

WHY CHINESE TOURISTS CHOOSE FINLAND AS
TRAVEL DESTINATION

Zheng Qiaoyin

Thesis
Lapland University of Applied Sciences
Innovative Business Services Degree Programme
Bachelor's Degree

2016

Lapland University of Applied
Sciences

Innovative Business Services

| | | | |
|------------------------|---|------|------|
| Author | Qiaoyin Zheng | Year | 2016 |
| Title of Thesis | Why Chinese Tourists Choose Finland as Travel Destination | | |
| Number of pages | 47 + 11 | | |

The purpose of this thesis is to find out the reasons why Chinese tourists choose Finland as travel destination. In this study, the author gives general view of Chinese outbound tourism and comes up with some reasonable recommendations for attracting more Chinese tourists to travel to Finland. Also the aim is to help readers to make improvements for increasing the competitiveness of Finland in the Chinese tourism market.

The theoretical framework consist of the theory based on consumer behavior in tourism and consumer motivation for identifying the demand and decision of Chinese tourists in making the travel destination choice. As tourism develops globally, tourists and tourism play an important role, and the need to understand the reasons behind tourist behavior is of fundamental importance.

The thesis used both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. The quantitative approach was used by conducting an online survey. The qualitative research methods based on one open-ended question included in the survey questionnaire. The data of this survey was allocated in November 2015 and 100 respondents answered. The survey was published on Chinese popular social media, Weibo, Wechat and QQ. This online survey aims to understand the motivations of Chinese tourists in choosing travel destinations, the specific needs and expectations of Chinese tourists and their satisfaction level when in Finland. The results showed that most Chinese tourists were satisfied with the nature attractions and the environment in Finland. However, the shopping and entertainment facilities should be improved to meet their needs.

Key word: Chinese tourists, Chinese outbound tourism, needs and expectations, consumer behavior

CONTENTS

| | | |
|-------|---|----|
| 1 | INTRODUCTION | 4 |
| 2 | THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK | 5 |
| 2.1 | Consumer Behavior in Tourism | 5 |
| 2.1.1 | Tourist Motivation..... | 5 |
| 2.1.2 | Destination Choice..... | 8 |
| 2.2 | Factors Affecting the Decision-Making Process..... | 10 |
| 2.3 | Tourism Demands..... | 11 |
| 2.4 | Tourists' Satisfaction..... | 12 |
| 3 | CHINESE OUTBOUND TOURISM..... | 14 |
| 3.1 | Chinese Outbound Tourism Market..... | 14 |
| 3.1.1 | Chinese Outbound Tourism Development..... | 14 |
| 3.1.2 | Characteristics of Chinese Market in Finland..... | 16 |
| 3.2 | Chinese Consumer Behavior..... | 17 |
| 4 | RESONS FOR CHINESE TOURISTS TO CHOOSE FINLAND AS TRAVEL DESTINATION..... | 19 |
| 4.1 | Tourism Market in Finland | 19 |
| 4.1.1 | Increasingly Close Relations Between China and Finland..... | 19 |
| 4.1.2 | Finnish Tourist Board..... | 21 |
| 4.2 | Attractions in Finland | 22 |
| 4.3 | Tourism Products and Services..... | 23 |
| 4.4 | Chinese Tourists' Expectations and Demands..... | 24 |
| 4.5 | Finland as Destination for Chinese Tourists..... | 26 |
| 5 | RESEARCH METHODS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY..... | 28 |
| 5.1 | Research Methods and Implementation..... | 28 |
| 5.2 | Survey and Analysis..... | 29 |
| 5.3 | Summary of Results..... | 38 |
| 6 | CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS..... | 40 |
| 7 | DISCUSSION..... | 42 |
| | REFERENCES | 43 |
| | APPENDICES..... | 47 |

1 INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, with the development of Chinese tourism industry, a growing number of Chinese people choose outbound tourism. On October 28, 1950, China and Finland established diplomatic relations and since then there has been long maintained friendly relations of cooperation between China and Finland. The Finnish Tourist Board was established more than a decade ago, through the efforts for many years, travel to Finland is already accepted by Chinese people. In December 2014 the Chinese National Tourism Administration informed that Chinese outbound passengers have exceeded the 100 million record, and continue to maintain double-digit growth. Due to the rapid economic growth, China's tourism becomes the greatest potential industry and it plays an important role in the global market. (Embassy of Finland 2015.)

The objective of this thesis is to find out reasons why Chinese tourists choose Finland as their travel destination and come up with some reasonable suggestions for attracting more Chinese tourists to Finland. From this thesis, readers can learn about the Chinese outbound tourism situation and tourism market in Finland, as well as they get information on how to make improvements in tourism services and products to increase the competitiveness of Finland in the Chinese travel market in the future.

The theoretical framework is based on consumer behavior in tourism that is a key factor affecting the needs and decision of Chinese tourists in making the travel destination choice. As tourism develops globally, tourists and tourism play an important role, the need to understand the reasons behind tourist behavior is of fundamental importance. In addition, the author also makes research based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs for the purpose of understanding consumer motivation. The author will make a survey questionnaire. The results of this survey will be analyzed in this thesis. Based on the results, new findings of Chinese tourists' needs and expectations would gain from respondents answers, which would help to give suggestions for attracting more Chinese tourists and promote Finnish tourism market in China.

2 THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Consumer Behavior in Tourism

Consumer behavior (CB) is the process of people who purchase products and services for personal consumption. It is a study of how individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose certain decisions, activities, ideas or experiences to satisfy their needs and desires. The theory of consumer decision-making process consists of steps through the consumer's purchase process by carefully evaluating attributes of products and service. Consumer behavior refers to consumer response and demand characteristics of the marketplace. Consumer behavior research is to study a variety of consumer psychology and consumer behavior of different consumers, and also analyse various factors that influence consumer psychology and consumer behavior. In order to study the consumer behavior in tourism, we should both investigate the consumer evaluation and choose activities before obtaining products and services, there is also a need to focus on the disposal of products and after-use feedback. (Solomon 1996.)

Consumer behavior is a useful step to make efforts to understand their behavior patterns which can optimize the effectiveness and efficiency of marketing activities. Most importantly, it helps to know who to target at a particular time with a particular tourism product and how to persuade tourists to choose certain products which meet their needs and wants in an effective way.

2.1.1 Tourist Motivation

Tourist motivation is to cause and maintain personal activities, and lead the activity towards an internal process of a specific target. A wide range of factors motivate consumers to buy tourism products and services. These factors can be split into two groups, they are the factors which motivate a person to take a holiday and those factors which motivate a person to take a particular holiday in a specific destination at a particular time. Also there are still many potential motivations that could relate to either or both of these. Figure 1 exhibits one of the major categorizations of the main motivating factors in tourism.

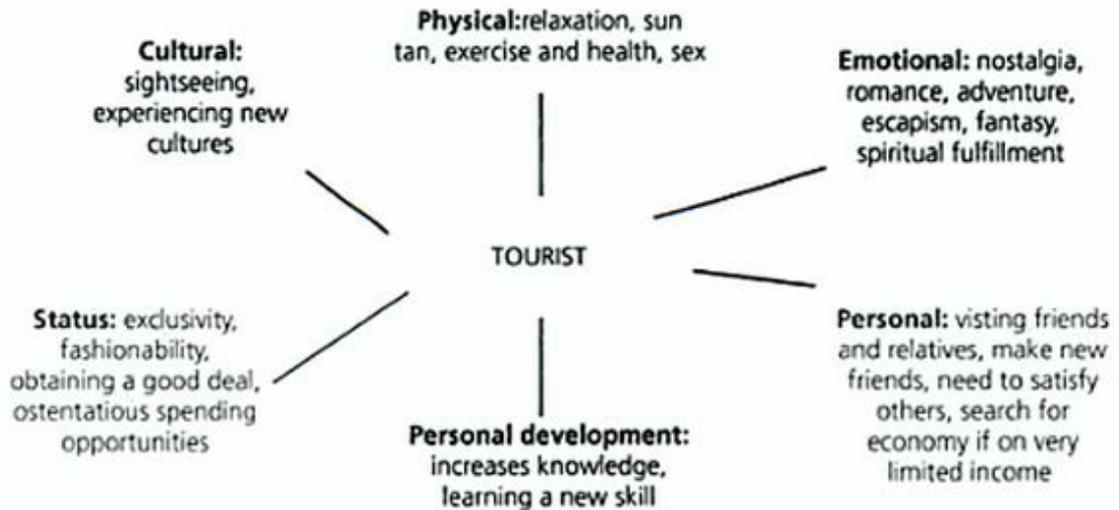


Figure 1. Typology of Motivators in Tourism (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007)

There are six factors that categorize the main motivation of tourists. From physical aspect, people take actions on the basis of their relaxation, exercise, health, sex and sun tan reasons. Personal emotion factors include nostalgia, romance, adventure, escapism, fantasy and spiritual fulfillment. The personal factors have several parts, the tourists may want to visit friends and relatives, make new friends, satisfy others and search for economy if on very limited income. In addition, for getting personal development, tourists will choose a destination that can increase their knowledge and learn new skills. The status is also an important factor. Tourists may be exclusive, fashionable, or they just want to flaunt spending opportunities. The different cultures between destinations are an important factor that may influence tourists have new view and new culture experience. Therefore, every person goes through different stages in life, depending on what age they are, what kind of growing environment they are familiar with, or how much income they earn, their motivation will change differently.

According to humanist psychologist Abraham Maslow, our actions are motivated in order to achieve certain needs. Firstly, Maslow introduced his concept of the hierarchy of needs in his 1943 paper "A Theory of Human Motivation" and his subsequent book Motivation and Personality. This theory suggests that people are motivated to fulfill basic needs before moving on to other, more advanced needs. This theory is divided into five categories from low to high levels, namely:

physiological needs, security needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs. Figure 2 indicates comprehensive information about Maslow's hierarchy of needs. (Cherry 2015.)

When a person lack of food, security, love and respect, the needs for food is usually the strongest, the other needs become less important. At this time, human consciousness is occupied by hunger entirely, and they will use all energy for obtaining food. In this extreme case, the whole meaning of life is to eat, nothing else is not important. Only when people are satisfied with physiological needs, advanced needs may appear, such as security needs. Safety needs belong to the low level needs. They include personal safety, home safety, and insurance and so on. If people feel threatened, they will become tense easily. Only if they get a guarantee of security, they will seek for social needs. Social needs also called as belonging needs are for meeting the needs of friendship, love and affiliation. If people cannot get attention from others, they would feel themselves useless. Furthermore, both of esteem needs and self-actualization needs are the advanced needs, they are influenced by internal factors. Also the respect and self-actualization needs are endless. Esteem needs include the sense of achievement and self-worth as well as other people's recognition and respect. The reasons why respect needs cannot be fulfilled are they only concern about face-saving, or only recognize positive action. These people are easily attracted by vanity. Self-actualization need is the highest level of needs. After people get satisfaction from previous needs, they will start to think about the self-realization, potential development, etc.

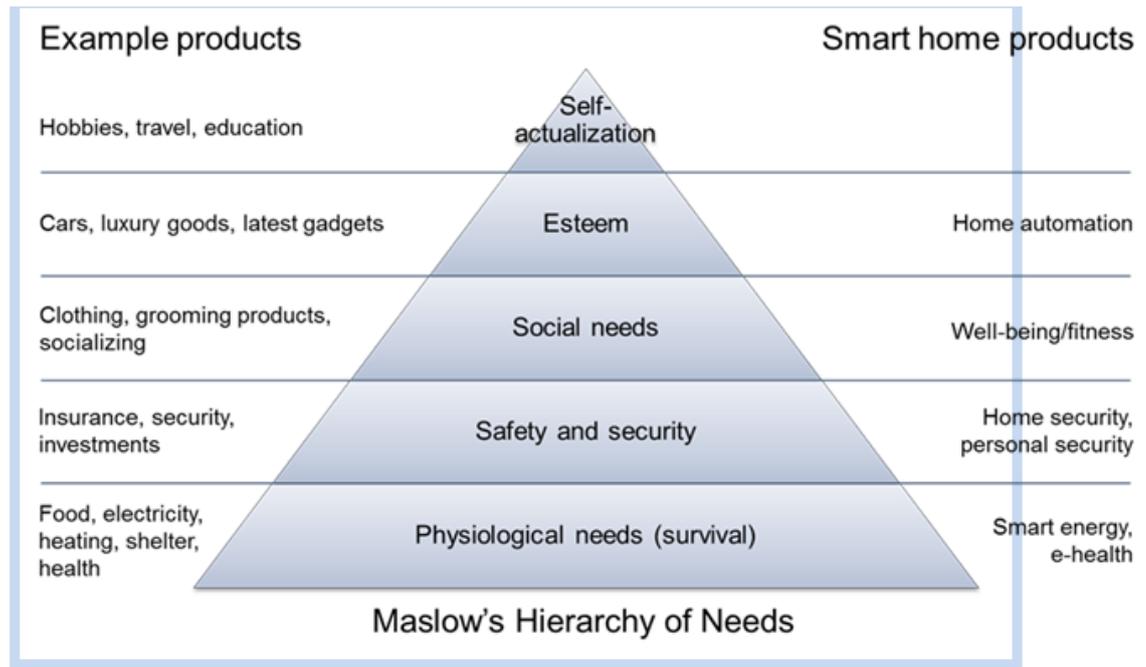


Figure 2. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Ovum 2014)

A clear example in tourism can be found in the response to terrorist attacks, which may cause tourists to reappraise their needs and set aside a search for esteem or self-fulfillment in the interests of safety. The visitation of scenic area have a downward trend because of such decisions. Therefore, tourist motivation depends on their different level of needs.

