Fangfang (Marketing director, Beijing Post travel) and analysis of the information of present tourism industry we can see the following development trends.

- Further growth of the tourist number of outbound travel. With the appreciation of the Yuan (RMB) and strong economic development in China, the research from The National Tourism Administration in People Republic of China shows that the forecasts for outbound tourist in 2012 will increase at least 12% and reach 77,000,000 people. With the popularity of outbound travel, the outbound tourists spread from affluent high-income groups to the middle-income groups. With the increase with people's living standard and improve of the spiritual needs, those who have the outbound travel experience will looking for other outbound travel destinations therefore the number of outbound tourists will further increase.
- Further increase in tourist destination countries. The statistic from the National Tourism Administration of People Republic of China also shows that presently mainland Chinese tourists have a much wider choice of tourist's destinations. From the first country Thailand open ADS travel visa(Visa which granted to tourist group more than 5 people) to mainland china in 1988 to the 113th country Columbia, dur-

ing 24 years there are totally 113 countries open the ADS travel market to mainland Chinese tourists. Chinese tourists' main destinations have changed from only South-east Asia to different countries in Asia, Europe, and Australia.

- Diversification of tourism product. With the development of mainland Chinese outbound tourism market, the tourism purpose and form have changed much. From the early simple sightseeing trips to the later a variety of purpose travel product, tourists have much more choices. In recent years, honeymoon trips, shopping trips, and trips specially designed for the elder become popular. Some typical honeymoon destination, such as Maldives, or shopping city like Tokyo are the new hot spots and will keep popular in a quite long period. The tourism product is no longer monotonous; a wide range of tourism products is designed on the basis of the segments in the market. In this case, tourists have more freedom and choice to select the travel products they need, and customer satisfaction has thus been further improved.
- Tourist groups' structure has changed. In the past 20 years, due to the restrictions of the destination countries, the majority of Chinese citizens who anticipated the outbound trips are mostly due to the public and official business, such as to attend meetings, exhibitions, and sightseeing was just a by-product. However with the increase in economic development and the number of tourist destination the main structure of tourist groups has changed from official business groups to the private sightseeing groups and this proportion will increase further.
- The improvement of usage of internet in the whole process of outbound tourism. Traditionally Mainland Chinese tourists choose the tourism products by reading newspaper, going to travel agency's local office, and finish the payment by cash or through bank (Putui). With the application of the internet, more and more tourists will be first search; check and compare the related information which provided by different tour companies, in order to make final decision. The application of internet bank, online payment provides a safe and convenient way for tourists to finish the payment and the usage of the internet greatly reduces the cost of travel agencies, eliminating the cost such as utilities, part of the staff costs and also saves the time of tourists.

3 ANALYTICAL SECTION

3.1 The scope of respondents

The scope of respondents is limited into mainland Chinese citizens with independent income, and with fixed residence in mainland China (residents of Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan are hence not included).

3.2 Purpose of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed for three purposes:

- To collect the basic information of the potential customers to provide the information to analysis the customers.
- To collect the information about the mainland Chinese potential customers' impressions of the Nordic countries and budgets of the Nordic travel.
- Find the information about what reasons to stop the mainland Chinese tourists to visit the Nordic countries.

3.3 Content of the questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of 12 questions, 8 of them are single election questions. 2 of 12 are multiple selection questions, and the rest 2 are questions and answers.

The questionnaire can be found in appendix part at the end of this work. The questionnaire in English is a translation of the Chinese original questionnaire which was sent to the respondents.

3.4 Data about Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to interview respondents from January 2012; a survey was conducted on 40 sample respondents in mainland China through three methods. Additional 40 questionnaires were sent out March 2012 to improve the accuracy of the survey.

There are three types of survey methods used in this thesis:

1. Through internet: the questionnaires were sent and collected through email or by other means of internet contact.
2. By telephone: interview respondents were contacted using Skype or phone calls.
3. Live interviews: interview of respondents in person to ensure accurate information.

Out of 80 questionnaires, 56 of them were sent and collected from the internet; 17 of them got resulted by phone calls; furthermore 7 of questionnaires were collected by face-to-face interview. 73 out of 80 questionnaires are effective (8.75% loss), 4 questionnaires were not returned, 2 questionnaires were not complete answered and 1 questionnaire were not answered serious enough.

3.5 The multiple limitations to the questionnaire:

- Design flaw – question no 9 and no 12 gave too limited options for the respondent. Those that like to choose other options did not have appropriate option available- adding “other” option would fix the problem, however at this stage the validity of the answers for this question was low and therefore it was not analysed.
- 80 question copies circulated – due to time constraints 40 questionnaires were spread first, and additional 40 questionnaires were added to collect accurate results. Low total amount makes use of the questionnaire for statistical analysis purpose unviable.
- Design – the purpose of the questionnaire was to get qualitative data. Questions were few in order to minimize time consumed for the respondents and to keep focus on the main point.
- Respondents answers might have also are influenced by internet environments, different Chinese accent, environments of taking the survey and other influences. Results therefore should be taken with these limitations in mind.

3.6 Result of the questionnaire

3.6.1 Characteristics of the respondents

Out of 73 respondents of valid questionnaires, 34 persons (46.6%) are male and 39 (53.4%) female. A diagram of the gender composition is shown below.

