

Introducing Chinese Students to Finnish Universities with Tourism Purpose

Siyi Fu

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Author(s) Siyi Fu	
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<p>Tourism is an important section of the global market. Nowadays Finland is becoming a popular tourist destination towards Chinese people, who are drastically growing into one of the world largest tourism consumer groups. Finland is well known for its outstanding quality of education and natural attractions. A start-up travel agency sees this trend as an opportunity, and is planning to arrange a Finnish study tour for Chinese university students, offering them opportunities to broaden their views and experience culture exchange. The purpose of the thesis is to conduct market research on tourism and education in both Finland and China. Author first paint a general picture of China's outbound tourism including the trend, sustainability and customer behaviour in the aspect of study tours. In addition, author also explores the background information on the Finnish education and tourism. At last, the author conducts a survey towards potential customers in order to provide the case agency with resourceful data and recommendation for organizing the study tour.</p> <p>Data from survey was collected through questionnaire. A quantitative data collecting method is involved in the questionnaire. 193 Chinese bachelor students from Northern China were treated as potential customers in the survey. The results indicate that there is a high demand for a study tour in Finland among the targeted Chinese students, but many factors such as culture differences, timing and budget appear to be potential threads that hinders some of them from joining the study tour.</p> <p>As a conclusion, the data and information collected from the research suggests that it is feasible to introduce Chinese student to Finland through study tour, however the company must be taken into consideration when planning the tour according to customers' preferences.</p>	
Keywords Study Tour, Social Media , Chinese Outbound Tourism, Finnish Education	

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1 Introduction

Tourism has always been a large and important sector in marketing. In recent years, Chinese tourism market has been drastically expanding due to increasing in individual wealth and popularity of traveling. Apart from trying to gain utility, many Chinese tourists travel abroad for short term study period, and this has been becoming a novel fashion among young people. Some of them see Finland as a potential option for their future tour and study place. Hence, this thesis aims exploring business opportunity of this novel combination of study and tourism in order to establish a tourism company. A survey-based research is conducted to identify available customers and their customer behaviors.. The result would primarily aid the company to precede decision making up on the plan that is to introduce Chinese tourists to Finnish universities, where they act both as students and tourists for short period of time.

1.1 Background

Nowadays, China is not only the world's fastest-growing economy but also the most significant tourism market according to both visitation amount and travel spending. Unlike the travel mode years ago, Chinese tourists are confident to invest large amount of time and personal holdings to explore every corner of the world in the past decade. (New Chinese Tourist in EU 2017, 2) According to the statistics, travelers from China are estimated to spend 129 billion USD annually when traveling internationally (UNWTO 2014). Besides the countries that are popular among tourists in Asia such as South Korea and Thailand, European countries are highly attractive and competitive to Chinese tourists. (CTA 2014).

Apart from the ordinary purposes that solely focus on traveling and recreation, the young Chinese generation chooses Finland also for its academic goal. Currently one of the common trends for Chinese student is to study in a foreign country in order to gain unique experience and development themselves further. (Boado & Hu & Soysal 2017, 1.) Due to the high quality of education and relatively lower cost in educational expense, Nordic countries, especially Finland, are becoming favorable among Chinese (Holm & Sammalisto & Vuorisalo 2014, 529-537).

In conclusion, here are some of the factors that make Chinese tourist incline to Finland.

- From the education perspective, Finnish education system, according to Finland education report, is one of the best among all countries in the world, and Finnish usually acquire right professional skills in school to succeed in their career and society. (Ruzzi 2005, 2)
- From the artistic points of view, Finnish design appeals to tourists. Not only because of the famous design with unique originality such as Iittala and Marimekko

but also due to the important reason that Helsinki is city of art, and has won the award of Creative Cities Network in 2012. (UNESCO 2012.)

- From the natural and environmental aspects, Finland has over 70% of total forest coverage (National Resources Institute Finland 2016). Currently, one of the most popular traveling cities in Finland is Kuusamo (Finnish Tourist Board 2005, 49), and Ruka is the most crowded destination in the winter season since tourists go there for skiing (Vuoristo & Vesterinen 2001).

The author is currently conducting a research project for a travel company planning to be established at the end of 2018 in Helsinki, which targets Chinese university students as customers. The company plans to arrange study tours for the Chinese student to Finnish Universities with tourism purpose. This thesis aims at exploring the potential business opportunities, through a survey-based research on Chinese university students, including identifying customer source and customer behavior. From the result, we provide a business plan to the case company aiding its decision making.

1.2 Research Questions

The thesis objectives are 1) to provide the case company with an insight analysis about company's target customers' behavior, 2) to produce a preliminary scheme for the case company, and 3) to explore potential threats and opportunities for a sustained business development.

The research question is: Is it feasible to introduce the Chinese student to Finnish Universities with tourism purpose?

The research question is divided into three following investigative questions IQs):

IQ1. Why do Chinese students want to come to Finland for the study tour?

IQ2. How to recruit the potential Chinese students' customer base to join the study tour?

2.1. What are their expectations?

2.2. How much they are willing to spend for the whole tour?

2.3. What is the consumer behavior of target Chinese students?

IQ 3. What is the business scheme of the study tour in Finland for targeted customers?

IQ4. What are the recommendations for the company in regards of the study tour?

In order to answer these questions, a quantitative survey has been conducted with questions and related theoretical framework shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The Theoretical Framework, Research Methods and Results.

Investigative Question	Theoretical Framework	Research Methods	Measurement Questions	Results Chapter
IQ 1. Why do Chinese want to come to Finland for the study tour?	New Chinese Tourist in EU	Desktop Research and Quantitative	Survey Question 18	Chapter 2.2-2.3 and Chapter 4.4
IQ 2. How to recruit the potential Chinese students' customer base?	The advertisement method in Mainland China	Desktop Research and Quantitative	Survey Question 14	Chapter 2.5.2-2.5.3 and Chapter 4
2.1. What are the customer expectations?	Customer behavior	Quantitative	Survey Question 1,2,3	Chapter 4.3
2.2. How much customer consumption is expected?	Customer behavior	Quantitative	Survey question 4	Chapter 4.2
2.3. What is the consumer behavior of target Chinese students?	Customer behavior	Quantitative	Survey question 5,6,7,8,9,10, 11,12	Chapter 4.3-4.4
IQ 3. What is the business scheme of the study tour in Finland for targeted customers?	Chinese customers new value	Quantitative	Survey Question 6,7,8,9,10, 11,12,13,14	Chapter 4.3-4.4
IQ 4. What are the recommendations for the company in regards of the study tour?	Recommendations for the company	Quantitative		Chapter 5.2

1.3 Demarcation

The demarcations of this thesis are shown in Table 2. For the company, the author would consider only the case company features, for example, the advantages and disadvantages the study tour project, which would be carefully analyzed in regards of the enterprise.