2.1.2 Destination Choice

Decision-makers proceed by comparing the benefits and costs of destination. The destination choice has to satisfy the needs for getting the most benefits at the least cost and at the same time, eliminate the costliest choice from the selection process. From Figure 3, we can learn that most tourists (82.31%) review their economic capability first and then select their place of destination (78.91%). Only 17.69% rich tourists have given emphasis on their willingness to satisfy their mental pleasure and they have the ability to choose attractions of place.

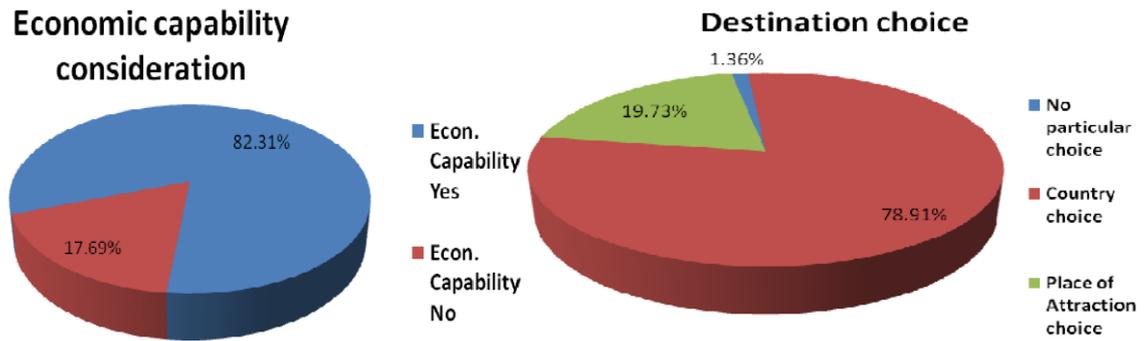


Figure 3. Economic Capability Consideration (Dilip 2012)

Tourist destinations, even more than basic consumer products such as food or household items, are viewed and presented in selective and diverse ways. The greatest emphasis in the tourist behavior literature has been directed towards a second group of models, broadly referred to as choice set models. The model of Um and Crompton (1990) will be taken as a leading exemplar of this choice set approach, and Figure 4 built on this work with some attention to extensions by Crompton and Ankomah (1993) and Moscardo, Morrison et al. (1996). (Pearce 2005, 87.)

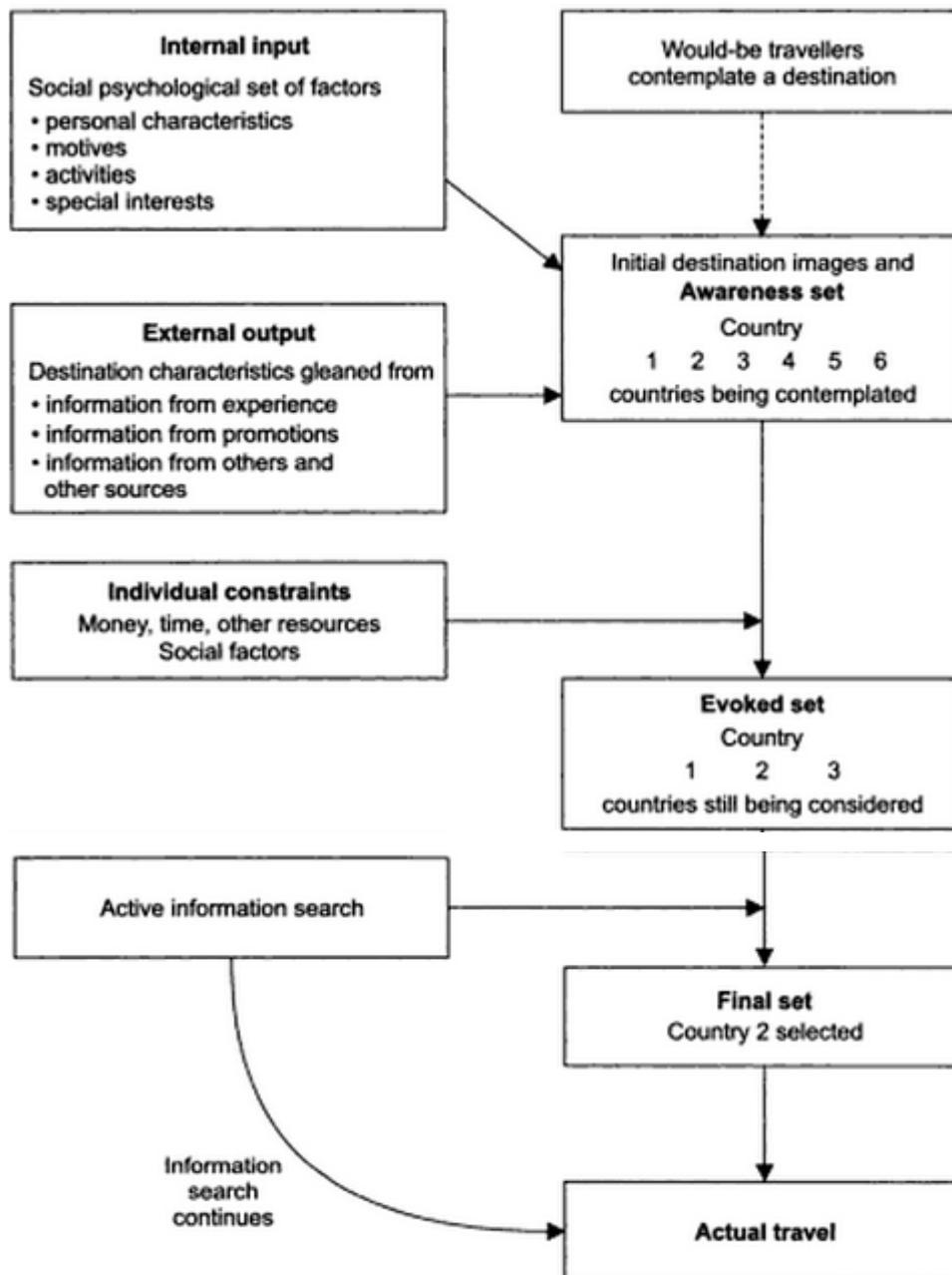


Figure 4. Model of Destination Choice Process (Pearce 2005)

Pearce developed a mode of travel destination choice with the concepts of external outputs, internal inputs and individual constraints. As we can see, the internal input refers to social psychological factors. It includes personal characteristics, personal motives, tourists' activities and their special interests. The external output refers to destination characteristics that gleaned from different information. Tourists can get information from other one's experience, promotion and other sources. Both internal input and external output would only

influence initial destination choice. The individual constraints are the most important part for the next destination selection. These constraints contain the income they earn, the free time they have, and other social factors. All of them will influence the evoked set of destination choice. Active information of destination will decide the final choice and it may get from internet or other sources.

2.2 Factors Affecting the Decision-Making Process

Decision-making is the process of identifying and choosing destination. It is closely linked to tourism motivation, many other factors remain unchanged, and travel needs and tourism motivation will directly lead people to make travel decisions, there are inherent subjective causal connections between them. In reality there are many factors that affect travel decisions. Bao Jigang (1999) indicates that the main factors affecting tourism decision-making behavior are based on the maximum benefit principle and travel preferences of tourists. Guo Yajun (2002) further proposed social factors, relaxing factors, knowledge and skills factors and factors related to 14 sub-factors which will all influence travel decisions. Qiufu Dong (2004) found that the impact factors of tourism decision-making can be divided into six categories: travel services factors; social support factors; individual psychological factors; community support factors; and individual social-economic factors. (Bao 1999; Guo 2002 & Dong 2005.)

The model of travel decision process of Schmoll is shown in Figure 5. It demonstrates that the purchase decision is the result of the interaction of four fields of influence, which are both internal and external factors to tourist. In addition, it stresses the important effect the tourist's own perceptions have on the final purchase decision. The first of the influencing elements are travel stimuli, which encompass a advertising and travel literature. The second elements are personal determinants of travel behavior contain motivations, demands and expectations influenced by personality, attitudes and values. Other important elements influencing consumer travel decision are external variables such as confidence in travel trade intermediaries. Characteristics and features of the service destinations such as attractions offered, range of travel expenses and

values are another significant elements that have an impact on the consumer's decision process. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007.)

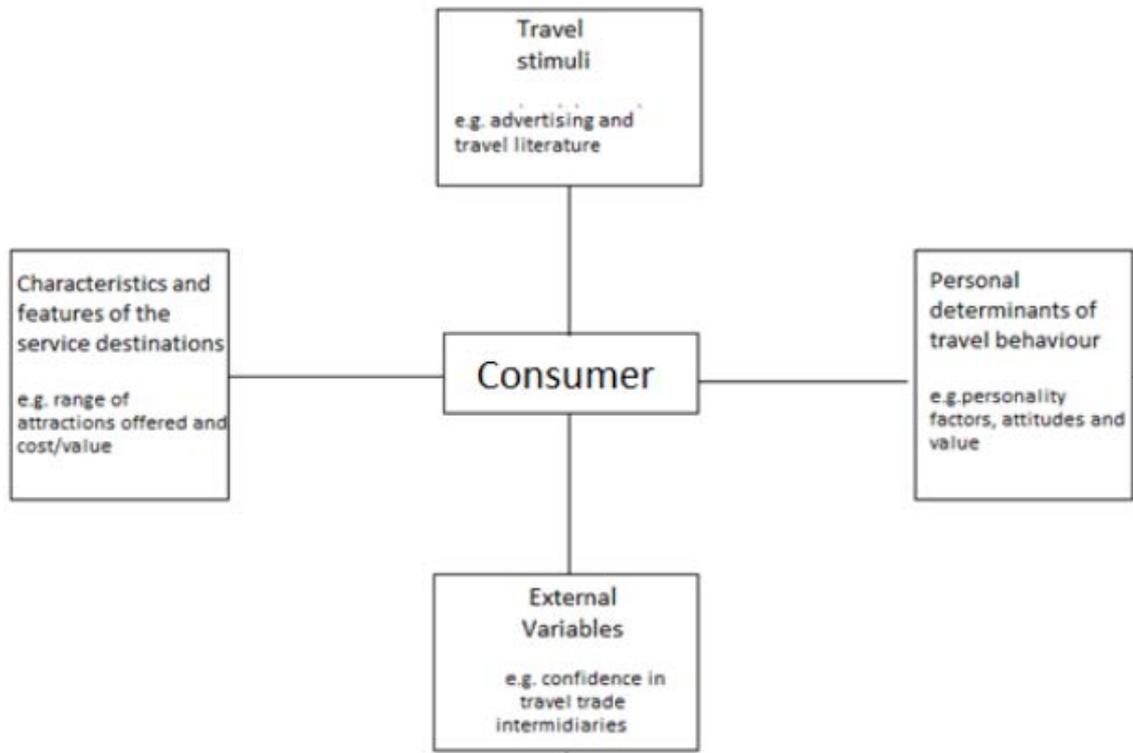


Figure 5. Schmoll Model of Travel Decision Process (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007)

2.3 Tourism Demand

Tourism demand is usually regarded as a measure of visitors' use of goods or service. The significance level and influences of tourism demand provide a strong case for better understanding of the nature of the tourists' decision-making process. (Frechtling 2001; Sinclair & Stabler 1997, 15.)

Tourism demand can be measured in a variety of ways. Kim (1988) categorized the measurement criteria for all types of travel and tourism demand into four groups: Firstly, an actor criterion, such as the number of tourist arrivals, the number of tourist visits and the visit rate. Secondly, a pecuniary criterion, for example, the level of tourist expenditure (receipts) and share of expenditure (receipts) in income. Thirdly, a time-consumed criterion, such as tourist-days, tourist-nights. And last but not least, a distance-traveled criterion, for instance, the distance traveled in miles or kilometers. (Song, Li, Will & Fei 2010.)

The exogenous factors that influence the levels of global tourism include economic and financial development, demographic and social changes, technological innovations and improvements, infrastructural, equipment and facility investment, political, legislative and regulatory factors, environmental planning and impact issues, trading developments, the safety of travel. From those factors we can see the complexity of tourism demands and the customer's demand has a big impact on decision-making, mental inspiration, economic issues, regional environment and tourism marketing strategies.

2.4 Tourism Demand

The Tourist satisfaction is determined by a combination of perceived value and quality, consumer expectations and actual experience. A tourist's overall satisfaction will influence the likelihood of repeating visitation, extended length of stay, increased expenditure, enhanced yield and word-of-mouth referrals.