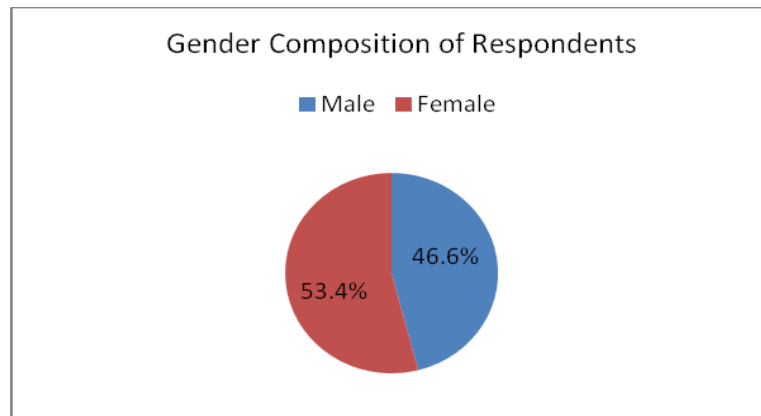


Figure 2. Gender composition of respondent

- The age groups limits were selected to mirror ages at when the person is studying or just start to work (18-25), engaged in working life in different steps from (26-55),and retired (Above 56).

Age from **18-25**: 15 person, or 20.5%

Age from **25-55**: 49 person, or 67.1%

Age Above **56**: 9 person, or 12.4%

- The education level of the respondents is divided into five groups based on our target groups' basic situation. Five groups are listed from lower education level to the middle level (University-level), and to higher education level (Graduate level, above Graduate degree level.)

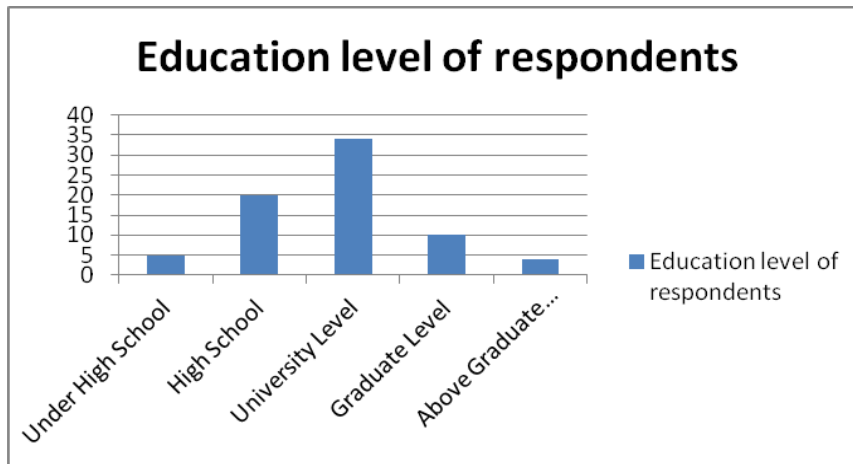


Figure 3 Education level of respondents

- About the family composition, these were classified into three groups, from single or unmarried, married, and divorced or widowed. Those three groups covered all Chinese families and the respondents.

Family Composition	Single/unmarried	Married	Divorced/Widow
Number	20	42	11

Table 1. Family composition among respondents

- Families' annual income is an important data for the analysis of the potential customers. To get the detail information, author classified the Chinese families annual income by low income families (Under EUR 10000), to the low-medium income and well-off families with annual income (EUR 10001- EUR 20000, and EUR 20001- EUR 40000). Author also classified the high income families into three groups, from the medium-high income family (EUR 40001- EUR 60000) to wealthy families (EUR 60001- EUR 100,000), even the families with the highest income (Above EUR 100.001)

Euro was chosen as the currency unit in the questionnaire, and with explanation that the exchange rate was regarded as EUR 1.0 equals RMB 8.2.

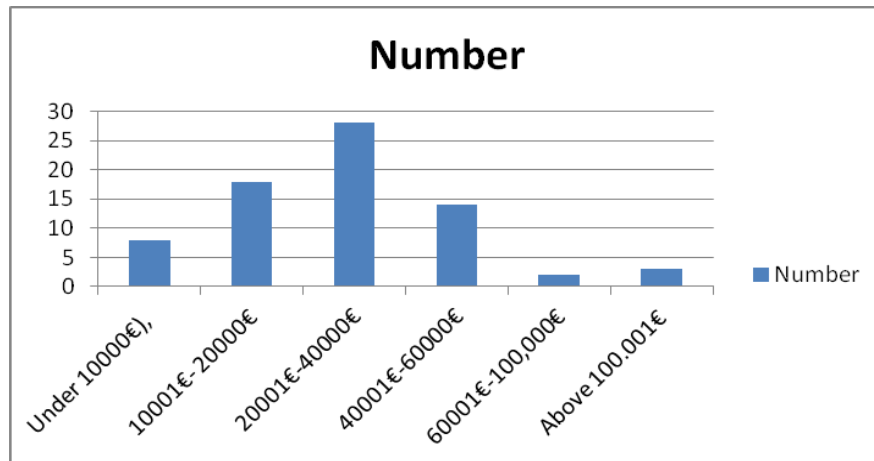


Figure 4. Families' annual income of respondents.