Geographically, it is challenging for the author to cover entire China due to the large size and China's great regional disparity (Keidel 2017). Hence, the scope of the survey narrows down to North part of mainland China, since the case company has existing connection there, and the secondary research is conducted in some cities in Finland such as Helsinki, Tampere, as those cities have been reputable for both tourism and education.

The research towards market centers China, and the focused fields would be outbound tourism and customer behavior, whereas the research conduct to Finland is more towards educational and tourism aspects. Based on existing connection in North part of China, the target customers are Chinese university students who are in their bachelor progress.

Through communication with university representatives on e-mail, the author gets permission to send the questionnaire (quantitative survey) to the target student in order to conduct the analysis. As for the tourism and education aspects information, a desktop and secondary research are the primary source. Moreover, the up-to-date resource is required to guarantee the quality and reliability of the research.

As for the communication channels, considering the situation that Facebook and Instagram are not widely used by mainland China, the author will use two of the most popular Chinese communication social media WeChat and QQ (Wu & Wan 2014, 3) to contact the target students as well as the representatives.

Table 2. Demarcation table

Demarcation criterion	Examples of demarcating dimensions
Case company	The start-up travel agency
Department or function in business	Travel, tourism
Direction of communication, action or perception	Company to customer
Geography	Finland (Helsinki), China (North part of China)
Industry	Tourism, Education
Channel	Social media such as WeChat and QQ
Research type	Primary quantitative survey and secondary research

1.4 International Aspect

The company focuses on conducting oversea business, where connecting Finnish and Chinese tourist market is the central theme. The research made in the thesis centers this theme, and gathering data from both markets. Hence, this research thesis meets the requirement of Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences guidelines.

1.5 Benefits

From the company perspective, the organization could benefit from the thesis by getting an insightful analysis and preliminary business scheme for the start-up company project. The market research result would provide the information on Chinese outbound tourism trend, whereas survey convey the information on the quantity and quality of customers, thus provide an avenue for the development of business to the next stage. As a result, the company could make adjustments to meet the Chinese students' expectation and needs. From the target Chinese students perspective, this thesis offers an opportunity for them to explore and experience the Finnish life style and education that are a valuable experience for them.

What is the most important for the Chinese students is that they will gain advantages in their CV with the experience of studying abroad, which is highly valued in Chinese career pursuing. For example, nowadays the Chinese are inclined to the people with international

background, and parents are eager to send their children for international study experience. (Zheng & Chen & Zhou 2013, 122-126.)

Personally, the author benefit from utilizing knowledge and skills obtained from previous study in real situation. Through a deeper research on the relative topics, the author has broadened knowledge in tourism trend of both China and Finland. In addition, the author will refine the ability of communication with customers, and manage the study tour better in detail when it comes to practice. In conclusion, the thesis provides a great opportunity for the author to get acquiesced, and further develop the practical skills that could potentially benefit future career.

Economically, in the end of 2013, China has launched a new trade development strategy called “Silk Road Economy Belt” and “Twenty-First –Century Maritime Silk Road” (known as: “One Belt, One road”). The purpose of such a strategy is to stimulate and develop the economy together with other regions including Asia, Europe and Africa. (One Belt and Road 2018, 1.) Hence from macroeconomic point of view, the Finnish study tour would have a necessary benefit for both Chinese and Finnish economy while both countries are actively participating “One Belt, One Road” related projects.

1.6 Key Concepts

Here are the key concepts and the definition in the thesis.

Study Tour

From the Definition of the Global learning (2017), Study Tours are short period study programs that allow students to complete intensive lectures in foreign countries. The study tour includes several destinations and the length is 2-4 weeks in average. Based on the Adelaide University definition, in this thesis, the study tour is defined as the combination of studying in Finnish universities and traveling in Finland.

Social Media

Social media provides values of various aspects to a company, such as promote the brand awareness, stimulating sales, receiving customer’s feedback and sharing information in regards of relevant industry field (Hajili 2014, 387). As for this thesis, the main social media channels are narrowed down to Chinese applications such as QQ and WeChat. Social Medias of overseas would not be considered as priority since Facebook and Instagram are not widely used in mainland China.

WeChat

WeChat is a multi-purpose social media application. It contains mobile instant text and voice messaging communication and nowadays WeChat has become an important online platform in China. (Cao & Hui & Lien 2014, 1.)

QQ

QQ is a leading platform in China, including Instant Messenger, QQ.com, QQ games and Space, which form the largest community in China. It is quite multifunctional since the internet users could communicate, have entertainment and do e-commerce on the platform. (Wu & Wan 2014, 3.)

Outbound tourism

Outbound tourism comprises the activities of residents of a given country traveling to and staying in places outside their countries of residence and outside their usual environment for not more than 12 consecutive months for leisure, business and other purposes (Statistics: Tourism account 2018, 1).

1.7 Case Company

Currently, the case company is a travel agency under development. Its headquarter locates in Helsinki, Finland. The start-up company budget so far is comprised of the government funding and the payment from our customers before they come to Finland. Based on previous business cases, the turnover of capital is estimated to be around 10,000 EUR, including the fee of business formation, insurance, licensing and accreditation & affiliation (Rollinglobe 2017). The business formation makes up the initial employees would have majors relevant to business, especially tourism market-related. The business plan of this company will be largely dependent on the market research conducted in this thesis.

1.8 Risk Analysis and Risk Management

From company points of view, the risk is possible to happen in the aspects of schedule. For example, study tour is planned to last one month, which usually will be organized during the summer break. However in many Chinese universities, many students may think the tour period would be too long if it exceed one month. (Wang & Weaver & Kwek 2015, 3.) Second, wrong calculation and estimation could cause failure in keeping the budget as the company plans. There is possible financial crisis, and a good research and business plan should be conducted to reduce the risk.