Satisfying the customer in tourism is important for three main reasons. First of all, it leads to positive word-of-mouth recommendation of the product to friends and relatives, which in turn brings in new customers. Secondly, increasing the number of visit times of tourists by satisfying them with their first use of the product brings a steady source of income with no need for extra marketing expenditure. Lastly, dealing with complaints is expensive, time-consuming and bad for the organization's reputation. Furthermore, it can bring direct costs through compensation payments. Figure 6 illustrates a simplified view of the process by which tourists are satisfied or not. It presents a tourist satisfaction process that has three stages. The tourist product is influenced by a tangible element, service element and role of travel agents. The satisfaction factors contain perceptions of the tourist experience, tourist attitude and expectations as well as uncontrollable factors such as strikes. The outcome defined as satisfaction, partial satisfaction and dissatisfaction reflect what tourists think and feel about both their overall experience and their received goods and services. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007.)

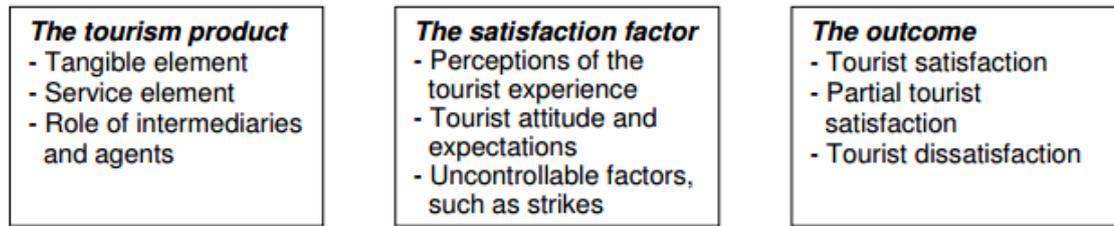


Figure 6. Tourist Satisfaction Process (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007)

There are certain difficulties to satisfy tourists, many uncontrollable factors may cause tourist dissatisfaction with a holiday experience. For instance, weather, air traffic, poor hygiene and transport infrastructure in the destination country, the behavior of other tourists in the resort are all factors that may influence the satisfaction level of tourists. Another difficulty in relation to tourist satisfaction is that tourists have different attitudes, standards and prejudices. Their subjective opinions have more influences on meeting the specific needs of consumers. Understanding why people choose to travel to this destination has been extensively regarded as a theoretical research. This research is to classify tourists into groups in order to know what motivates them to visit the specific resorts.

3 CHINESE OUTBOUND TOURISM

3.1 Chinese Outbound Tourism Market

To meet the goal of the study, the literature of Chinese outbound tourism needs to be reviewed in the theories. Chinese outbound tourism is growing rapidly, and it becomes a new engine of World Tourism Economic Development just within a few decades. In 1984, due to the State Council officially approving the visitation in Hong Kong and Macao, provided for the first time an opportunity for mainland Chinese tourists to travel to these administrative regions. In 1987, Dandong City residents had the opportunity for border tourism to visit North Korea Sinuiju. In 1990, the openness of trips to Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia for visiting relatives, makes border travel upgraded to outbound tourism, and it set off a climax on choosing to travel to Southeast Asia as a destination. With the amplification of Chinese outbound tourism year by year, "Interim Measures for Chinese citizens traveling abroad at their own expense management" has been implemented, more than 140 Approved Destination Status (ADS) agreements (tourism agreements) were signed, so the range for Chinese tourists traveling abroad has been extended to more than half of the world's countries. Through more than 20 years of sustained high growth, the number of overseas visits reached a record of 70.25 million in 2011. This amount is 1.2 times of American outbound market, and 3.5 times of Japanese outbound market. With the development of Chinese outbound tourism, it can be said that in the near future, China will become the world's largest outbound tourism market. The Chinese travel market carries great potential to European destinations, not only due to the increasing numbers of outbound travelers, but also due to their propensity to shop while traveling, accounting for 20% of global tax-free shopping expenditure. (Hansen 2013.)

3.1.1 Chinese Outbound Tourism Development

In 1993, the number of outbound tourism in China was 3.74 million. In 2007, the number of people reached 40,954 million, which is an increase of 18.6% in 2006, and it was 11 times in 1993. By November 2014 Chinese yearly outbound tourists reached 100 million for the first time, a milestone in Chinese outbound tourism.

In 2014, the outbound tourist amount reached 117 million, this number increased by 19.16% over 2013. According to China Tourism Research Institute, China had 61.90 million outbound visitors in the first half of 2015, an increase of 12.1% compared with the same period in 2014. The main driving forces for the increase included personal income rise, favorable policies, and appreciation of RMB. The World Tourism Organization predicts that by 2020, Chinese outbound tourism will include more than 100 million visitors accounted for 6.2% of global outbound tourism market share, second only to Germany, Japan and the United States, ranked fourth worldwide position. It can be seen that the potential of Chinese outbound tourism market is indeed enormous. (Chinese Outbound Tourism Development Process Review 2014.)

In the first ten months of 2014 other countries in Asia received most Chinese visitors, 85.42 million, an increase of 16.1%, compared with the same period in 2013. There are several reasons: cultural differences are relatively few; travel costs are lower; transportation is more convenient and short-distance travel requires only short and more flexible holidays. Following Asia was Europe, receiving 3.43 million Chinese visitors, an increase of 10.4%. Africa surpassed America and received the third most amount of Chinese visitors, reaching 2.69 million, an increase of 93.2%. America dropped to fourth, but still received 2.63 million, an increase of 14.8%. The last was Oceania, welcoming 1.09 Chinese, an increase of 21%. Chinese visitors made great contributions to the development of outbound destinations in many aspects during the year, including hotels, restaurants, attractions, airlines and retail. The destination countries also adopted new policies to attract the Chinese, such as decreasing visa fees, simplifying visa applications, operating more international flights to China and employing Chinese tour guides and salespersons. (Travel China Guide 2014.)

Comparing the outbound tourism data on public holidays with that of the previous year, it is concluded that the total number of outbound tourists respectively grew by 10%, 37%, and 30% during the Chinese New Year, May Day, and Dragon Boat Festival, except for the decrease of 5% during Qingming Festival. In 2014, Chinese outbound tourism increased more rapidly during the Chinese New Year Festival and Qingming Festival, while in this year, the outbound tourists number grew faster during May Day and Dragon Boat Festival. As for gender proportion

of Chinese outbound tourists in the first half year of 2015, 64% were women. Fond of shopping, countries producing high-quality goods attracted them a lot. Outbound tourists aged between 25 and 34 became the largest outbound tour group, indicating a younger average age. Based on the surveys conducted by travel agencies all around China, it is expected that outbound tourism will see a substantial increase as a result of more convenient visa policies, summer holiday travel peaks, and operation of more international flights. In addition, with the implement of “One Belt and One Road” strategy this year, Chinese outbound tourism market is endowed with more opportunities. (Travel China Guide 2015.)

3.1.2 Characteristics of Chinese Market in Finland

Chinese tourists are not only the largest number of outbound travelers over the world, but also are the highest consumption group. With a strong gift-giving culture and high domestic luxury taxes, the Chinese travelers see shopping as an important and integral part of their travel, especially shopping for international luxury brands. Chinese travelers prefer tours that will take them to multiple countries when considering price and time for their trip. They would like to feel that they get the most in a way of experiences for their money.

The Finnish Tourist Board was established in 1973. It is a specialized government agency under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of Finland to promote tourism in Finland. Currently the Finnish Tourist Board has offices in Beijing and Hong Kong, and 14 overseas offices. In addition, the Finnish Tourist Board office in Shanghai also formally founded on the 1st of February, 2004. The main objectives of the Finnish Tourist Board are to maintain and improve the good Finnish image, give publicity to Finnish tourism product information, promote domestic tourism carried out in Finland and improve the overall tourism revenue. (Lotour 2004.)

From those aspects, we can see some big potential cooperation opportunities between China and Finland. Firstly, there are five cities in China can take direct flights to Helsinki. They are Chongqing, Beijing, Shanghai, Xi’an, Hong Kong, respectively. In the Helsinki airport, there are some Chinese signs shown clearly. Therefore, it can be seen that Chinese tourists are very welcomed to visit Finland.

The convenient transportation between the two countries has played a really positive role on tourism commerce. In addition, the Finnish Tourist Board launches a series of marketing activities every year, including participation in exhibitions, for recommending Finnish tourism products to Chinese tourists face to face. The Finnish Tourist Board is scheduled for the next few years to increase publicity in China, the publicity coverage will be in Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Chongqing, Shenzhen and Hong Kong, so as to make the Chinese people more aware of this "Northern Lights" and "Midnight Sun" resort, prompting Chinese tourists to enhance the number of visiting times in Finland to 260,000 in 2020. (TTG tourism 2014.)

In conclusion, there is a big opportunity for development of cooperation between China and Finland. For the convenience of Chinese tourists, Finnish government is improving tourism services and products to attract them. Chinese tourism market will expand continuously in Finland.

3.2 Chinese Consumer Behavior

Since 1978, China has implemented the policy "Reform and Opening" which made the economic develop rapidly. Due to China's regional development, there was a change among consumer trends in those regions. The key to expand a retail business in China is to understand the preferences and mindset of Chinese consumer groups comprehensively. In the past three decades, due to the income has rised, new products and concepts have entered in the Chinese market, Chinese consumers' shopping habits vary greatly. Planet Retail has discovered that the older generation maintains traditional shopping habits and they may value price over quality, but the middle-aged Chinese prefer to choose products between tradition and new trends. On the contrary, the younger consumers are increasingly willing to pay premiums for higher-end products and are becoming more westernized. Generally, Chinese consumers form shopping habits in their youth and keep them through adulthood. Although the increased income can change some preferences, such as clothing and food preferences, the majority of Chinese consumers' habits are based on their limited earnings and living conditions. (Qiu 2011.)

The consumer market in China develops very fast, new products have been accepted frequently because of the successful development market of their predecessors. Advertisement on television is a traditional medium to reach customers when a company prepares a new product to access the Chinese market and it was used everywhere. Therefore, it is also a good method to target consumers in mid-sized cities, which are growing rapidly in terms of incoming and outgoing. In China, there is also a very typical phenomenon that the Chinese consumer likes to make last minute purchasing decisions. Most Chinese buyers decide in the store what they are going to buy, some of them are easily impressed emotionally for promotions and a few consumers stick to the original idea before entering a store. Therefore, engaged in-store marketing and promotions, and at the same time, investing in salespeople would influence customers more and make them convinced. (Giele 2009.)

4 REASONS FOR CHINESE TOURISTS TO CHOOSE FINLAND AS TRAVEL DESTINATION

4.1 Tourism Market in Finland

The number of foreign visitors in Finland has increased remarkably during the recent years. According to forecasts by the World Travel Tourism Council (WTTTC), the total demand for traveling in Finland will grow by 33.7 percent between 2006 and 2016. Firstly, Finland offers unique and unspoiled nature with four distinct seasons. Secondly, Finland has a safe and friendly atmosphere everywhere. Thirdly, there are easy transport connections to and from east, west and south. Lastly, the excellent business opportunities are provided in varied business areas. (Invest In Finland 2014.)

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in Finland by now. It has various effects on economic activities within different regions of Finland such as: Helsinki, Lapland, Tampere, Turku and others. According to the report of World Tourism Organization (2010) the international tourist arrival in Finland increased by 7% to 940 million and generated 693 billion export earnings. However, in October 2013, the amount of overnight stays by foreign tourists was just under 316,000 which was 2.9% lower than last year and domestic tourists stayed over one million days which was 1.8% lower than last year. UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has predicted in their newly released report that Finland being a Nordic country situated in the region of Northern Europe, the international tourist arrivals will amount to 1.8 billion by 2030. (Finland's Tourism Strategy to 2020 2011.)

Finland is not very well known as a tourist destination. In Sweden, Norway and Denmark, the government investment in promoting tourism is higher than in Finland. Even so, Finland has unlimited potential that can be more developed in the Finnish tourism industry. The Finnish tourism industry is providing employment, tax, and export income and increases welfare throughout Finland. According to the European standard, the prices of Finnish tourism services are very high on account of high taxes and labour costs. Therefore, make strategies for maintaining a competitive level on a European scale with value added tax and electricity tax on services is needed for developing the tourism market of Finland.

The easy accessibility of countries is also very critical for tourism industry. However, Finland has few routes which make access difficult for the Chinese tourists. The strategies on tourism business which can provide a competitive cost on tourism products and services to the international tourists are needed. In addition, investing money to enrich on the Finnish national economy and establishing more diverse tourism industries are also important. (Finland's Tourism Strategy to 2020 2011.)

4.1.1 Increasingly Close Relations Between China and Finland

Along with Norway, Denmark and Sweden, Finland was one of the first Western countries to recognize the People's Republic of China. Finland recognized the People's Republic of China on 13 January 1950, and the two countries established diplomatic relations on 28 October the same year. By this year, the relations cover numerous fields of cooperation and the two countries are seeking to conclude a new partnership agreement that will pave a way for the future development of the relations. The Finnish Embassy in Beijing was opened in February 1952, after the arrival of Finnish personnel. The first resident Finnish Ambassador to China, Helge von Knorring, presented his credentials to Chairman Mao Zedong 9 May 1952. The embassy of Finland opened a commercial section in 1952 to promote the opening of trade relations between China and Finland. The economic and trade relations between the two countries started to develop rapidly under the lead of Ambassador Carl-Johan Sundström. Also China and Finland signed the Inter-Governmental Trade and Payment Agreement. It was the first one of its kind between China and Western Countries. (Embassy of Finland 2015.)