Family income is a key element by determining respondent's choices. Especially in number no.11 and no.12, the high income family often chooses the high budget but instead they often choose the time budget from 1-2 weeks. Respondents with higher family income are also often with outbound travel experience and know more about the Nordic countries compare to other respondent.

- Result about respondent's previous travel experience.

The question no 6 (- Please state which foreign countries have you travelled to?) is asked to collect the respondent's previous travel experience for further analysis. There are two key data that author will receive from this questions. Respondents answering that they have never been to other countries are in total 40 persons; which covers 55% of the total 73 respondents, and is showed with blue in the Figure 5. On the other hand, the respondents who answered opposite are 33 in number; and cover the 45% of total respondents. Out of 33 respondents who have been travelled to foreign countries, Thailand is mentioned 25 times and therefore occupies the most popular outbound travels destination. The brief information is showed in the Figure 4.

A: How many per cent of the respondents have ever travelled to foreign countries. Respondents who answered never been to other countries are 18 persons; covering 49% of the total 37 respondents. On the other hand, the respondents answering opposite are 19 people, covering the 51% of total.

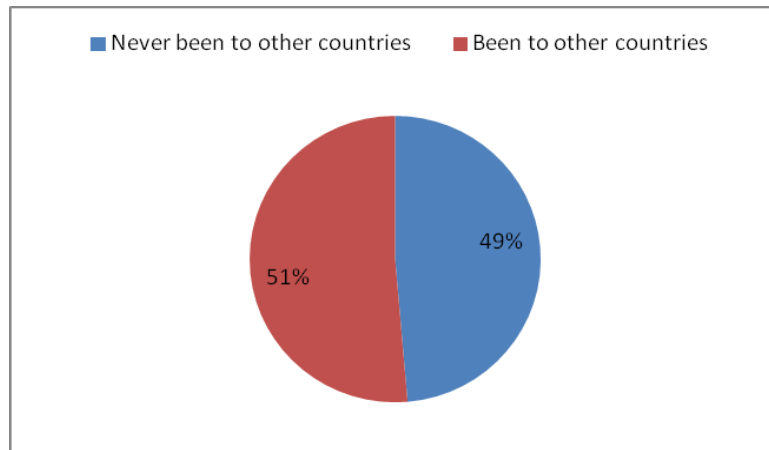


Figure 5. Percentage of respondents that have ever been to foreign countries.

B: By analysis which countries the respondent ever been to conclude what is the most popular outbound travels destination. What is the different destinations market share?

Out of 33 respondents who have been travelled to foreign countries, Thailand is mentioned 25 times therefore occupies the most popular outbound travels destination.

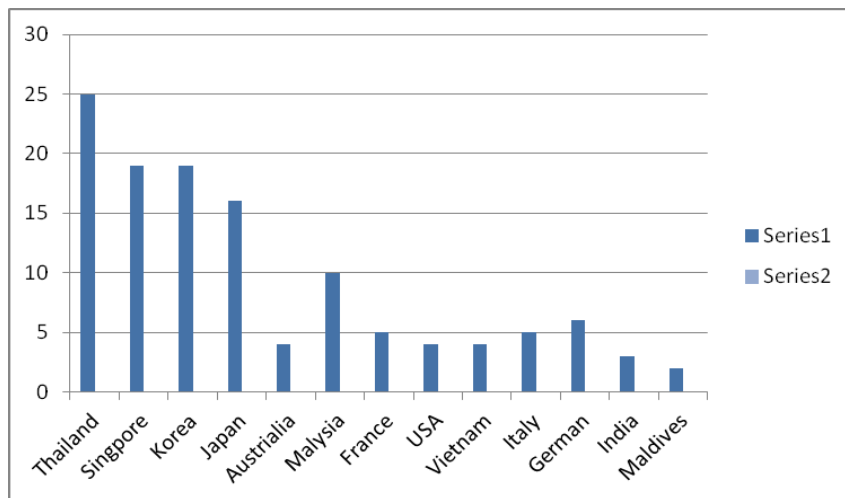


Figure 6. Outbound destinations of respondents.

As we can see, the most popular outbound destinations for respondents is still other Asian countries (South East Asia and East Asia) due to the proximity from mainland China, and the relatively low cost combined with a similar cultural identity.

Classical European tourist destinations like France, Italy, and even Germany, were mentioned. Compared to this, Europe receives 48.1% of the votes in the survey when asked about what tourist destination mainland Chinese tourists are interested in. North Amer-

ica, Australia, and South and Southeast Asian countries, are mentioned in the survey which shows that the mainland Chinese' outbound travel's destinations are getting more personalized and diversified (SINA).The survey also shows that those who have outbound travel experience often are those who also choose to belong to the medium and high income groups and with good income, those respondents are also have more information about the Nordic countries.

3.6.2 Impression about Nordic countries

Question no 7 and no 8 are designed to collect the respondent's impression about the Nordic countries. Question no 7 is required to answer by list three words by order about respondent's first impression about Nordic countries. The top five words by frequency of being mentioned were:

1. Cold, 2. Peaceful, 3.Mysterious, 4 Welfare, 5 Modern

In addition the following words where: no 6 Private, no 7 Nature, no 8 Design, no 9 Far Away, and no 10 Volvo. All words from 1 to 10 are listed by frequency of being mentioned, and there are words for example IKEA, Dark, Salmon, North light, Nokia, High tax being mentioned in our survey.