To deal with the risk, the case start-up company will need to shorten the tour period to approximately ten days or move the tour schedule to other possible time such as spring break. In addition, we could put more efforts on advertising the study tour so that the customers feel the trip is worthy of its long period. In order to avoid financial issue caused by customers before and during the tour abroad, the customers will be asked to carefully consider their financial ability, their estimated budget and their attitude towards Finland as a destination for the study tour. By doing so, the company will make a relatively more realistic investment. For other financial problems, the managers should identify the potential financial risk in advanced before it happens, and avoid an unwanted waste in the budget.

Customer quantity could also be seriously concerned as a potential risk for the case company future development. Lack of customer source is fatal to a start-up company. Thus, the case company should maintain enough and sustained effort on the advertising and marketing.

Also, for the thesis, the risk could happen when there is no or not a sufficient number of replies to the questionnaire survey. Without the response, the thesis could hardly proceed. To handle the problem, the author would actively contact the school representatives in order to motivate the students to reply, or inquire the survey to be given as a compulsory assignment.

2 Understanding study tour in Chinese and Finnish Tourism Market

In this chapter, the author would give an insight review with theoretical, previous practical and experiential information on the study tour tourism market that is interested by the case company between China and Finland. In the theoretical frame as shown in Figure 1, a study tour will need a source of tourism from country A (in this case it is China), and attractions and educational institutes in country B (in this case it is Finland) that are made to known to the customers in country A through proper advertisement. During this process, marketing segmentation, selecting right group of customers, positioning of company and analyzing customer behavior will all play important roles at different stages. These theories are closely related to the practical and experiential themes that are key to the case company such as the Chinese outbound tourism trend and sustainability, and the new consumption pattern of Chinese among the young generation, Finnish tourism market, Finnish education, Finnish universities and its majors.

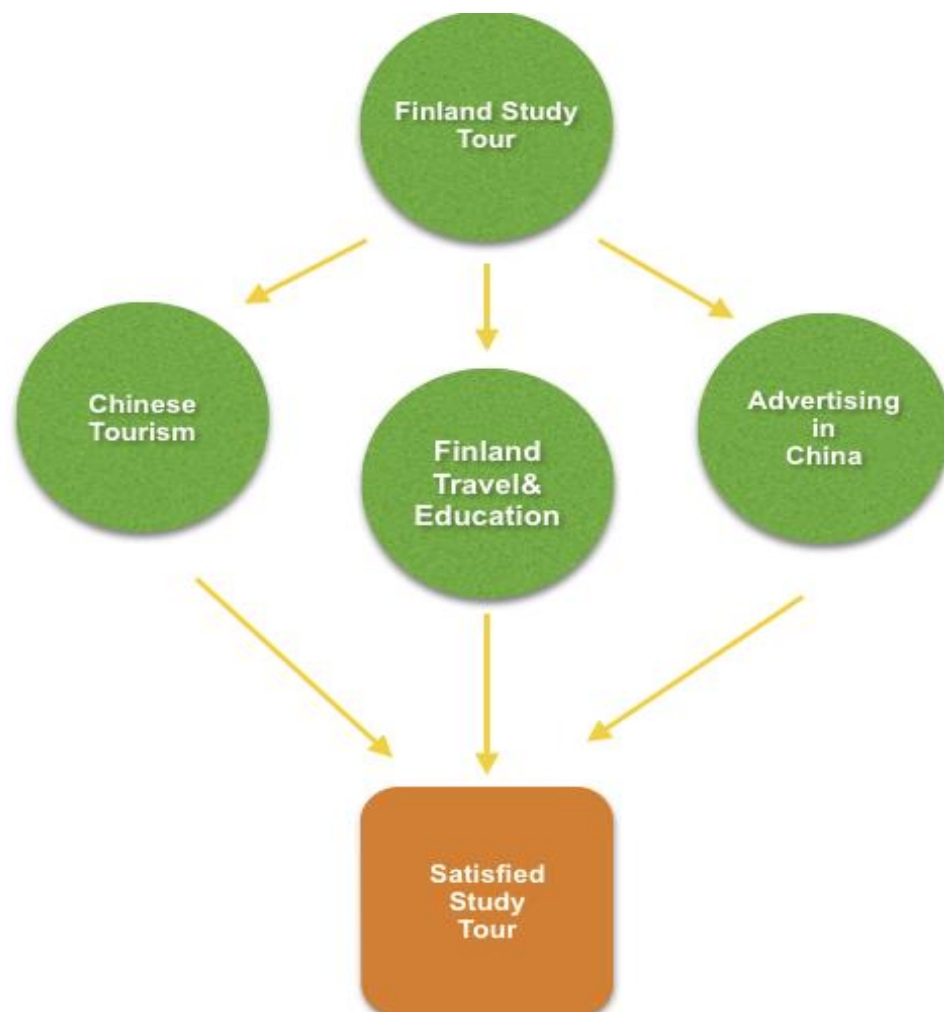


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Marketing In General

The marketing is defined as “study and management of exchange relationship” (Hunt 1976, 17-28). Marketing concept in general is to achieve a business goal with a competitive and sustainable development in long-term (Baker 2008, 3). A company needs to decide what target customer value as well as needs, hence to provide the right service to increase satisfaction. By doing so, the company will stand out among its competitors. (Kongalla 2013, 9.) However, it is not enough to only considering consumer’s demand but what the company and society need in long-term. The societal marketing concept means that a travel agency should make decision on the needs, interests of the target markets. (Elliot 1990, 23-30.) Based on that, the company provides a satisfying service for the customers. The difference between the societal marketing and marketing concept is that the former concept focuses more on improving society’s well-being, rather than merely competing with the competitors. (Kongalla 2013, 10.) The tourism marketing can sometimes be considered as one type of societal marketing, where not only the economic profit but the exchange of culture and social impact are also highly rated (Jamrozy 2007, 15).

2.2 Tourism Marketing

The tourism marketing is the business field of study to attract customers to an arranged destination (Grassi 2015). Another definition for the concept of tourism marketing is that an organized and joint effort of tourists and the company to achieve the tourists satisfaction (UNWTO 2010). The business sector could range from international to local area. International tourism often has an impact on a country’s payment, where incoming of international tourism will increase the country’s income and vice versa for outgoing of internal tourism from a country (Boham & Mak 2014). Nevertheless, promoting exchange of tourism between two countries is always a win-win strategy in doing so (Kongalla 2013, 2).