Establishment of Finnish companies in China, which started in the 1980's and has been increasingly developed since the beginning of 1990's to date has helped to develop relations between China and Finland. Since the early 1990's at least one member of the Council of State has visited China annually. The cities of Espoo and Shanghai are sister cities since 1998. Ever since, various collaboration programs have been carried out in areas of science and technology, urban development, culture, education, health care and environmental protection.

In recent years, Finland-China relations have been strengthened by various Espoo-Shanghai activities. (China - Finland relations 2015.)

In 2015, it is 65 years since Finland and the People's Republic of China established diplomatic relations. During the anniversary year, a special Finland-China relations 65 years logo has been created and will mark the related events and communications (Figure 7). The elements of the logo are simple but with a rich meaning: despite of a far distance, China and Finland are linked by mountains and rivers, and the friendship between the two nations goes back for generations. For the future, the two countries will further develop the partnership and collaboration in order to achieve new progress with joint efforts. (Embassy of Finland 2015.)



Figure 7. Logo of Finland-China Diplomatic Relations 65 Years (Embassy of Finland 2015)

4.1.2 Finnish Tourist Board

The Finnish tourist board is the official travel guide of Finland, it was established in 1973. The website of Finnish tourist board is VisitFinland.com. In order to promote the activities to China, it provides nine languages including Chinese. There are some marketing events, a roadshow held every year. In 2015, the roadshow was held in Chengdu, Guangzhou and Kunming for promoting newest tourism products and services to Chinese tourists. Also, the Weibo of the Finnish tourist board has been opened in 2015 and it is one of the most popular social medium in China. This website has plentiful sections and design which introduces comprehensive tourism services related to activities, events, food and accommodation. First of all, the "Travel Info" section introduces travel transportation information. Secondly, on the "About Finland" page, it tells the customers about the attractions and tourism products which are Aurora Borealis,

Midnight Sun, Finnish sauna, Real Santa Claus and so on. Thirdly, the “Destinations” section introduces popular travel destinations to tourists with attractive pictures and colours. Fourthly, on the “Seasons page”, it shows the characteristics of the sharp contrasts between these four seasons and correspondent activities for each season. The “Themes” section presents three main contents, and they are silence, wild and cultural beat, respectively. From this section, customers can see some special Finnish culture activities. Last but not least, the “Directory” section has many kinds of articles and videos about Finland. On the top of the website, we can see that there are several social medium used for promoting the Finnish Tourist Board, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc. (VisitFinland 2015.)

4.2 Attractions in Finland

Finland attracted over 6.1 million tourists in 2010. The summer is marked by long days in Finland, especially in the far north where the sun does not set at all which attracts tourists to go fishing and canoeing. There are several large lakes, including Lakes Saimaa, Inari, and Päijänne. It is also a cyclist's paradise because of flat roads and gently rolling hills with very little traffic. The highest mountain is Halti near Enontekiö. It rises 1328 meters above sea level. Finland is called the Kingdom of thousands of lakes, there are nearly 200,000 of them (larger than 500 m² /0.12 acres). Tampere is the biggest city on the Finnish Lakeland with other major cities being Jyväskylä, Mikkeli, Lahti, Joensuu, Lappeenranta, Kuopio and Savonlinna. Finland is also famous for excellent water quality, green deep woods and forests around the sea, rivers, and the waterways. In winter, Finland provides opportunities for cross-country skiing and alpine skiing. Many of the popular ski resorts are situated north of the Arctic Circle in Lapland. Santa Claus is commonly known to live in Korvatunturi in Finland. In the town of Rovaniemi there is the Santa Claus Village for tourists to visit. (Tourism in Finland 2015.)

Depending on location, winter in Finland begins in November and can last up to five months, with temperatures ranging from a balmy zero to minus 35. Therefore, a lot of activities are arranged in winter time and also the winter is a tourist season. There is a large snow castle with an Ice hotel built every year in the

northern town of Kemi. Rovaniemi is a place from which to see the Aurora Borealis as well as a very popular city attracting tourists from the whole world every year. The trips in reindeer sleighs with Sami drivers, or in dog sleighs will be provided in winter to enjoy tourists. It is also possible to ski, with downhill resorts at Saariselkä and Levi which have many cross country ski tracks throughout the northern part of the country. Most lakes are frozen in winter, the sport Ice hockey and ice fishing become very popular, and it is possible to go ice yachting, or ice skating on the ice. (Tourism in Finland 2015.)

Helsinki is Finland's capital and largest city, receives many visitors year-round. During the summertime, thousands of tourists approach Helsinki by cruising boats and air fly. Helsinki is known as a clean, modern and safe meeting point between the east and west, as well as a safe city for tourists and a reliable place in which to live. In terms of personal safety, Helsinki has been named second safest city in the world. Traditional museums built in Helsinki, attract tourists such as the National Museum of Finland, Museum of Finnish Architecture and Finnish museum of Natural History. Other popular tourist destinations within Finland include Jyväskylä, Tampere, Turku, Oulu, Rovaniemi and Porvoo. (Tourism in Finland 2015.)

4.3 Tourism Products and Services

Tourism in Finland plays, and will play, a more prominent position in the national economy. The main tourism products and services offer winter sports, adventure tourism, cultural tourism, Eco-tourism and cruising. As for many other countries in Europe, the Finnish employment feels the effect of seasonality of the sector. To deal with this issue the Finnish government created two specific initiatives: Outdoors Finland and Culture Finland. (Tourism industry sub-sectors 2014.)

The Finnish tourist board came up with national umbrella programmes to make sure the products and services can meet their needs and expectations when traveling in Finland. This programmes also aims at the development of summer activities (Outdoors Finland) and cultural tourism (Culture Finland). The goal is to direct and coordinate development work in different parts in Finland. The

development work also aims to control the development of products and services for keeping Finnish tourism image. (VisitFinland 2015.)

Finland provides a wide variety of activities for tourists looking for adventure experiences both in summer and winter time. It has seasonal peaks of tourists in summer, so that the main attractions for adventure tourists are represented by water sports and walking activities. In wintertime, it provides cross-country skiing in Lapland area and Santa Claus culture activities. In order to reduce the seasonality of tourism in Finland, there is a new offer called "Outdoors Finland" project. It aims to improve the quality and accessibility of routes for cycling, hiking, canoeing and so on. It can be implemented by creating a specific portal for marketing and advertising alternative activities in the summertime. (Tourism industry sub-sectors 2014.)

From the confirmed data in 2011, culture is a significant factor in Finnish tourism. For 15% of the 2.5 million EU 27 citizens who travelled to Finland in 2011, the main reason for going on holidays was culture or religion. The Ministry of Education and Culture built a program to promote products development for the purpose of cultural tourism from 2009 to 2013. The experience provided unique features of the cultural identity which include heritage, customs, lifestyles and values that convey an impression of the Finnish culture to the tourists. Also according to the Finnish tourism strategy 2020, culture tourism resources have been created from those aspects: history, cultural landscapes, built environment, archaeological sites, museums, performing arts, visual arts, events, handcraft, language, traditions, human characteristics, etc.(Tourism industry sub-sectors 2014.)

4.4 Chinese Tourists' Expectations and Demands

Over the last few years, the whole world has heard about Chinese tourists, and everyone knows that Chinese people are the new promising tourist customers. However, the market of Chinese tourists is evolving at lightning speed. Chinese tourists' favourite destinations, expectations and requirements are changing. They are more demanding and want to redefine the way they travel. (Chairman Media 2014.)

There are some trends that show the constant change of expectations and demands of Chinese tourists. First of all, Chinese tourists prefer traveling alone by now. For quite some time, Chinese people tend to refuse joining in travel agencies and traveling with a group of strangers. Some national agencies disappoint Chinese tourists with the lack of innovation in their offer. Chinese tourists do not trust local agencies either because they failed to understand the tourist's demand of high-end travels. Therefore, now they want to travel alone and enjoy their own trip. A lot of travel service companies like Ctrip and Qunar have already started to exploit this trend, offering products and services dedicated to independent travelers such as discounts on single bedrooms in hotels. As more Chinese people travel independently everywhere, they spend less or choose different destinations. (Chairman Media 2014.)

Secondly, until now, Chinese people have usually traveled within a group and tended to eat Chinese or Asian food while traveling abroad that could come to an end. Chinese people seem to be more conscious about local culture and food in the future. They want to try local specialties, especially when it comes to countries for which quality of cuisine is world-famous such as France or Italy. Even though, Chinese and Asian restaurants already become the famous tourist sites in the global for attracting Chinese tourists. This may reflect a change in Chinese tourists' attitude and mentality. What is more, traveling abroad is no longer reserved for young Chinese people. There are a majority of retired people who like to travel to foreign countries in recent years. Thus, a lot of travel agencies specialized in travel services dedicated to retired and old people have emerged. For instance, there is a tour operator in Xi'an called leaf graphic offers trips dedicated to old people. The types of travel, choices of destination and programs offered by the tour operator can meet their specific needs and expectations. The agency also provides a lot of medical travels to countries where they can benefit from excellent medical services at affordable prices. (Chairman Media 2014.)

The last one is the new trend that Chinese tourists provide weddings abroad with celebrities. The main purpose of weddings abroad is to show their wealth and financial success. In fact, weddings are very important in Chinese society, and they are an occasion to show one's happiness and social status to others. Chinese people would like to spend a huge amount of money for their wedding.

Hence, the business of weddings and honeymoons abroad is booming, and the country which benefits most is France which is considered to be the country of luxury and romance for Chinese people. Exotic destinations and islands are also very successful for this type of tourism. (Chairman Media 2014.)

In conclusion, in order to attract Chinese tourists, the tourism services and products have to adapt to their needs and expectations, and also renewal of them frequently in order to catch the constantly changing market in China. The essential way for getting more attention from Chinese tourists is to create appropriate services in travel agencies and restaurants.

4.5 Finland as Destination for Chinese Tourists

Understanding the Chinese tourists' perceived image of Finland is the key for getting repeat customers or achieving 'the word of mouth' effect. Therefore, it is very important to know the image of Finland by the eyes of Chinese travelers in Finland. As one of Nordic countries, Finland is becoming an increasingly attractive destination for Chinese tourists. The pure and beautiful nature, original culture, including Santa Claus and Sauna, modern design, interesting outdoor activities, Northern lights and many other aspects of Finland are the main points of interest for the Chinese who are planning to visit Finland. According to a report, from 2012 for the first time, the number of overnight stays by Chinese travelers in Finland topped 100,000 as well as Chinese spent the largest sum of money per visit compared to other foreign visitors in Finland. (Maierhaba 2014.)

For Chinese tourists, Finland itself is not a brand and the country is still relatively unknown for them. Many Chinese do not know what to see and experience in Finland. For instance, they go to ski to Switzerland just because they know they can ski there. They do not know the specific tourism products in Finland or the key attractions which is shopping facilities. Only those Chinese that have visited or lived in Finland know the best attractions of Finland. (Heikkinen 2012.)

Finland responds to the growing demand from the Chinese visitors to visit Finland by opening visa application centers in Beijing and in Shanghai. The centers will supply faster and more comprehensive services for the Chinese tourists, business travelers and others, whose main destination is Finland. There are

several direct flights between the major cities in China and the capital of Finland, Helsinki. As Finland is a Schengen country using euros, it means that Finland is more accessible to Chinese visitors than many other destinations in Europe. The opening of the visa application centers in downtown Beijing and Shanghai on May 22, 2015 can provide faster and more comprehensive visa services. The visa centers also provide services such as on-site photographing and internet. The most important thing is offering express delivery across China once the visa has been issued. This is highly beneficial to the customers as they can avoid double-trips or inconvenient third-party pick ups from the Embassy or the Consulate General. (Jemaiel 2015.)

5 RESEARCH METHODS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY

5.1 Research Methods and Implementation

The quantitative research method use the certain mathematical model to collect data and make statistical measurement. This method combines with practical issues to conduct questionnaire. The quantitative research is generally carried out to get the overall statistical results for the given research object. It is to quantify the problems and phenomenon. Quantitative analysis techniques such as graphs and charts can help us to explore, present, describe and examine relationships and trends within our data. The qualitative research method through explore issues, understand the phenomenon, analyse the human behavior, and answer questions to get insight information. It examines the attitudes, feelings and motivations of research object through observation, experimentation and analysis. Therefore, it has no specific figures, only from a theoretical point to discuss and research issues, and also propose countermeasures and suggestions. Most of the time, qualitative research is a prerequisite for quantitative research. However, the qualitative method is more concentrated on the deeper research and high-level analysis. Qualitative and quantitative research are often combined together. Qualitative research produces a good mechanism for improving the efficiency of quantitative research. (Proctor 2005.)

In this thesis, both research methods have been used. The quantitative approach was chosen as the main research method for data collection. The author conducted an online survey as a quantitative research to study the Chinese tourists' needs and wishes as well as their satisfaction level of experiences of traveling to Finland. The survey questionnaire (Appendix 1) includes 12 questions that were presented on one Chinese online survey website in Chinese language that the author of the thesis invented. The respondents are a group of people, who have experienced traveling in Finland or who have planned a trip to Finland. Also, the survey was distributed on different kinds of popular social websites such as Weibo, Wechat and QQ. The qualitative research method was used for only one open-ended question in the survey questionnaire that let respondents freely answer the question in order to get more relevant information.