- The questions no 8 is about what respondents' self-estimate the level of understanding of the Nordic countries by choose the option which fit them the most. Based on the different level of understanding, options were classified in to five levels.

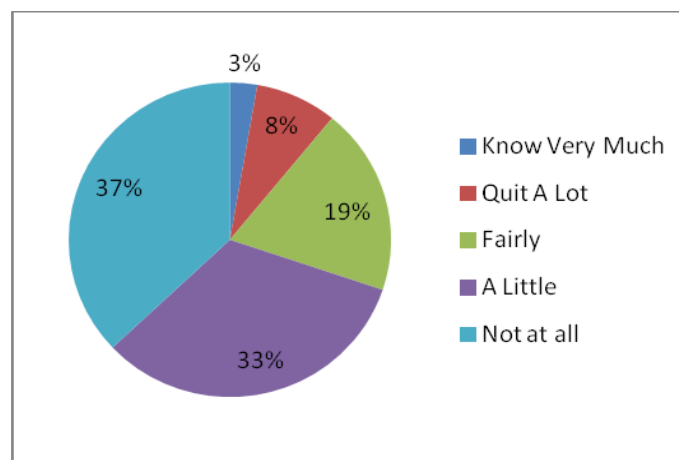


Figure 7. Respondent's self-evaluation of their knowledge about the Nordic countries.

From the answers of question no 7 and no 8 we can see that Chinese have very limited knowledge about the Nordic. Most responded cold, peaceful and mysterious with high living standards and modern life. The result also shows that mainland Chinese knows more about the Nordic countries economic and social information than the tourism. Words such as Welfare, Modern, Design, Volvo are mentioned in top 10 list.

- Question no 9 was designed to discover the motivation of Chinese potential tourist to visit the Nordic. The question was designed to be a multiple choice question, and the choices should be listed by order.

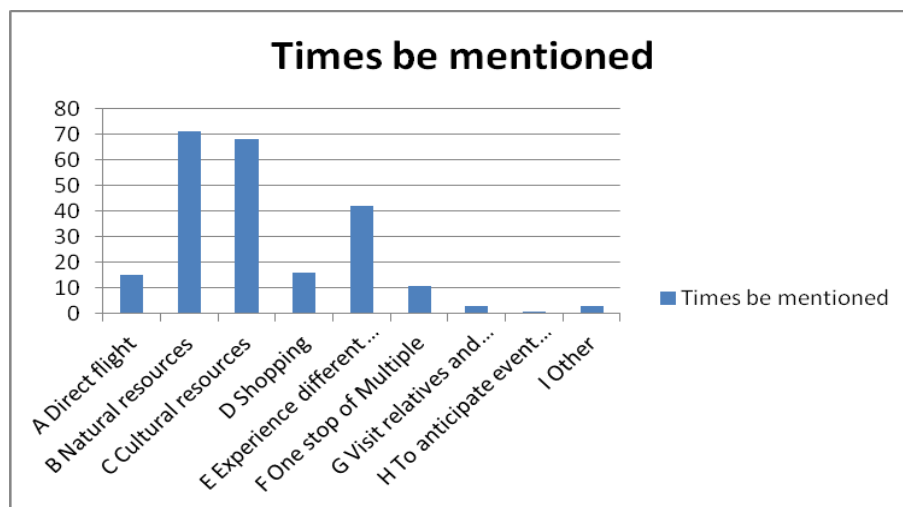


Figure 8. Times mentioned.

Based on the figure above, the option B and C are the most mentioned options in our survey (Option B was mentioned 71 times, or 97% , and Option C was mentioned 69 times, or 93%), this shows that the main motivation for mainland Chinese to visit the Nordic countries is to visit the natural and cultural resources. Furthermore the option E (to experience different lifestyle) also got relatively high mentioned (mentioned 42 times or 57.5%) also shows that to get a different experience in a different atmosphere is an important motivation to choose different tourism destinations. Majority in the target group have a very intensive and modern life, so the convenience of transportation is an important superiority for our target group to choose a tourism destination. Shopping is an important part in tourism, from local souvenirs to the famous Nordic design. Mainland China charges high important tax in foreign-made products (Reuters) and tourists in Nordic countries have possibility to get up to 17% tax refund in most of products, therefore the Nordic countries are also reasonable for Chinese tourists to foreign-made

products, and in the survey 16 respondents choose “Shopping” as one of their main motivation to travel to the Nordic countries (Nordisk eTax). The option G was mentioned 3 times in the survey, because the respondents have friends or classmates who are studying in the Nordic countries and the option I was mentioned because two respondents wanted to try the Nordic cuisine and another respondent has a deep impression with the children book “The Wonderful Adventures of Nils Holgersson”. The book is written by Swedish author Selma Lagerlof, the respondent’s childhood memory was the main motivation for her to choose the Nordic as destination. This case shows that culture and education exchange plays an increasingly important role to customer when they choose tourist destination. I.e. the release of the movie “The Lord of the Ring” brought New Zealand 11% more tourists in 2003 (新西兰留学). Questions no 10 and no 11 are designed for what mainland Chinese’s time and economic budget in the Nordic countries.