2.2.1 General Situation In Chinese Outbound Tourism

Tourism is widely regarded as an activity that people temperately move out from the place where they normally live and work (Middleton & Fyall & Morgan & Ranchhod 2009, 3). In this chapter, the thesis Chinese outbound tourism is part of the tourism and it mostly means the overseas tour made by Chinese from Main-land, exempted from Hong Kong and Macau since they are the special administrative region (Jin & Wang 2015, 2). Furthermore, according to Euromonitor International (2012), the trend, in general, is rather positive as displayed from the statistics of the Chinese air passenger for tourism purpose yearly growth in the figure 2. Chinese outbound tourism is currently at a fast pace of increasing. In 2011, the vacation flight number has increased in the last six years by 50 %

over the past six years, from 11.3 million to 17 million.

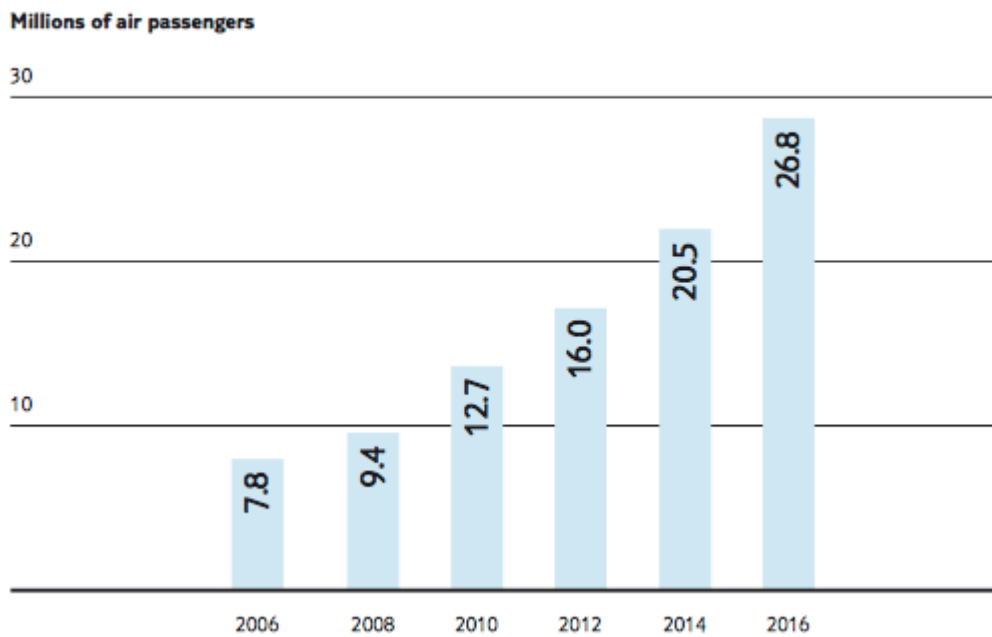


Figure 2. Number of Chinese tourists taking holiday flights abroad (Euromonitor International 2012)

2.2.2 The Chinese Tourism Sustainability and Its Trend

It is said that China, nowadays, is gradually taking the first place in world largest tourism source markets (New Chinese Tourist in EU 2017, 2). By studying on the Chinese traveling behavior, a large portion of their spending is shopping (CTA 2014).

Due to the reason that Chinese government gradually relaxes the policies on citizens in regards to traveling, and the middle-class economic condition is much better than that decades ago, Chinese are willing to invest a large number of resources on traveling abroad. The purchasing power of Chinese tourists grows enormously due to the rapid increase of average income in China. Such buying ability makes Chinese tourist highly competitive among others in worldwide tourism business. Thus, to welcome Chinese tourists, which could promote the national economy, some countries have the tempting policy to attract more Chinese visitors. One of the examples is China and USA signed an agreement that once a Chinese visit USA with tourism purpose, he or she could get a 10-year extended visa. This would primarily stimulate the Chinese tourists from all ages to fly to the US. Furthermore, as the China economy is steadily growing and the government is more open-minded, all these factors would strengthen the protectiveness of China outbound tourism, considering in the long term. (Li 2014, 1.)

On the other hand, European countries are rather popular in long-haul destinations among Chinese tourists due to the richness of culture and history. For example, around 3.8 million of Chinese visitors came to Europe in 2010 and the number will be four times by the year of 2020. From 2008 to 2016, the growth rate of Chinese tourists visiting Germany is 128%, and the growth rate of UK is even more significant, which is around 134%. Importantly, from the international comparison, most Chinese list the European countries as the most preferred visiting place. As the living condition shows a steady growth trend, more Chinese would choose distant destinations such as Europe for traveling if the economic situation allowed. For safety factors, for instance, the terrorist attacks, though it does not happen every day, however, these barriers are still the most severe concerns for Chinese tourists abroad. (New Chinese Tourist in EU 2017, 8.) However, several Nordic countries including Finland have not yet reported any mass terrorist attack, and have been well-known worldwide for the peaceful environment, thus, have been favored by Chinese tourists.

2.2.3 Finnish Tourism Market

Tourism is nowadays the fastest growing industry globally. Finland has been developing in the tourism areas for a couple of decades. In Finland, it is now one of the fastest growing industries. It acts various roles on the economy in different regions of Finland, for instance, Helsinki, Lapland, Tampere, Turku and many other cities. (Finland's Tourism Strategy to 2020 2011.)

Finland, with 338,445 square kilometers and coast line of 14018 km, has the number eight largest areas among all European countries. It has the largest amount of island and the most attractive one is Aland Islands. In regards to nature, Finland has over 70% of wood coverage in EU and more than 200,000 lakes among the country. All those natural resources become the attraction spots for visitors. (Finland's Tourism Strategy to 2020 2011.)

Summer season is especially fascinating since days are incredibly long and the landscape is stunning. Hence, it is ideal for many outdoor activities such as camping, barbequing, and fishing. Also, there are many wild berry bushes in nature, which allows people to pick the blueberries for multipurpose, such as making jam, backing a pie, or simply enjoy the fruit. During the winter, Finland is covered with thick snow and ice. Many visitors travel Rovaniemi to ski, to skate and to do many other winter activities. Besides, the reindeer and dog sleighs are popular as well. (Finland's Tourism Strategy to 2020 2011.)

All these features make Finland a fascinating destination for travelers who love nature and enjoy activities in nature.