The questionnaire consisted of 11 mandatory closed questions and one open-ended question. In total, 100 respondents participated in the survey. The results were automatically analyzed by the Chinese online survey website. The basic information related to this survey is about the respondents' personal background information, such as gender, age and nationality. Besides that, respondents' information involves their purpose and experience of visiting Finland, as well as their expectations for and satisfaction level with this trip in Finland. In some questions, respondents were asked to indicate the importance of some aspects e.g. accommodation facilities, climate, expenses, culture, transportation, nature attractions, shopping and entertainment facilities. This information helps the author to know the needs and wishes of Chinese tourists. Through analyzing the data, some useful feedback and opinions of respondents could be collected, in order to make improvements in services and products. In the next section, the results are presented in more detail.

5.2 Survey and Analysis

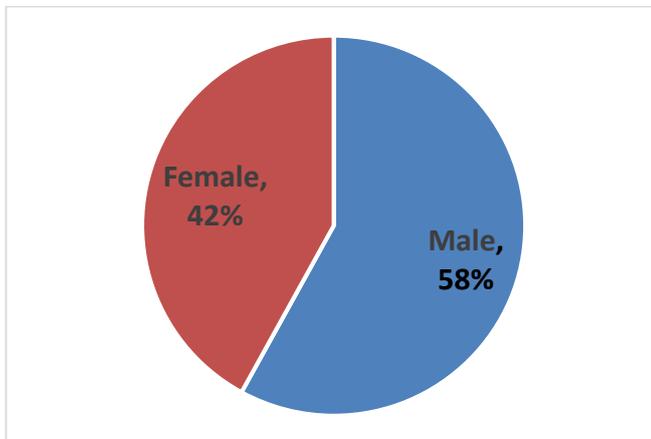


Figure 8. Gender (N=100)

Figure 8 illustrates the respondents' demographic characteristics. Among those people who had experiences on traveling in Finland or planned to visit Finland, around 42% were female and 58% were male. This data indicates that male is on the high side and there are more males using social media and online surveys.

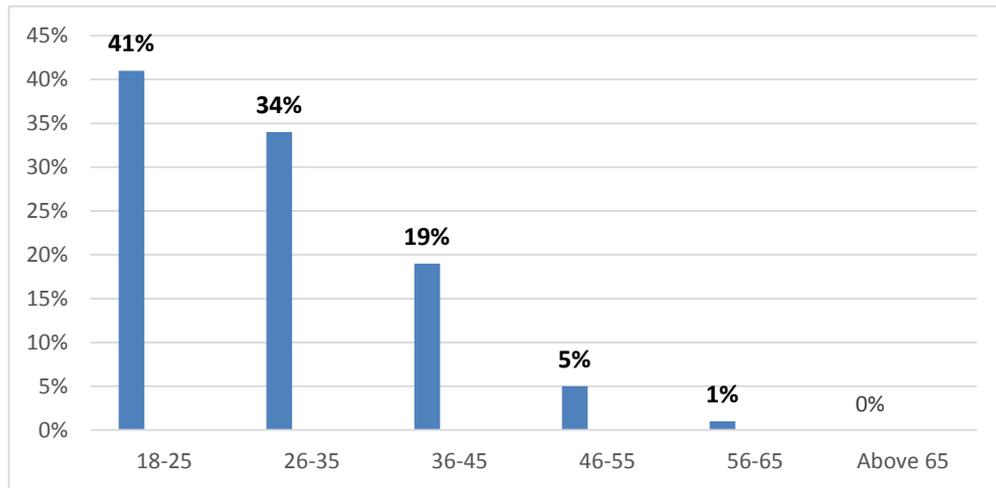


Figure 9. Age (N=100)

As shown in Figure 9, only 6% of respondents who had visited or planned to visit Finland were 46-55 or older than 55 years old, whereas the majority 94% was between 18 and 45. The largest percentage of respondents is the age group from 18-25. The reason is that there were a lot of respondents from university and most of them are from the author's social circle. Also the age group from 26-35 has a large proportion of respondents because most online users are from this age range.

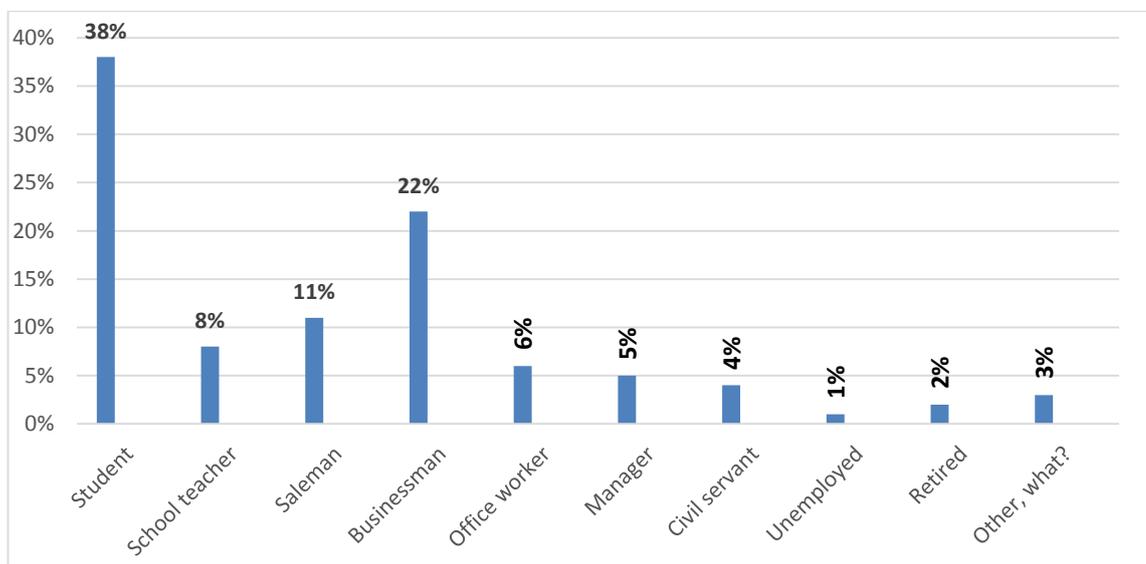


Figure 10. Occupation (N=100)

As Figure 10 shows the respondents were mainly students (38%) and businessmen (22%). Most respondents study in school, work in office and government owned enterprises were dominating 34% together among the

respondents who had experiences on traveling in Finland. There were only a few respondents who chose unemployed or retired. The other occupations that were not listed have a 3% share.

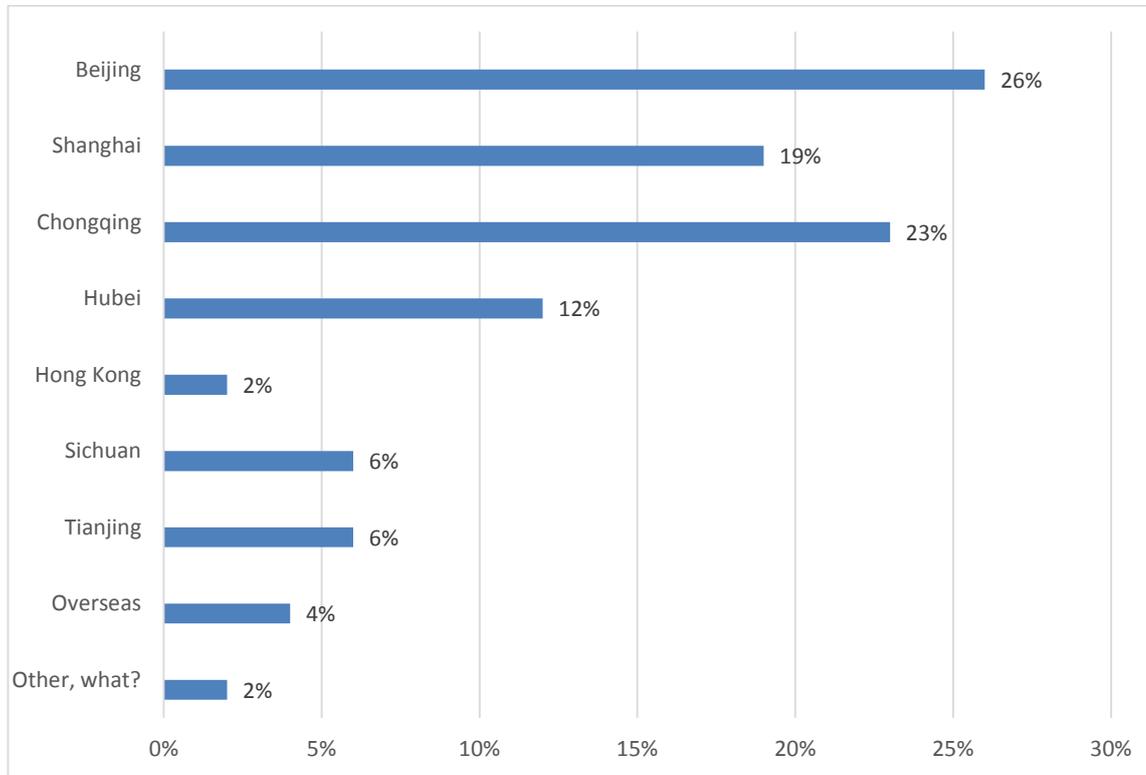


Figure 11. Place of residence (N=100)

From Figure 11, you can see that those respondents who visited Finland were from different areas of China. A large proportion of the respondents were from the capital of China, Beijing (26%). Due to the survey's distribution region of the author, most of them were from Chongqing (23%), followed by Shanghai (19%), Hubei (12%), Sichuan (6%), Tianjing (6%) and Hong Kong (2%). The percentage of respondents from other countries is 4% and from other cities is 2%. These top three provinces Beijing, Chongqing and Shanghai have a common feature that is they all named municipalities. There are local airport that cooperate with Finnair which can directly fly to Finland. Therefore, the convenient transportation plays a significant role on choosing Finland as their travel destination.

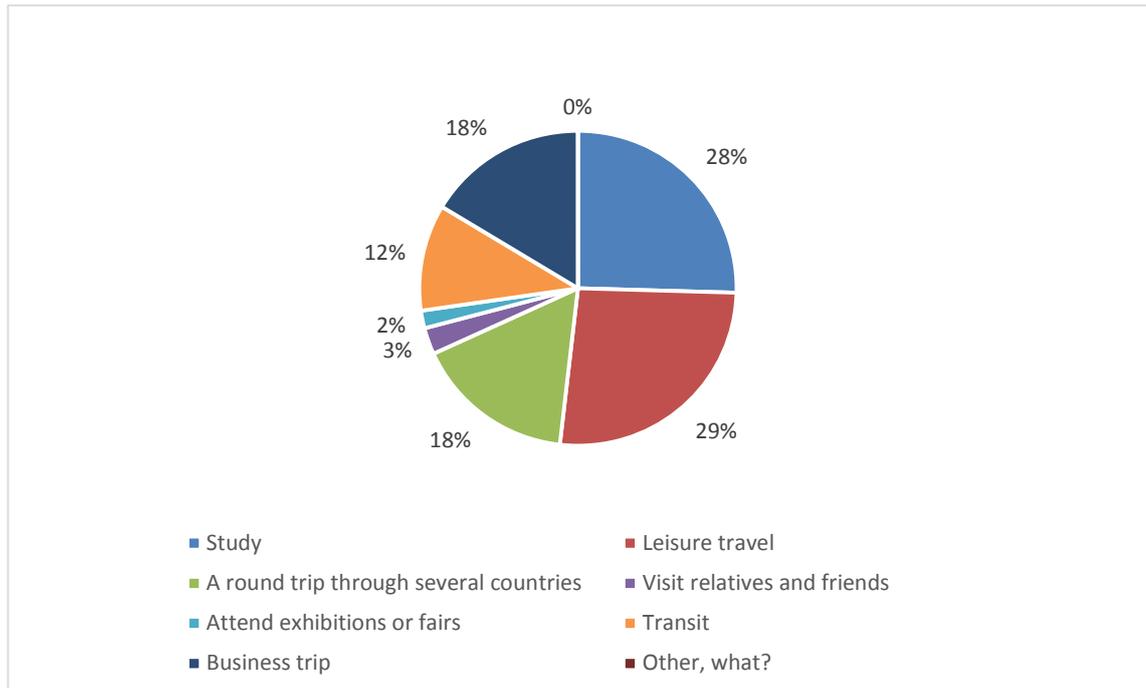


Figure 12. Purpose of coming to Finland (N=100)

Figure 12 demonstrates that leisure travel (29%) was dominating, at the same time, the percentage of study was 28%. A large portion of respondents chose a round trip through several countries (18%) which means that a lot of Chinese travelers came to Finland for a holiday break and recreational travel. Another important reason to travel to Finland was business needs (18%). Followed by transit (12%), visiting relatives and friends (3%) and attending exhibitions or fairs (2%). From the above observation data, visiting friends and participating in exhibitions were not the primary reasons for Chinese visitors to choose Finland as travel destination.