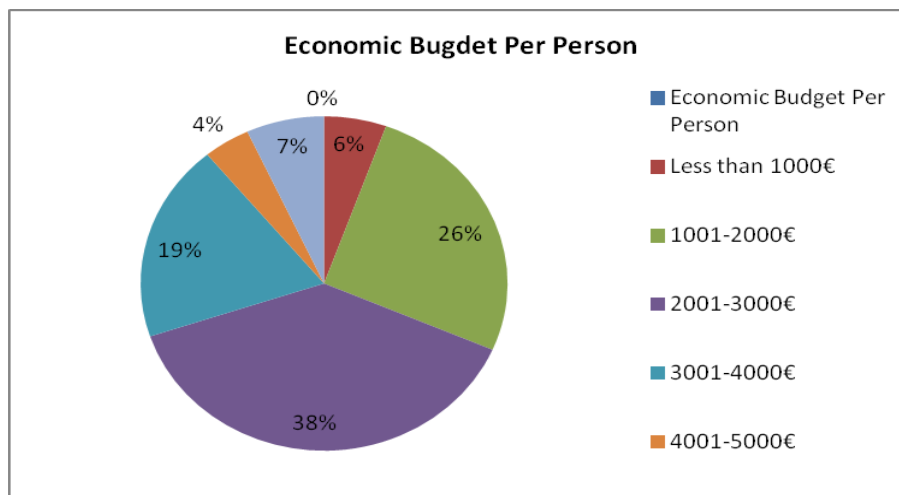


Figure 9. Economic budget per person.

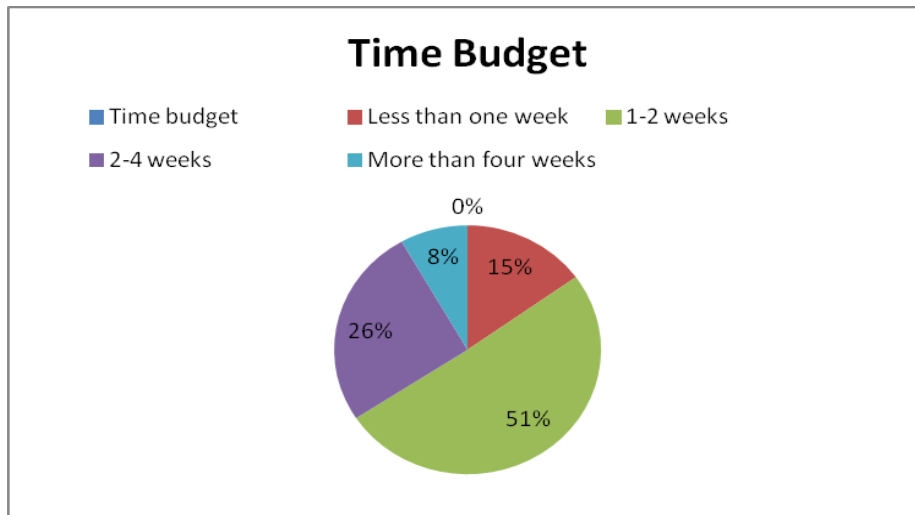


Figure 10. Time budget of travelling in the Nordic countries.

The last question was designed to discover the top reasons to stop mainland Chinese tourist to visit the Nordic countries, the result shows in the figure below.

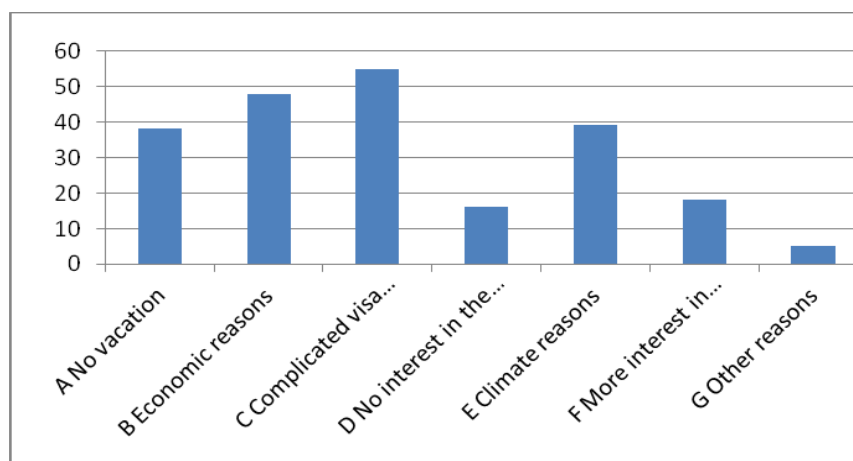


Figure 11. Reasons stopping mainland Chinese to travel to the Nordic countries.

The survey shows that the complicated paper work to apply for visa and the economic reasons are the two top reasons to stop mainland Chinese tourists to visit the Nordic countries. The option "others" be mentioned because of the recent 2011 Norway Attacks, the respondents are not sure about the social security in the Nordic countries. This shows a serious incident will bring much stronger influence than many times positive publicity.