Climate change has already been a significant issue affecting the tourism especially the nature-based tourism attractions. Considering the effect of Lapland attraction, global warming would have impact on Northern Finland tourism attraction such as Lapland. However, many interviews from nature-based tourism companies in north part Finland pointed out that, in general, the phenomenon is less likely to have an impact on the tourism industry and it will continue to grow in the future. Thus, in conclusion, Finland is a potentially powerful market for both tourism and education, regardless of the continually raising temperature globally. (Hall 2014, 23-40.)

In recent years, China has become prioritized country for Finland of various aspects including diplomatic, economic and educational purpose, according to Finnish international strategies. China is world-widely focused for cooperation, where the growing Chinese educational market is the major target for collaboration. (Holtta & Pekkola & Cai 2014, 1.) As a result, the case company is seeking for combining tourism market and educational collaboration into a novel form of tourism business known as study tour.

2.3 Market segmentation and 4 Ps

Market segmentation is the process of taking the potential customer into groups with similar inclinations, and then choose the group as target market, which would most likely to bring the profit (Pride & Ferrell & Lukas & Schembri & Niininen & Cassidy 2018, 200). Based on the segmentation, a company should design a strategy in order to satisfy the target customer needs. The strategy is often considered as the four Ps, which refers to product, price, place and promotion. (McCarthy 1964.) They are the backbone of tourism marketing, and provide framework for decision making in the entire business (Needham 1996). The following paragraphs below provide further explanation of each term (Jim 2009, 130-133).

- **Product:** A company develops the unique package, which often has significant benefit for its target markets. Such uniqueness will make the company more competitive than other similar organizations of the industry.
- **Price:** When a company intends to draw customers, strategies such as discounting and bundling are frequently applied.
- **Place:** It refers to an organization's service or package distribution. In the tourism market sale, destination marketers will sell through the travel industry.
- **Promotion:** Tourism marketers will use various kinds of tools to promote the destinations to the customers. For example, destinations would establish websites and put advertisements in publications read by the potential target customers.

Market segmentation facilitates the company to choose the emphasis (one of the 4Ps) on target customers. The ways of doing segmentation could be categorized by following methods: location of the residence such as international, local or national; demographics means of segmentation is based on age, income, family situation and education background; lifestyle attributes such as similar interests, particular activity; the last way of making segmentation is based on the important product attributes includes price, quality, quantity. (Sarin 2010, 1.) After segmentation process has been completed, the organization needs to select the segment which would bring the biggest profit and opportunity. When determining the most suitable market, the company should take those factors into consideration: 1) the potential sale force of each segment. 2) The amount and strength of competition of each segment. 3) The cost evaluation each segment. 4) Each segment overall business value and profitability assessment. (Marketing-Insider 2017.) In general, it is wiser to focus on smaller segment that is not being considered by most of the competitors. Hence, the company will target those segments to increase profitability. In this thesis, the case company is aiming to target a group of small but increasing in number customers, who are willing to travel and studying abroad in a short period of time.

2.3.1 Craze of Studying Tour Heat in China

In the recent decade, with the popularity of studying abroad and immigration, a huge wave of Chinese started to implement the idea of the international study tour. The study tour is an ideal combination of studying and traveling. During the study tour, students would broaden their scopes, experience the multicultural environment, develop their independent ability and manage their budgets (PinChain 2016). Since 2005, the overseas study tour gradually becomes popular in China and the market growth regard of study tour is in a rate of 40%-50% dramatic increase annually, for example between 2014 and 2015 as shown in Figure 3. Unlike the traditional tour, which consisted of roughly 30 people visiting only landscape and well-known attractions, the study tour focuses more on customized tour services. Based on customers' needs and budget, the travel company will design a tour that suits their customer the most. (Wang 2014, 3.)

Chinese students' top destinations for study tour are the USA and UK, since Chinese students are interested in doing their bachelor and master degree there. The study tour program provides them a channel to experience universities and is more prepared before they apply.

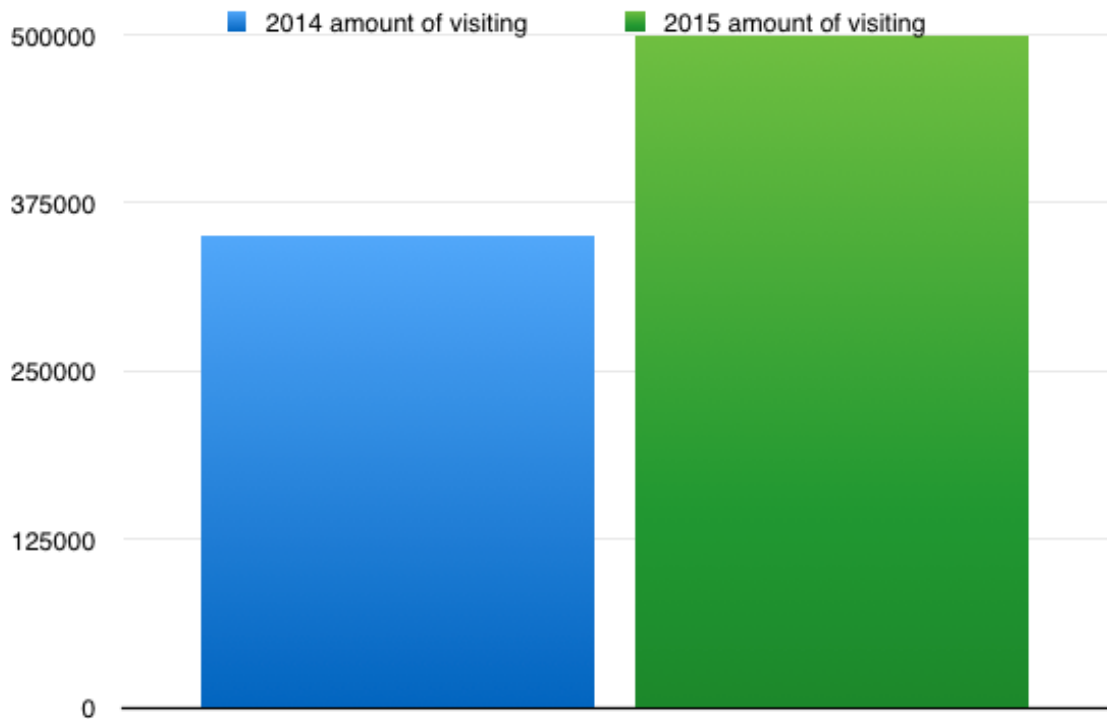


Figure 3. China Overseas Study Tour Amount (pinchain 2016)