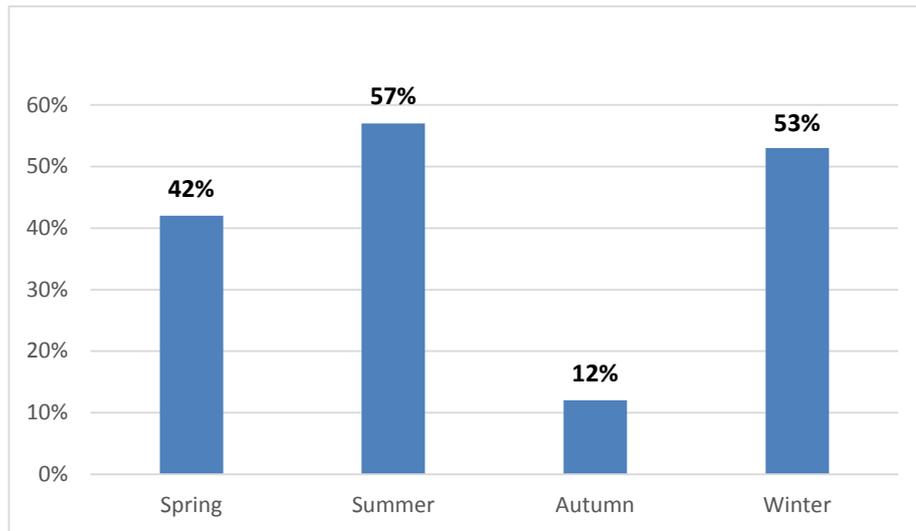


Figure 13. Season or seasons choosing to travel to Finland (N=100)

From Figure 13, we can see that there are almost an equal number of respondents who prefer to come to travel to Finland in summer (57%) and winter time (53%). The possible reason is that Chinese holiday breaks are only in the summer and winter. So that is why only 12% respondents chose to visit Finland in autumn. There were still 42% Chinese who like to visit Finland in spring time.

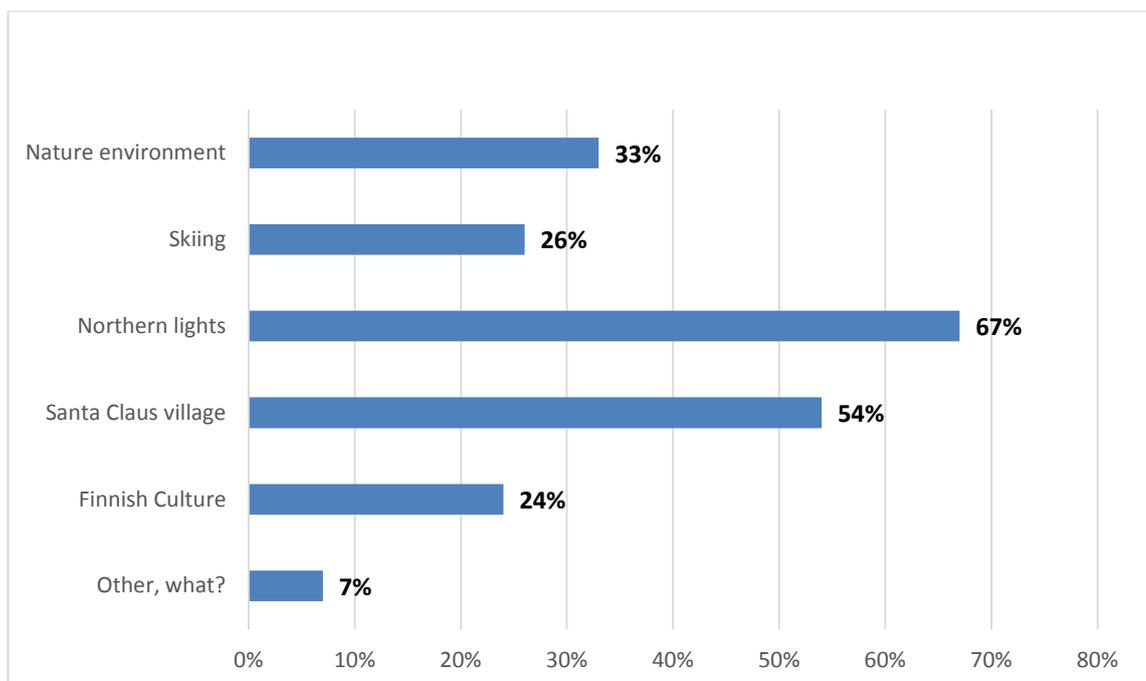


Figure 14. What attracts the respondents to travel to Finland (N=100)

Northern lights (67%) is the main driving factor that respondents chose to travel to Finland. Santa Claus village (54%) was also one of the most important factors

for Chinese visitors to come to Finland. Nature environment (33%) was quite an important factor that attracts respondents to have an interest in Finland, followed by skiing (26%), Finnish culture (24%). There are only seven people who chose other reasons, such as participating in the Christmas street fairs, festival celebrations and featured products fairs.

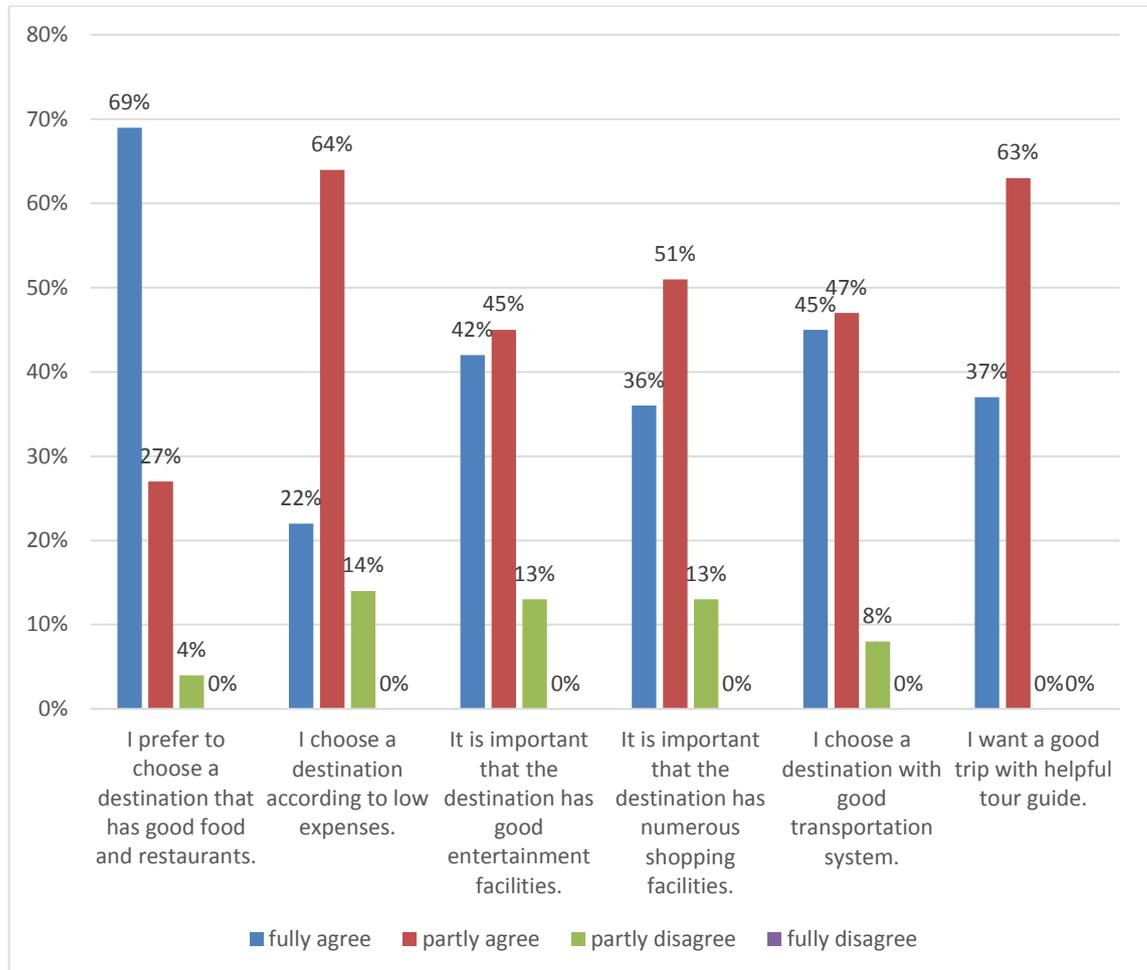


Figure 15. Importance of presented factors when planning a trip to Finland (N=100)

Respondents were asked the important factors that influence them when planning a trip to Finland from choosing the best one option to describe their opinion. Figure 15 illustrates that Chinese travelers prefer to pay attention to safe food and good restaurants (69%) in the destination country. The second factor that respondents fully agreed with was good transportation system (45%), Chinese tourists like convenient routes that cost less money. According to the Chinese tourists' behavior, we can see that Chinese people are very fond of shopping activities. Therefore, the next important factors are destination with

numerous shopping facilities (45%) and numerous entertainment facilities (36%). It also seems that low expenses of destination have a large percentage when choosing the travel destination. With no doubt Chinese people would like to choose to travel with a helpful tour guide because of lack of good communication skills, as well as some of them might think the tour guide would give them professional knowledge of attractions in order to learn about the destination.

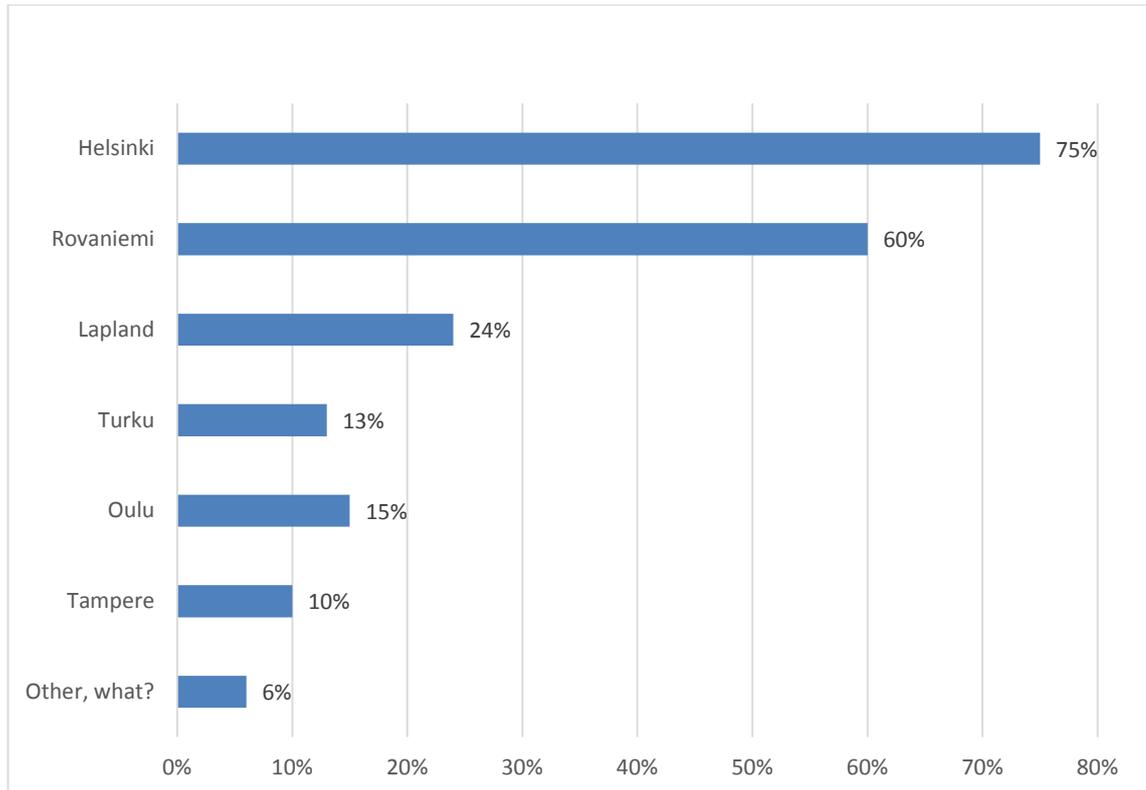


Figure 16. Main destinations when traveling to Finland (N=100)

From Figure 16, a majority of respondents are interested in the capital of Finland, Helsinki (75%). Also the northern area, Rovaniemi (60%) with Santa Claus village attractions has large proportion. Followed by Lapland region (24%), Turku (13%), Oulu (15%) and Tampere (10%). There were also some other cities that attract Chinese visitors to come to Finland, such as Espoo, Lahti, Pori, Kotka, etc.