3.7 Further Analysis

Gender plays different roles on the result. In some specific questions gender plays an important role but some are not. The question No 9 was designed to discover the motivation for the mainland Chinese customers to visit the Nordic countries. Among 9 options, D (shopping) got mentioned 16 times. Of the respondents mentioning D in the question No 9, 12 of respondents were female compared to 4 male. On the other hand, there are some results did not get strong influence by gender. Education levels relate to the past travel experience. The result above shows that 34 % (25 persons) of the respondents with lower education level and 66% (48 persons) of respondents with the university or above university education level. 51% (37 people) of respondents have not ever visited foreign country outside China compares to 49% (36 persons) of respondents who with the outbound travel experience. Among the 49% of respondents (36 persons), 29 of them with university or above university education level, it stands 80.5% of all the respondents who has outbound travel experience. Compare with that there are 66% of respondents of total with university or above university education level; this shows that people enjoying outbound travel often are of higher educational level. Higher education generally tends to lead to better economic opportunities; those who find themselves at a lower socioeconomic status usually have a lower level of education and lower wage (Wise geek). The survey shows that outbound travelling tourists often belong to the medium and high income group. Question No 8 was designed to collect understanding of the Nordic, and the understanding the travel budget of the potential customer. The surveys shows that the respondents choosing “knowing quite a lot” and “very much” often choose a generous budget in the question No 10, on opposite those who choose “knowing not at all” in question No.8 chose low economic budget. This shows that many respondents have very limit information about the price level of the Nordic countries, they plan the budget actually based on their own understanding about the Nordic countries.

The respondents who choose “no interesting” and “want to take the chance to visit other more famous countries” in question No 12 can be divided in to two groups after interview. First group include those who want to go to the Nordic countries, but the Nordic countries are not in their top destination list, they will visit the Nordic countries if they have chance and time. The second group belongs to those respondents who do not have

much interest in the Nordic countries; they rather stay at home instead of going to the Nordic countries. The result from the question No 6 shows that the most popular outbound destinations for respondents is still the Asian countries due to the short distance from mainland China and the relatively low cost and cultural identity. European countries such as France, Italy, even Germany got mentioned but not so often in the questionnaire, but compare with the data that Europe gets the 48.1% votes in the survey of what is the most mainland Chinese interested in tourist destination, there is a huge potential market for European market (Sina).

In our survey, the family composition does not play very important role to influence our respondents' choices in question 7, 8, 9, 10, and 12. However the choices of question no.11.12 got influence by respondent's family composition, married respondents are often have lower time budget in question No 10 and lower economic budget in question No 11.

3.7.1 Barriers for Chinese tourism in the Nordic countries

As we have seen through the questionnaire, there are barriers stopping Chinese tourism in the Nordic countries, we will here further focus and assess these together with secondary data for fully understand what creates these barriers.

3.7.2 Chinese barriers

The Chinese barriers, are as seen, mostly are focused on the limited time of vacations and the tourists' own economic situation.

A. Limited vacation

After the information sampling for different travel agency, the general trips to the Nordic countries last from eight to fifteen days, including the domestic transport in China, to travel to the Nordic countries need at least 8 to 15 days' vacation (Mrs Lily Lu, China Women Travel Service) However, China has one of the shortest paid vacations in the world (China.com.cn). The total amount of paid vacation days in China are 21, including the minimum paid vacation of 10 days and statutory 11 days. A CNN research shows that most mainland Chinese cannot enjoy the 21days of vacation (Xinhua). 54.5%

said that they never enjoy any paid vacation and 23.5% enjoy the paid vacation partly, there are only 22% enjoying paid vacation every year, and most of them are government employees compared to the more than 60% employees who work for private-own enterprises with no paid vacation ever.

B. Economic situation of the customer

The economic reason is another important element to influence tourist's decision. Although the fast development of the Chinese economy, China has a long way to go compared to the Nordic countries' high GDP per capita level. According to the World Economic Outlook Database-September 2011, China became the world's second biggest economy; however China's GDP per capita in 2011 still only reached no 90. According to our questionnaire, the majority of mainland Chinese considers that the economic reason is one of the biggest barriers.

3.7.3 Nordic barriers

The lack of information, the complicated application process, and even the climate are factors stopping the mainland Chinese tourism in the Nordic.

A. Lack of market promotion and information.

A majority of Chinese have very limited information about the Nordic. Even after the World Expo 2010 in Shanghai, the average Chinese is unaware of the existence of the Nordic countries; the awareness is often restricted to Nordic brands such as Nokia and Volvo. Before the outspread of internet international information was very limited, furthermore the common Chinese almost has no chance to travel abroad.

B. The complicated visa application process.

Visa is a biggest barrier between the Nordic and the Chinese tourists, based on a survey carried out for this thesis (Interviews). There is a special ADS visa which is required to visit the Nordic countries. ADS visas are issued to members of tourist groups of at least five persons; the maximum duration is 30 days (Embassy of Sweden). For the visa there is a EUR 60 application fee which is not refundable even if the visa application is rejected, and the visa is not granted to be issued (full form in Appendix II).

C. Climate barriers

The Nordic tourist season is from May to September. November till March is winter time, and the Nordic winter is long and dark. In interview Nordic tour leader Lin Zeng (CTS Beijing) says. most mainland Chinese tourist choose to visit the Nordic between May and September because the tourists interest to the Nordic countries are the natural and cultural resources, and those resources have limited time to get the best travel experience.