An example travel agency that arranges study tour in Finland is Kylin Travel Oy. The company has launched a project called “2017 Kylin Finland STEAM summer study tour”. STEAM is a brand new and fashionable education concept. Different from traditional text-book-based education method, STEAM is inclined to practical and more scientific education way. S means Science; T means Talent& life skill; represents Emotion and social skill; A refers to Art and crafts; M regards to movement and music. Their main visiting places in Finland are Science and Technology Museum, Rovaniemi, Finnish nature experiencing, and Finnish universities and libraries. (Unlike the Kylin Travel Oy target customers are mainly middle or primary school students, our company aims at university Chinese students. (Kylin 2017.) Kylin travel agency provides a sufficient model for the start-up company in how to run the study tour project. It offers the case travel agency references in many different aspects, such as the meal location, hotel, schedule arrangement, activity arrangement and advertising channels. Through drawing on the experience of Kylin, the case start-up would develop increasingly effective.

2.3.2 Finland as a destination for both traveling and education purpose

2.3.3 Finnish education background

Finland higher education is ranking the top, with the much more number of English language programs compared to other countries in Europe, whose mother language is not

English (Wächter & Maiworm 2008, 16-17). In Finland, there are two types of higher education: University and University of Applied Sciences. The traditional kind of university is mainly research-based institution. It focuses more on academic perspective instead of career practice. Furthermore, besides bachelor and master degree, conventional universities would also offer doctoral degrees for students. As for the University of Applied Sciences (UAS), unlike the traditional college, the University of Applied Sciences specializations setting are based mainly on market needs. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2015.)

There are now 26 UASs in Finland, which work closely with industry and society in various fields. They are intimately involved with the real working life practically. Usually, after graduation, the students are quite professional on their job and innovative in a task. (Vanhanen 2016, 9.)

The Finnish education has an excellent reputation so that many countries, including China, would like to experience and learn from it. Based on Xiang (2017), from the speech of Xi Jinping, the Chinese president, China emphasizes the importance and willingness to strengthen the relationship with Finland in various aspects including education.

2.3.4 Finnish Top Universities

Although the system of higher education in Finland is younger than other European countries', the quality of the university is still high. Here are the top three universities in Finland ranking world's top 300. (World University Rankings, 2016-2017.)

The University of Helsinki is the oldest university in Finland, found in 1640. The University of Helsinki is one of the world leading multidisciplinary universities specializing in the fields of research. The University is famous for its high quality of teaching, researching and innovation worldwide. From international aspect, University of Helsinki continually ranks top 20 in Europe and top 100 globally. (World University Rankings, 2016-2017.)

Aalto University, it is the second best education institution. Currently the institution is ranked 133 globally. The strength of Aalto University is its advanced quality system, with both external and internal stakeholder's active involvement. Its main areas of education advantages are engineering, art & design, and business. (World University Rankings, 2016-2017.)

The University of Turku is the second largest university in Finland, ranked 234 worldwide. The university emphasis on the international collaboration and it provides students with

numerous choices to have the master and Ph.D. degrees in various universities in cooperation internationally (World University Rankings 2016-2017).

Beside university, Finland universities of applied sciences (UAS), formerly known as polygenic, also plays an important role in Finnish education. UAS emphasizes on providing higher education for professional expert careers, based on the requirements of practical working life. Here are some of the high quality universities of applied sciences listed below:

Arcada University of Applied Sciences is the best polytechnic in Finland, according to Ministry of Education and Culture research result in 2017 (Arcada University of Applied Sciences 2017).

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences is the most attractive and professionally-oriented Finnish institution of higher education. It is one of the most international university of applied sciences in Finland. (Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences 2017.)

Metropolia University of Applied Sciences is the biggest university of applied sciences among Finland. The institution provides education the professionals of future fields in regards of Culture, Business, Health Care and Social Services and Technology. (Metropolia University of Applied Sciences 2015.)

2.4 Positioning strategy in tourism marketing

In tourism marketing, based on Belch, Kerr and Powell (2009, 205-206), positioning refers to the process of creating a company image and brand, such the products in the target markets. The positioning elements are:

- Pricing: company needs to set the price based on their product standard. For example, if the company product an expensive item or a cheap one.
- Quality: company needs to assure the products are well produced or the service are carefully designed.
- Service: the organization should make the service more customized in order to meet consumer satisfaction and need.
- Distribution: the company should manage to make sure the service is easy to reach for the customers.

From customer aspect, the function of branding is to reduce risk when making decision, gain quality-promising service and match their expectations and satisfaction. From manufacturer points of view, a good brand is a source of financial return and competitive advantages. (Schwarzkopf 2008, 22-30.)

In regards of the thesis, travel agency marketing is regarded as a focus section since it is highly related to the case company. According to Kongalla (2013), the travel agency do not necessarily need large marketing budgets, instead, the agency should implement following points to enhance company image:

- hold an open evening
- enhance its communication skills
- seek partners
- Motivate employees.
- Customized client promotions
- Be creative
- Apply the local press
- Make the agency look inviting
- Be a member of travel association
- Apply PR as a tool to get the positive word out about traveling

2.5 Customer Behavior

Consumer behavior, both as an individual or as a group, indicates that the activities such as the purchase, apply and the arrangement of items and services, including the customers' mood, mental and responses that precede or follow these activities (Kardes & Cronley& Cline 2011, 7). Consumer behavior Consumer behavior consists of several fundamental concepts, including decision making, motivation, self-concept& personality, expectation, attitudes, perception and satisfaction as illustrated in table 3. Customer behavior plays a key role in the success the goal of satisfying demands for the consumers. (UK Essay 2013.)

Decision making: It starts with all existing choices. Potential customers would usually consider the awareness set, the relative familiar one, instead of the unawareness set.

Awareness set consists of evoking set and the substitute set. Among evoke set options, the potential customers will incline to the final available choice. The whole process described above is the decision making process. (Decrop 2010, 93-115.)

Motivation : It is the incentive to satisfy both physical and spiritual needs by the method of purchasing particular products or services. Some motives are survival-based such as the need for food, water and shelter. Others are more complex for example, the desire for dignity and power, or self-value. Besides, the motivation of the consumer could be regarded as a process of satisfying the needs. (Sirgy& Rahtz& Porto-lese 2017, 1.)

Self-concept and personality: They refer to the definite individual's mentality and feeling as the only standard (Sohn & Yuan 2011, 2).