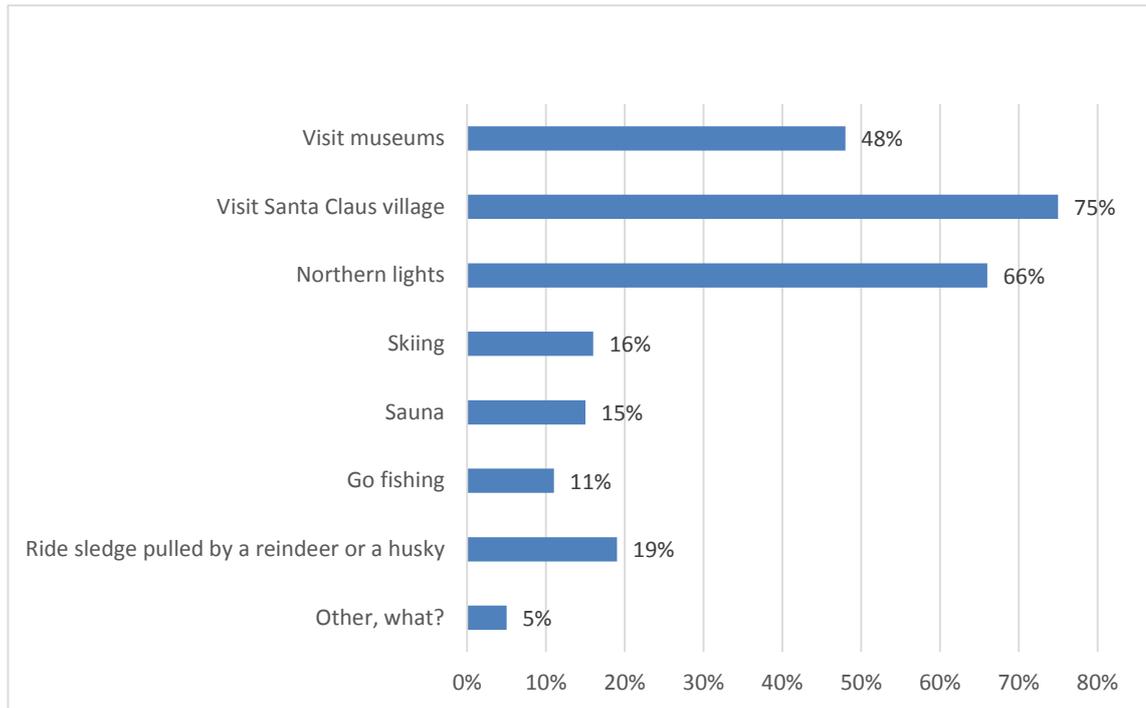


Figure 17. Activities chosen when traveling in Finland (N=100)

Northern lights and Santa Claus village have become the most popular scenic spots in Finland. As you can see in Figure 17, 75% respondents chose to visit Santa Claus village when traveling in Finland. With no doubt the second largest percentage is Northern lights (66%). As a lot of respondents chose to travel to Helsinki, the museum visitation has quite a large proportion. The following activities choosing by respondents were riding a sledge pulled by reindeer or husky (19%), going skiing (16%), and having a sauna (15%), going fishing (11%), respectively. Only a few of the respondents chose other activities, such as visiting an icebreaker, playing in snow and so on.

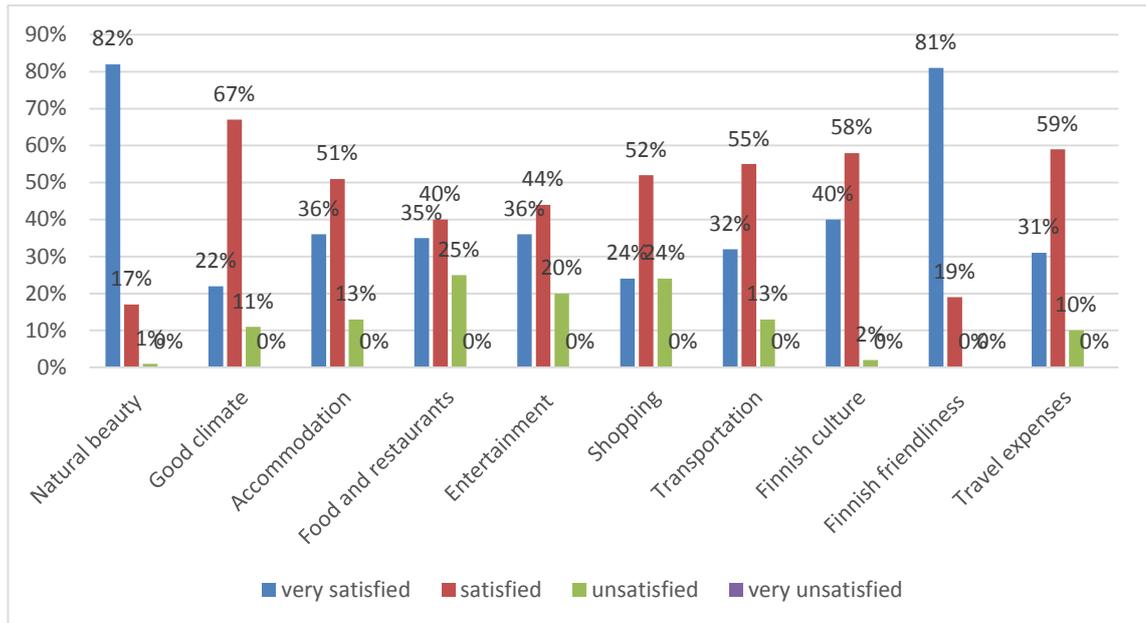


Figure 18. Satisfaction level of respondents with presented elements (N=100)

This is a question about the satisfaction of the respondents' experiences in Finland in ten aspects. Figure 18 shows that natural beauty (82%) and Finnish friendliness (81%) are the most satisfying elements of Chinese tourists. Most of them enjoyed the clean, beautiful fresh air and pollution-free environment. Similarly, the local Finnish people's friendliness also got a high satisfaction in this survey. The good climate, Finnish culture, accommodation, entertainment, transportation and travel expenses were the factors between satisfied and neutral. The price of the whole trip and accommodation facilities might cause a high cost of traveling in Finland and that is also the key point which makes Chinese tourists concentrate on. Lack of entertainment facilities and transportation system in the trip would decrease the satisfactory level of respondents. The factor of shopping services has half satisfied level and half unsatisfied level, which means the shopping facilities in Finland cannot reach the demand of the Chinese tourists.

The last question was asked about the overall evaluation of respondents and the open-ended question were only answered by the respondents who have travel experiences of Finland. There were 19 respondents who answered this question.

The overall evaluation is that Finnish people are friendly, services are good, and environment and scenery are great. Most people believe that Finland is a well

worth experience and can be visited again. They claim that Finland is a very safe country and most of them can speak English which can make smooth communication. Besides these positive aspects, some respondents think that the shopping facilities are less and the shopping centers have less international brands with an early closing time especially on weekends. A few of them complain about the weather going too cold, prices are high, it is not interesting enough because of less attractions compared to other European countries. There are some examples of answers. "Finland is very suitable for the elderly to live with a pension and good benefits." "Finland is the country of a thousand lakes, good environment, good scenery, fresh air, very beautiful northern lights, hoping to come again." "Finns are very friendly, cars let people go first, the weather is not very good, too cold, and snow is too thick to walk." "Malls close too early, especially shorter on weekends, it is not convenient for shopping." "Services are good, people are friendly, but prices are too expensive, there are not many shopping products, Chinese restaurants are not enough or not authentic." "China's future tourism trends, more attention than other areas of natural landscape."

5.3 Summary of Results

In conclusion, most of the tourists who have experiences of traveling to Finland or a plan to visit Finland were mainly from the age group of 18-35. With the age groups, most respondents were students and businessmen. They were mainly from Beijing, Chongqing and Shanghai. Chinese tourists had a high overall evaluation of traveling in Finland. Most of them are satisfied with natural beauty, Finnish friendliness and Finnish culture. The mainstream services and activities were visiting museums, shopping, visiting Northern lights and Santa Claus village. Compared to other cities, Helsinki is the main tourist area that attracts most Chinese tourists. Also the direct plane routes resulted in convenient travel itinerary for Chinese travelers.

From this survey, we could see that Chinese tourists are very focused on healthy food and richness in food, and shopping is one of the most attractive activities for them. Therefore, the entertainment services should respond more to their needs and expectations. At the same time, bringing in more international brands would

help to increase the tourist amount. Besides the summer time (57%), Finland also attracted Chinese tourists almost as much in winter time (53%). It can be seen that winter time is a potential season for developing tourism in Finland. There are a lot of respondents who prefer to have a tour guide on their journey that would provide sufficient information of the destination and help to solve the problems of lack on communication skills. As part of respondents expressed, the clean pollution-free environment and rich natural ecological resources are the greatest advantage of Finland. Hence, the development of Eco-tourism can be promoted to attract more Chinese tourists.

6 CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Discussion in this chapter is aimed to answer why Chinese tourists choose Finland as travel destination and what expectations and needs they have when traveling in Finland. Based on the analysis of the results of the online survey with 100 respondents, the author gives some reasonable recommendations for attracting more Chinese tourists and improving Finnish tourism services and products for increasing the competitive power of Finland.

For attracting Chinese tourists, we have to adapt to their needs and try to meet their expectations. First of all, Chinese tourists go a lot of shopping in Europe, because they can enjoy the cheaper luxury goods prices and attentive services during their stay abroad. One more reason is that this type of product is indeed generally less taxed and counterfeited. Chinese tourists are more confident of the quality of the product if it is purchased abroad.

Secondly, China's direct flights to Finland brought a great impact on tourism development in China and Finland, through the Helsinki-Vantaa Airport, Chinese tourists can easily reach the European territory of multiple Schengen countries. Thus, Finland should open and develop more direct routes in order to bring more Chinese tourists.

Thirdly, except for the youngest Chinese tourists that can be fairly self-sufficient through their ability to speak English, the older groups of Chinese tourists need more specific services, such as a good tour guide, more Chinese labels on brochures and interpreters. Furthermore, the appropriate services in accommodation should also be adapted to the expectations of the Chinese tourists, with special menus, television channels in Mandarin and a kettle.

The online survey data was collected by using Chinese social media such as Weibo, Wechat and though the survey was published for only a few days, a large number of responses were received. It can be seen that the utilization of social media is big. Chinese always like to search for information on the internet and seek what will better suit their needs and expectations. So they will rely on the sources they find on the internet to learn about the travel destinations. They decide the travel destination by learning about other people's experiences shared

on the internet, to see if the destinations attract them. Therefore, by creating more Finnish special tourist projects on Chinese social network, is a good way to expand the Finnish tourism market in China.

The natural beauty and thousands of ecological resources are the symbols of Finland. That it very different from other European countries. In order to attract more Chinese tourists and improv the tourism products and services, the development of Eco-tourism and offering special services to tourists are both significant. Taking advantages of Finland's unique geographic circumstances in developing Finnish tourism are recommendable. Also in order to make Chinese tourists enjoy the special nature of Finland, offering special services can be used as an effective method to attract them. Examples could be such as providing berry and mushroom picking activities, guiding Chinese tourists to experience traditional Finnish summer cottage life, supporting some activities like swimming in a lake and hiking in clean nature.

7 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this thesis was to study why Chinese tourists choose Finland as travel destination. The objective was also to understand what needs and wishes Chinese tourists have, what they are missing of the services and what they are expecting to have in the future. In addition, their satisfaction level of experiences of traveling in Finland was studied. Furthermore, the aim was also to give recommendations on how to improve tourism services and products for increasing the competitiveness of Finland in the Chinese tourism market in the future. From this thesis, the reader can get knowledge of tourist behavior and Chinese tourists' needs and expectations. From the survey, the needs and expectations of Chinese tourists for choosing Finland as their travel destination and their evaluation of Finland journey can be seen. The thesis introduced Chinese outbound tourism from the market and development point of view. This thesis hopefully helps the service provider to make improvements in the services and products for increasing the competitiveness of Finland as a destination to attract more Chinese tourists.

This thesis could be improved by some aspects. For instance, the author could have used an interview as an additional method for Chinese tourists' behavior and in this way get a deeper understanding on their needs and thoughts. In the interview, it would be easier to discuss with respondents in order to get more detailed information. For further study of this topic, it can give readers a deep understanding of consumer behavior in tourism and Chinese tourist behavior.

REFERENCES

Bao, J.G. 1999. EXPLORING GENDER DIFFERENCES IN INFORMATION SEARCH AMONG. Referenced on 3 Nov 2015.

http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/gtr/gtr_nrs-p-14/16-xie-p-14.pdf

Chairman Media. 2014. 5 new trends about Chinese tourists. Referenced 24 Nov 2015.

<http://chairmanmigo.com/trends-about-chinese-tourists/>

Cherry, K. 2015. Hierarchy of Needs. Referenced 27 Oct 2015.

<http://psychology.about.com/od/theoriesofpersonality/a/hierarchyneeds.htm>

China - Finland relations. 2015. Referenced 22 Nov 2015.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China%E2%80%93Finland_relations

Dilip, K.B. 2012. Analysis on the Tourists' Demand-side Behavior and Consumption Factors. Referenced 31 Oct 2015.

<http://www.mlit.go.jp/kankocho/naratourismstatisticsweek/global/pdf/presentation/2-3.pdf>

Dong, Q.F. 2005. A Survey on Tourism Decision-making Process. Referenced 1 Nov 2015.

http://en.cnki.com.cn/Article_en/CJFDTOTAL-LUYX200502000.htm

Embassy of Finland. 2015. Current Affairs. Referenced 22 Nov 2015.

<http://finland.cn/public/default.aspx?contentid=323091&nodeid=35178&culture=en-US>

Embassy of Finland. 2015. History. Referenced 22 Nov 2015.