3.7.4 Suggestions to address the barriers

A. Limited time of vacations.

To solve this problem, the two main ways are either developing other target group or reduce the lengths of the trips. The current target group is middle and high income families, a group with very limited time. Due to the Chinese culture and current market situation, newly retired people, and students from wealthy families could two new target groups. Chinese retiring age is 55 for women and 60 for men (Fabang). The newly retired people have plenty time to do what they want when they are still in age to be physically able to do it. The Chinese culture of saving money helps developing this target group, they have the economic freedom and plenty of time to travel (Mr Yang Yu, The First Travel Beijing). Another potential target groups are students. For the junior and high school students, a way to promote is direct contact with schools, according to Ms Wang Bing (senior market manager, Beijing Oriental School). Due to Chinese one child policy, a big percentage of Chinese urban families have only one child, i.e. Shanghai 60.2% and Beijing 69.7% by 2011 (China POPIN). These are called “the little emperors” and have become the core of the modern Chinese family. Chinese parents are ready to go far in helping them to win the fierce competition of today’s China. International exposure is favoured upon in China and therefore it is very likely that parents will send their only child abroad if the chance exists.

B. Economic factors

There are two ways to reduce the costs for a trip according to Mr Yang Yu (The First Travel Beijing). The first way is to choose lower priced options for flights, hotels and restaurants; the other way is to avoid the high season. Tour companies can save costs for

hotels, restaurants, and air tickets through group discounts – if they find a way to increase the number of tourists. To avoid the high season is another way to reduce costs. The Nordic tourist season stretches from April to October. During peak season most of hotels will increase prices 20% -50% - the same applies to some tourist attractions (Scandinavian Tourist Board). However, the shorter opening hours during low season is an important element to consider for tour companies, especially the fact that some attractions are not open at all during this season (Scandinavian Tourist Board).

C. Lack of information.

To promote the Nordic countries tourist market, the application of the modern media is very important. The popularity of social networking such as Facebook, and Twitter is still growing, based on statistics from Merchant Circle 70% of enterprises choose Facebook as market platform, steadily increasing with 20% annually (2010 figures). Modern social media is an effective market platform, however, there is an important point here, many website and social networking platforms are blocked in China, including Facebook, Twitter, and Google plus (The Wall Street Journal online). Instead Chinese options are offered, such as the Chinese version of Facebook called Renren (www.renren.com), the Chinese version of twitter named Weibo (www.weibo.com), and Baidu (www.baidu.com) acting as a Google in China. To participate in tourism exhibitions is another way to introduce the Nordic to the Chinese tourism practitioner, i.e. COTTM (China Outbound Travel& Tourism Market).

D. The complicated visa application process.

To promote tourism and indirectly boost local business, many countries have chosen to simplify the approval process for certain tourist visas – especially in the United States of America, and Brazil (Want China Times). Other countries have chosen to lift the usually heavy screening for visa, for special designated geographical areas where tourism is promoted, an example is the Jeju islands in the republic of Korea (Consulate General of the Republic of Korea.). If the Nordic countries would chose a similar path – this could be a potential way to reduce current obstacles for mainland Chinese tourists visit the Nordic countries.

E. The climate.

Climate can of course not be changed; nevertheless the market could adapt the tourism the climate and make this special Nordic climate a part of the experience. Such could be snow- and ice related tourism, winter tours allowing tourists to see the Aurora Borealis,

and adventure tourism. The Santa Claus Theme park in Rovaniemi is an example of how the tourism industry has used the cold climate to promote tourism to Finland (Official homepage of the Santa Claus Village).

3.8 Questionnaire-conclusion

The survey of 73 questionnaires has shown that there is a huge potential market for tourism for mainland Chinese of different genders and age groups. Presently information about the Nordic is limited. The understanding of the Nordic still stays in the primary impression such like cold or far away. Most of respondents' motivation to visit the Nordic countries is to visit the natural and culture resources, as well as to experience a kind of new life style. Income is an important element to influence the respondent to plan time and economic budget, even influence the level of knowing about the Nordic countries. There are many reasons to stop mainland Chinese to visit the Nordic countries, the complicated paper work is the top reason and then followed by economic reasons and the weather problem.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The research aim of this thesis was to answer our three defined questions.

- **Research question 1:** what are the Nordic countries' current resources when it comes to attracting mainland Chinese tourists and what are these resources' pros and cons?
- **Research question 2:** What is the target group for Nordic tourism in mainland China?
- **Research question 3:** What barriers stop the mainland Chinese tourists to visit the Nordic countries and how to solve them?

Based on the sources presented and assessed in this thesis we can hence answer these questions:

- The resources the Nordic countries can provide in attracting tourists from China are the natural resources together with the different culture the Nordic countries can offer.
- The target group for tourism in the Nordics is urban residents with often higher income with good educational level within all ages, interested in experiencing different life style and rich natural and cultural resources.
- The main barriers for Chinese tourists visiting the Nordic countries are as shown: the limited time for vacation most Chinese potential tourists face, the personal economy of the Chinese tourists making the Nordic a very pricy destination, overall lack of knowledge about the Nordics in China, the Nordic climate, and mentioned as the biggest barrier, the complicated application process for VISA needed for visiting the Nordic countries.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I - Questionnaire in English

Hello, my name is Zhang Zhichao, I am studying at Arcade University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki currently and working on my Bachelor' thesis in International Business Degree Program.