Expectation : When deciding on purchasing a service or product, customers, in mentality, will consider some of its features are as same as they want.

Usually customers' expectations are based on their past experiences. In regards to entertainment, here are customers' expectation on entertainment based on research:

People have their expectations for joining in the event or activities, and such expectations are different for various activities. Customers engage in one activity often have different expectations. The expectations might be perfectly matched, sometimes the customers' expectation might exceed the actual service, and sometimes might much less. (Fluker & Turner 2000, 380-389)

Attitudes: Attitude is a behavior, automatically or subconsciously, to give the response to a relevant object or situation, and those reactions are mostly based on the previous experiences (Palani & Sohrabi, 2013).

Perception: Usually the customers' perception image of a travel destination is quite important since what they imagine is exactly what they are expecting, which makes the destination as a favored choice. As a result, with a better understanding of customers' the needs, the company could set a concerted plan based on it and will make the journey more comfortable and more satisfied. (Neethiahnanthan & Hema & Saeed 2014, 407.)

Satisfaction: In the thesis, tourist satisfaction is extremely important, since after visiting the destination, their word of mouth talks with relatives or friends will largely impact the tourism industry. According to the research, it is widely thought that highly satisfied tourists would be more likely to revisit the same destination and are more willing to recommend the place to their friends. (Lee 2015, 261-277.)

Value: Value can vary upon cultures. It is a clear indication of an individual's norm. In addition, values have been widely applied in marketing strategies.

There are many definitions of value. However, referring to the thesis, value is an expression of feeling in delightfulness or desire in obtaining the object. In the thesis, object refers to material matters for instance goods, ideas or a characteristic.

Furthermore, there is two dimensions of value: external and internal value. External value is based on the knowledge and objective such as goals, which is hard to be replaced. In comparison, the internal value is more internally expected. For example, if you would like to relax from the pressure, you could choose either a day off or hang out with friends. (Li& Cai 2012, 473-478.)

2.5.1 New Consumption Pattern of Chinese Tourists

From the research, of old-pattern Chinese tourists' behaviors and expectations towards a new and unknown destination have the following issue: they would mainly consider the food problem since the cuisine between Europe and China are in great difference. Hotel conditions also influence decision making, because the Chinese tourists highly value the clean, safe and money worthy. Besides, the quality of a tour guide has a key role in effecting Chinese tourists choosing Travel Company, due to the reason that Chinese tourists would like the guide is responsible for tourists schedule, airport-related process management, destination's culture and history explanation and translation jobs. (Li & Cai &Lai & Harrill & Kline & Wang 211, 741-749.)

However, the new generation traveling behavior is more focus on individual interests and relaxation. For the particular interest, many Chinese need to deepen their expertise in some areas, rather than on landscape or sights that are already well known. For example, tourists would visit wineries in Bordeaux (New Chinese Tourist in EU 2017, 25). Hence, there would be a lot of Chinese tourists with winter sports interests come to Finland during the winter. As for the recreation, because of the severe smog pollution in China (Rohde & Muller 2015, 1), and the high pressure of daily life, the booked holiday increased profoundly. Thus, those groups of Chinese tourists are more in favor of a rural place where surrounded by nature.

From Digital culture point of view, China has arrived a digital age and it is the world number one online nation. As it shows in Figure 4, China mobile internet users have increased 170 % from the year 2008 to 2011, and the number of users will keep growing. From the statistics, most Chinese receive the news worldwide mainly through the social media on the mobile phone. Thus, social media offers the case company a clear sign that the Finnish study tour should be advertised efficiently through social media applications such as WeChat and QQ.

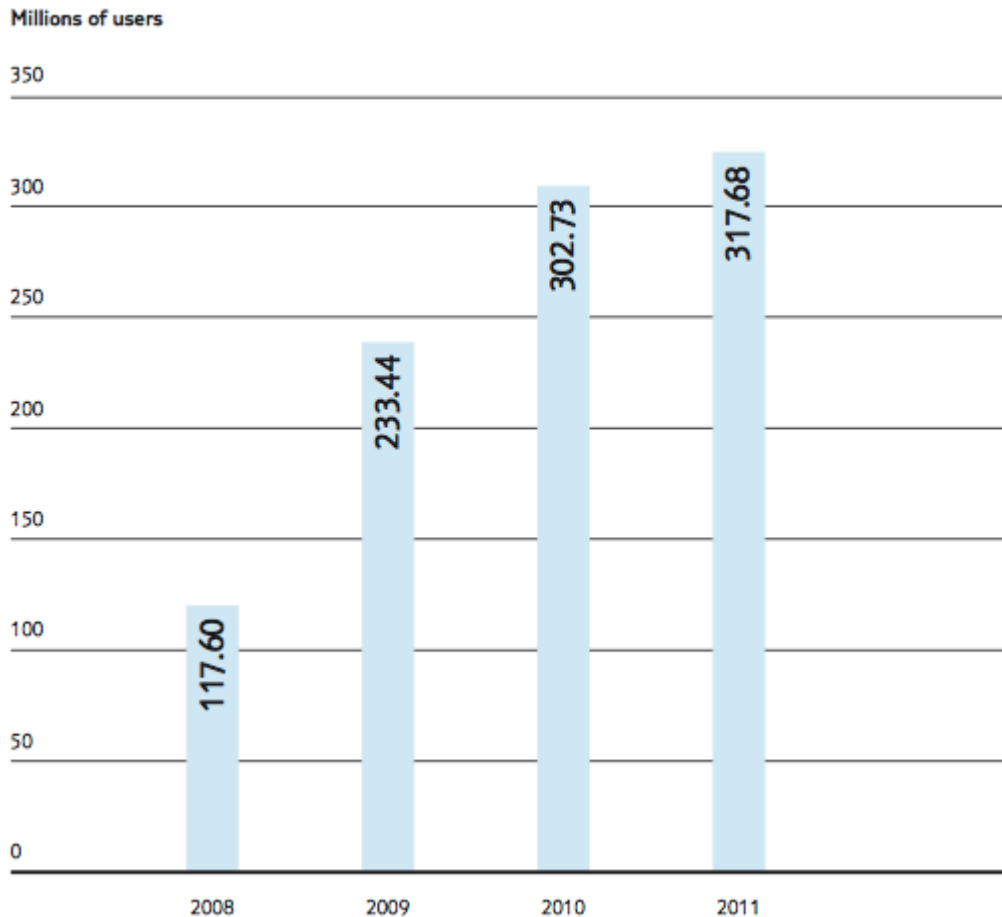


Figure 4. Mobile Internet users in China (CIW 2012)

One important approach to manipulate customer behavior is advertisement (Bigat 2012, 1022-1029). In order meet the new consumption behavior and increasing digital culture of Chinese customers, the social media plays a vital role in connecting the company to the customers. The Social media services is a new method of communication on the internet. It develops increasingly fast in recent periods. Users apply them as a vital source of acquiring information by for example socializing. At the same time, with the continuously popular in the smartphone, more companies focus on the social media applications on the smartphone.