<http://www.finland.cn/public/default.aspx?nodeid=35189&contentlan=2&culture=en-US>

Finland's Tourism Strategy to 2020. 2011. Four good reasons to promote tourist industry development. Referenced 21 Nov 2015.

https://www.tem.fi/files/28018/Finlands_Tourism_Strategy_to_2020.pdf

Frechtling, D. 2001. Forecasting Tourism Demand: Methods and Strategies. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Giele, F. 2009. Chinese Consumer Behavior. Referenced 20 Nov 2015.
<http://www.fransgiele.be/freematerial/2009chineseconsumerbehaviour.pdf>

Guo, Y.J. 2002. A Study of Tourists' Decision-Making Behaviors. Referenced 2 Nov 2015.
http://en.cnki.com.cn/Article_en/CJFDTOTAL-LUYX200204006.htm

Hansen, P. R. 2013. Review of China's Outbound Travel Market 2013. Referenced 2 Nov 2015.
http://www.visitcopenhagen.com/sites/default/files/asp/visitcopenhagen/Corporate/PDF-filer/Analyser/Chinavia/chinavia_-_review_of_chinas_outbound_travel_market_2013_-_final.pdf

Heikkinen, J. 2012. China's next top travel destination-Finland. Referenced 25 Nov 2015.
<https://ffjohanna.wordpress.com/2012/10/04/chinas-next-top-travel-destination-finland/>

Invest In Finland, 2014. Travel and tourism. Referenced 21 Nov 2015.
<http://www.investinfinland.fi/industries/travel-and-tourism/112>

Jemaiel, K. 2015. Finland welcomes more visitors from China by opening visa application centres. Referenced 25 Nov 2015.
<http://kauppakamari.fi/en/2015/04/10/finland-welcomes-more-visitors-from-china-by-opening-visa-application-centres/>

Lotour. 2004. Finland's door open to Chinese tourists. Referenced 19 Nov 2015.
http://www.lotour.com/snapshot/2005-1-23/snapshot_10556.shtml

Maierhaba, A. 2014. Image of Finland as a Destination for the Mainland Chinese Tourist. Referenced 25 Nov 2015.
https://publications.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/80398/AIHAITI_MAIERHABA.PDF.pdf?sequence=1

Muhannad, M.A. 2012. Consumer Behavior Models in Tourism Analysis Study. Department of Tourism and Hospitality, Faculty of Tourism and Archeology King Saud University.

Ovum, 2014. Referenced on 28 Oct 2015.

<http://www.cww.net.cn/news/html/2014/9/5/201495143958115.htm>

Pearce, P. L. 2005. Tourist Behavior Themes and Conceptual Schemes. Frankfurt: Channel View Publications.

Proctor, T. 2005. Essentials of Marketing Research. British: Ashford Colour Press Ltd, Gosport.

Qiu, Y.J. 2011. Understanding Chinese Consumers. Referenced 20 Nov 2015.

<http://www.chinabusinessreview.com/understanding-chinese-consumers/>

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. 2007. Research Methods for Business Students. London: Prentice Hall.

Sinclair, M.T. & Stabler, M. 1997. The Economics of Tourism. London: Routledge.

Solomon, M.R. 1996. Consumer behavior Engle-wood Cliffs. NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Song, H.Y., Li, G., Will S.F. & Fei, B.G. 2010. Tourism demand modelling and forecasting: how should demand be measured? Referenced 31 Oct 2015.

<http://epubs.surrey.ac.uk/7594/69/s5.pdf>

Swarbrooke, P. & Horner, S. 1999. Consumer Behavior in Tourism. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Tourism in Finland. 2015. Referenced 23 Nov 2015.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tourism_in_Finland

Tourism industry sub-sectors. 2014. COUNTRY REPORT. Referenced 23 Nov 2015.

http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/tourism-business-portal/documents/business/internationalisation/finland_country_report.pdf

Travel China Guide. 2015. Referenced 5 Nov 2015.

<http://www.travelchinaguide.com/tourism/2015statistics/outbound.htm>

TTG Tourism. 2014. Finland plan to upgrade the number of Chinese tourists to 260,000 in 2020. Referenced 19 Nov 2015.

<http://www.traveldaily.cn/article/79426>

VisitFinland. 2015. Referenced 22 Nov 2015.

<http://www.visitfinland.com/>

VisitFinland. 2015. Referenced 23 Nov 2015.

<http://www.visitfinland.com/about-us/product-development/>

WSHL1983. 2014. Chinese outbound tourism development process review. Referenced 3 Nov 2015.

http://wenku.baidu.com/link?url=AtWYJuFJ8LaQz52TrDN5clHL9QMire9dMhv9XD0-e64veEMqelpX4DfPzt3DqJh_1wsY4S6b52abD-aAyBsrxEeMBI4DGmD1KZlwPhk_zFS

APPENDICES

| | |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| Appendix 1. | English version of questionnaire |
| Appendix 2. | Results of survey |

English version of questionnaire

Appendix 1 1(4)

1. Gender

-Male -Female

2. Age

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

3. Occupation

-Student

-School teacher

-Salesman

-Businessman

-Office worker

-Manager

-Civil servant

-Unemployed

-Retired

-Other, what?

4. Where do you live?

-Beijing

-Shanghai

-Chongqing

-Hubei

-Hong Kong

-Sichuan

-Tianjing

-Overseas

-Other, what?

5. What is the purpose of your coming to Finland?

-Study

- Leisure travel
- A round trip through several countries
- Visit relatives and friends
- Attend exhibitions or fairs
- Transit
- Business trip
- Other, what?

6. Which season or seasons do you choose to travel to Finland? (multiple choice question)

- Spring
- Summer
- Autumn
- Winter

7. What attracts you to travel to Finland? (multiple choice question)

- Nature environment
- Skiing
- Northern lights
- Santa Claus village
- Finnish Culture
- Other, what?

8. How important are the following factors to you when planning a trip to Finland? Choose from the following options the one that best describe your opinion on the matter. (4=fully agree, 3=partly agree, 2=partly disagree, 1=fully disagree)

- I prefer to choose a destination that has good food and restaurants.
- I choose a destination according to low expenses.
- It is important that the destination has good entertainment facilities
- It is important that the destination has numerous shopping facilities.
- I choose a destination with good transportation system.
- I want a good trip with helpful tour guide.

9. What are the main destinations your travel to in Finland? (multiple choice question)

- Helsinki
- Rovaniemi
- Lapland
- Turku
- Oulu
- Tampere
- Other, what?

10. What kind of activities do you choose when traveling in Finland?(multiple choice question)

- Visit museums
- Visit Santa Claus village
- Northern lights
- Skiing
- Sauna
- Go fishing
- Ride sledge pulled by a reindeer or a husky
- Other, what?

11. What is your satisfaction level with the following elements? (4=very satisfied, 3=satisfied, 2=unsatisfied, 1=very unsatisfied)

- Natural beauty
- Good climate
- Accommodation
- Food and restaurants
- Entertainment
- Shopping
- Transportation
- Finnish culture
- Finnish friendliness

-Travel expenses

11. What is your overall evaluation after traveling in Finland? Please tell in your own words about your experiences here. (Open-ended question)

Results of survey

Appendix 2 1(6)

1. Gender

| | N | Percent |
|--------|----|---------|
| Male | 58 | 58% |
| Female | 42 | 42% |

2. Age

| | N | Percent |
|----------|----|---------|
| 18-25 | 41 | 41% |
| 26-35 | 34 | 34% |
| 36-45 | 19 | 19% |
| 46-55 | 5 | 5% |
| 56-65 | 1 | 1% |
| Above 65 | 0 | 0% |

3. Occupation

| | N | Percent |
|----------------|----|---------|
| Student | 38 | 38% |
| School teacher | 8 | 8% |
| Salesman | 11 | 11% |
| Businessman | 22 | 22% |
| Office worker | 6 | 6% |
| Manager | 5 | 5% |
| Civil servant | 4 | 4% |
| Unemployed | 1 | 1% |
| Retired | 2 | 2% |
| Other, what? | 3 | 3% |

4. Where do you live?

| | N | Percent |
|--------------|----|---------|
| Beijing | 26 | 26% |
| Shanghai | 19 | 19% |
| Chongqing | 23 | 23% |
| Hubei | 12 | 12% |
| Hong Kong | 2 | 2% |
| Sichuan | 6 | 6% |
| Tianjing | 6 | 6% |
| Overseas | 4 | 4% |
| Other, what? | 2 | 2% |

5. What is the purpose of your coming to Finland?

| | N | Percent |
|--|----|---------|
| Study | 28 | 28% |
| Leisure travel | 29 | 29% |
| A round trip through several countries | 18 | 18% |
| Visit relatives and friends | 3 | 3% |
| Attend exhibitions or fairs | 2 | 2% |
| Transit | 12 | 12% |
| Business trip | 18 | 18% |
| Other, what? | 0 | 0% |

6. Which season or seasons do you choose to travel to Finland?

| | N | Percent |
|--------|----|---------|
| Spring | 42 | 42% |
| Summer | 57 | 57% |
| Autumn | 12 | 12% |
| Winter | 53 | 53% |

7. What attracts you to travel to Finland?

| | N | Percent |
|---------------------|----|---------|
| Nature environment | 33 | 33% |
| Skiing | 26 | 26% |
| Northern lights | 67 | 67% |
| Santa Claus village | 54 | 54% |
| Finnish Culture | 24 | 24% |
| Other, what? | 7 | 7% |

8. How important are the following factors to you when planning a trip to Finland?

Choose from the following options the one that best describe your opinion on the matter. (4=fully agree, 3=partly agree, 2=partly disagree, 1=fully disagree)

| | 4 Fully agree | 3 Partly agree | 2 Partly disagre e | 1 Fully disagre e | Total |
|---|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-------|
| I prefer to choose a destination that has good food and restaurants. | 69% | 27% | 4% | 0% | 100 |
| I choose a destination according to low expenses. | 22% | 64% | 14% | 0% | 100 |
| It is important that the destination has good entertainment facilities. | 42% | 45% | 13% | 0% | 100 |
| It is important that the destination has numerous shopping facilities. | 36% | 51% | 13% | 0% | 100 |
| I choose a destination with good transportation system. | 45% | 47% | 8% | 0% | 100 |
| I want a good trip with helpful tour guide. | 37% | 63% | 0% | 0% | 100 |
| Total | 251 | 297 | 52 | 0 | 600 |

9. What are the main destinations your travel to in Finland?

| | N | Percent |
|--------------|----|---------|
| Helsinki | 75 | 75% |
| Rovaniemi | 60 | 60% |
| Lapland | 24 | 24% |
| Turku | 13 | 13% |
| Oulu | 15 | 15% |
| Tampere | 10 | 10% |
| Other, what? | 6 | 6% |

10. What kind of activities do you choose when traveling in Finland?

| | N | Percent |
|---|----|---------|
| Visit museums | 48 | 48% |
| Visit Santa Claus village | 75 | 75% |
| Northern lights | 66 | 66% |
| Skiing | 16 | 16% |
| Sauna | 15 | 15% |
| Go fishing | 11 | 11% |
| Ride sledge pulled by a reindeer or a husky | 19 | 19% |
| Other, what? | 5 | 5% |

Appendix 2 5(6)

11. What is your satisfaction level with the following elements?(4=very satisfied, 3=satisfied, 2=unsatisfied, 1=very unsatisfied)

| | 4 very satisfied | 3 satisfied | 2 unsatisfied | 1 very unsatisfied | Total |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------------|-------|
| Natural beauty | 82% | 17% | 1% | 0% | 100 |
| Climate | 22% | 67% | 11% | 0% | 100 |
| Accommodation | 36% | 51% | 13% | 0% | 100 |
| Food and restaurants | 35% | 40% | 25% | 0% | 100 |
| Entertainment | 36% | 44% | 20% | 0% | 100 |
| Shopping | 24% | 52% | 24% | 0% | 100 |
| Transportation | 32% | 55% | 13% | 0% | 100 |
| Finnish culture | 40% | 58% | 2% | 0% | 100 |
| Finnish friendliness | 81% | 19% | 0% | 0% | 100 |
| Travel expenses | 31% | 59% | 10% | 0% | 100 |
| Total | 419 | 462 | 119 | 0 | 1000 |

12. What is your overall evaluation after traveling in Finland?

“Finland is too small, relatively boring, too few attractions compared to other European countries, I prefer other European countries, such as France and Germany.”

“Finland is very suitable for the elderly to live with pension and good benefits.”

Appendix 2 6(6)

“Finland temperature is below zero, too cold, dark fast in winter, and summer is too short.”

“Finland is the country of a thousand lakes, good environment, good scenery, fresh air, very beautiful northern lights, hoping to come again.”

“Finns are very friendly, the car will make people go first, the weather is not very good, too cold, and snow is too thick to walk.”

“Mall close too early, especially shorter on weekend, it is not convenient to shopping.”

“Service is good, the people are friendly, but prices are too expensive, there are not many shopping products, Chinese restaurants too little, not authentic.”

“Basically all Finns can speak English, very convenient to communication. Also encountered a lot of Chinese people in Helsinki.”

“China's future tourism trends, more attention than other areas of natural landscape.”

“Overall is good.”

“Finland is a very nice quiet place, but with higher expenses, there are only few people and places are not crowded. Shopping goods are not too much, mostly are Finnish brands, Chinese tourists like to buy international luxury goods, it is better to introduce more international brands to Finland for attracting Chinese tourists.”

“It is a very worth to experience this journey.”

“High prices, and fur are very expensive.”

“Finland is a very clean, quiet country, wonderland stunning natural scenery with very friendly people.”

“Finland is a very beautiful country, it has many trees, but fewer people, Santa Claus Village is very beautiful, I hope to come to Finland again.”