The topic of my thesis is “**An analysis of mainland Chinese tourism in the Nordic countries**”.

The following questionnaire is about your personal information and your opinions towards Nordic travel, your answer will be very important and helpful for the completion of my thesis. All your personal information will be kept confidential, Thank you for your help.

Please answer the following questions by ticking ✓ one or more options:

1. Please, state your gender:

- Female
- Male

2. Please choose your education level.

- Under high school level
- High school level
- University level
- Master level.
- Above master level.

3. Please choose your age:

- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-65
- Above 66

4. Please state your family composition (Adult children are not included).

- Single or unmarried.
- Married

- Divorced or widow

5. Please choose your family's annual income.(If you are single or unmarried ,just count your own income.)

- Under € 10000.
 €10001- € 20000
 € 20001- € 40000
 €40001- € 60000
 €60001- € 100,000
 Above € 100001

6. Please state which foreign countries have you travelled to?

7. What is your first impression about Nordic countries; please list it by at least 3 words.

8. How do you think you know about the Nordic countries?

- Not at all
 A little
 Fairly
 Quite a lot
 Know very much

9 . If there is an opportunity for you to choose any country to visit, which following item would attract you most to choose Nordic country as your destination. Multiple choices, please list the items by order. (Please choose at least three options)

- A. Convenient transportation, such as direct fly.
 B. Beautiful natural landscape. Such as: fjord, forest, lakes, snow, north lights...
 C. Splendid cultural resources. Such as: Nobel Prize, little Mermaid, Santa Village in Finland.
 D. Shopping, Scandinavian design, fashion, high-tech products, souvenir and tax refund service.
 E. To experience different traditions and culture. Such as the famous Scandinavia mode.
 F. Just to visit, take the chance to visit as many countries as I can.
 G. Visit relatives and friends in Nordic countries
 H. To anticipate event or sport. Such as: going to skiing.
 I. Others

10. If there is a chance for you to visit Nordic countries, what is your budget per person?

- Less than 1000Euro

- 1001-2000 Euro
- 2001-3000 Euro
- 3001-4000Euro
- 4001-5000Euro
- Above 5001 Euro

11. If there is a chance for you to visit Nordic countries how many days will you want to be in Nordic countries.

- Less one week
- 1-2 weeks
- 2-4 weeks
- More than four weeks.

12. Which following reasons would stop you to visit Nordic countries? Multiple choice question, please list the answer by your order (please choose at least three options).

- A. Busy working, no vacations.
- B. Economic reasons , because it is quite expensive to visit Scandinavian countries
- C. Too much paper works, such as to apply for visa.
- D. No interest in to visit the Nordic countries, feel like there is no much nothing worth to see
- E. Weather, cold and long dark winters.
- F. There are no many opportunities to travel abroad, want to take the chance to visit others more attractive and famous countries instead, such as France, Italy.
- G. Others

Appendix II – Schengen visa documents from the embassy of Sweden

Documents that must be submitted by the ADS-accredited travel agency (note that all documents must be submitted in original)

- A name list of all the group members, with passport numbers
- A detailed itinerary (in Swedish or in English), including flight details for the round trip from China, names, addresses, telephone numbers and fax numbers of the hotels to be used by the group during the tour with the dates of stay in each hotel, and details of how the group is to travel between locations during the tour.
- Flight reservation with confirmation for the China-Europe-China round trip from the airlines (with list of the tourists' names).
- Name of the tour leader and a copy of the ADS-badge

- Name and contact details of the designated partner tour operator in Europe
- Confirmation from the designated partner tour operator in Europe that accommodation and transport within Europe as specified in the group's itinerary will be provided to all members of the group.

For each member of the group the following materials should be handed in:

- [Application form](#) for Schengen Visa
- Two color photos not more than six months old, passport-sized (45 mmx35 mm) full face and taken against a light background.
- Passport with a validity of at least three months beyond the planned departure from Sweden/Schengen. Photocopy of the first page of the passport.
- Copy of a paid medical travel insurance that covers the entire period of intended stay, valid for all Schengen states.

For minors (under 18) copy of student card + Original letter of the school, mentioning:

- full address, telephone number of the school
- permission for absence
- name and function of the person giving the permission

Minors traveling alone or with one parent:

- Notary Certificate of permission to travel from both parents and legal guardians (when minor is traveling alone) or the parent or legal guardian not traveling (if minor is traveling with one parent), legalized by MFA, and when not in China, attested by the relevant authorities in the country of residence.
- Notary Certificate of family relation or proof of guardianship, legalized by MFA of guardianship, legalized by MFA.

-Original "Hukou" (no translation) with photocopies of all pages (only for Chinese nationals).

-Proof of solvency of the applicant Bank statements from the last 3 to 6 months, no deposits

For employees:

- a sealed copy of the business license of the employing company
- a letter from the employer (in English, or in Chinese with English translation) on official company paper with stamp, signature, date and clearly mentioning:
 - address, telephone and fax numbers of the employing company
 - the name and position in the employing company of the countersigning officer
 - the name of the applicant, position, salary and years of service
 - approval for leave or absence

For retired persons:

Proof of pension or other regular income

For unemployed adults:

If married: Letter of employment and income of the spouse + Notary certificate of marriage,

legalized by MFA.

If single/divorced/widow/widower: Any other proof of regular income.