2.5.2 WeChat

WeChat has recently become one of the most popular communication apps (Gao & Zhang 2013, 278). It contains the massager, blog, social media and IM connection, which could transfer from a communication tool to an ideal social media platform. Compare the traditional method of internet web page advertising, WeChat, as a smartphone application which closely ties up users' personal information, has more fascinating advantages in market management in following ways. First, WeChat advertising usually has high credi-

bility, since most people on the contact list are friends, family members, colleagues and schoolmates. Hence, advertising through sharing the product on Moment, people from your WeChat friends would be more likely to trust and buy the product quality. Second, the cost of advertising through WeChat is surprisingly low. Since the registration fee and all the function of the application are entirely free. Also, everyone could quickly register one. Last, the potential customer base is enormous. In 2012, 7th of September, Tencent announced that the WeChat users were over 2 billion. From 0 to 2 billion of users took only 14 months. Hence, it supposed that shortly, WeChat definitely would take the dominant place in smartphone application of China. (Han 2013, 1.)

2.5.3 QQ

As the most widely applied IM software in China, QQ users has exceeded the number of 10 billion already. The users who are online at the same time are at least 1 billion, hence, in regards to marketing management, QQ is an excellent tool due to its large potential customer base. Also, QQ can do advertising to the target group precisely, since QQ has one to one communication function, which is a dominating advantage among other forms of marketing management. Furthermore, QQ has characteristics of sustainability. Due to the reason that the very first step of advertising is to make friend with the target customers, by building the long-term friendship, the company would understand what is customers' real needs, temper, and preference. Hence the customers would easily trust those businesses and prefer to purchase the recommended products since they matched their needs. (Zhao 2016, 40.)

3 Research Methods

Data was collected through an online survey. The author mainly conducted quantitative research, and lists the core segments that was investigated with detail explained in the following sub-chapters.

3.1 Research Design

Quantitative research method allows and facilitates collection and analysis of large data set. In addition, online survey made data collection easy to manage, and rapid to collect. (Burns& Bush 2010.)

Considering the fact that tourism industry profits from the large quantity of customer base, the quantitate research approach is suitable for the start-up case company. The more

potential respondents answer the survey, the more accurate customer behavior is predicted, hence more refined strategy the company will implement.

Following core questions are addressed through the survey:

- How is the target Chinese students' interests in joining the study tour?
- How is Chinese students' ability to pay the tour?
- What is the consumer behavior of those target Chinese students?
- What tour services are included into Finnish tour package in regards with the company?

3.2 Data Collection

My data collection tool is Webropol. The questionnaire is sent to students through the Chinese Universities representatives. The estimated target Chinese students' number is around 700, and the expected respondents are about 200 to 300. Hence, the expected respondent rate would be approximately 30% to 40%. After the respondents complete the survey, the result will automatically be gathered in Webropol and an Excel form will be made for analyzing.

According to the chapter 2, the reason for choosing the north part of China is due to the fact that the start-up company founder has the connection with the local university representatives. Both sides see Finland study tour as a great opportunity since the continuous increasing study abroad heat in China, as well as the thumb-up education quality in Finland.

3.3 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire consists of several segments: Chinese students' interests towards joining the Finland study tour, the target Chinese students' budgets, Chinese students' customer behavior, service package of the study tour and the target customers' background information.

within question 1, after being given a brief introduction, the target respondent will be asked if they are interested in the Finland study tour. The option of not being interested will directly lead the respondents to end the survey, which would show in Webropol how many percentage of respondents are not interested in this project at all.

In the question 2, the respondents are asked to choose which European countries (Finland, UK, Germany, Italy and Sweden) they would like to have study tour the most. The four countries beside Finland are selected according to the Times Higher Education World University Ranking 2018, where they are the top 4 ranking for students who would like to

study abroad. (Times Higher Education World University Ranking 2018.)The purpose of this question is to give the travel company an estimation of the amount of customers, hence the company could plan how much investment should be put into the Finnish study tour.

In question 4, which addresses the budget of customers, the option ranges from 1282 EUR to 5410 EUR. This range was selected based on the payment of study tour of several existing travel agencies who are running study tour in Finland or several other Nordic countries.

From question number 5 to 12, the target customer behavior segment is studied. The respondents are asked about their preference in living condition, meal, time arrangement, and travel accompanies, course choices and so on.

The last segment, from question 13-20, is the background information such as what is the respondent's current study progress, in which way they would like to know more about the study tour information and are they willing to study in Finland in the future.

3.4 Data analysis

The survey was designed into sections so it is easy to summarize the result. The results are transferred into an excel form, and further analyzed and presented in figures and tables. No statistical analysis was made as no comparison for significance was needed. Data is analyzed based on customer behavior models from previous studies.

3.5 Validity

The survey will be shared only in China without the involvement of Facebook. The reason for that is to avoid wrong feedback collected from other countries. Due to the reason that the target group for this survey is Chinese, it will be translated into Mandarin to prevent any unnecessary misunderstanding. Furthermore, the survey will be conducted through the representative of specific university in northern China, hence the survey quality and the source of the respondents will be guaranteed.

4 Results

Before going through the result by each question, it is rather important that customer behavior should be determined based on the result of the survey. The company reach the final decision for the business scheme needs to go through the following process as shown in the left column in Figure 5 below: the case company set the strategy based on the market research, and then define the target customer, planning the tour in detail and calculate the budget & profit, then finally make the decision. The market research is the back-bone of all the decision making. The process of decision making is based on a systematic analysis of customer behavior, which shows on the right side in Figure 5. The main themes of customer behavior including decision making are mentioned, however, in the survey the author mainly address decision making, value, motivation expectation and satisfaction to support the decision making for the case company.

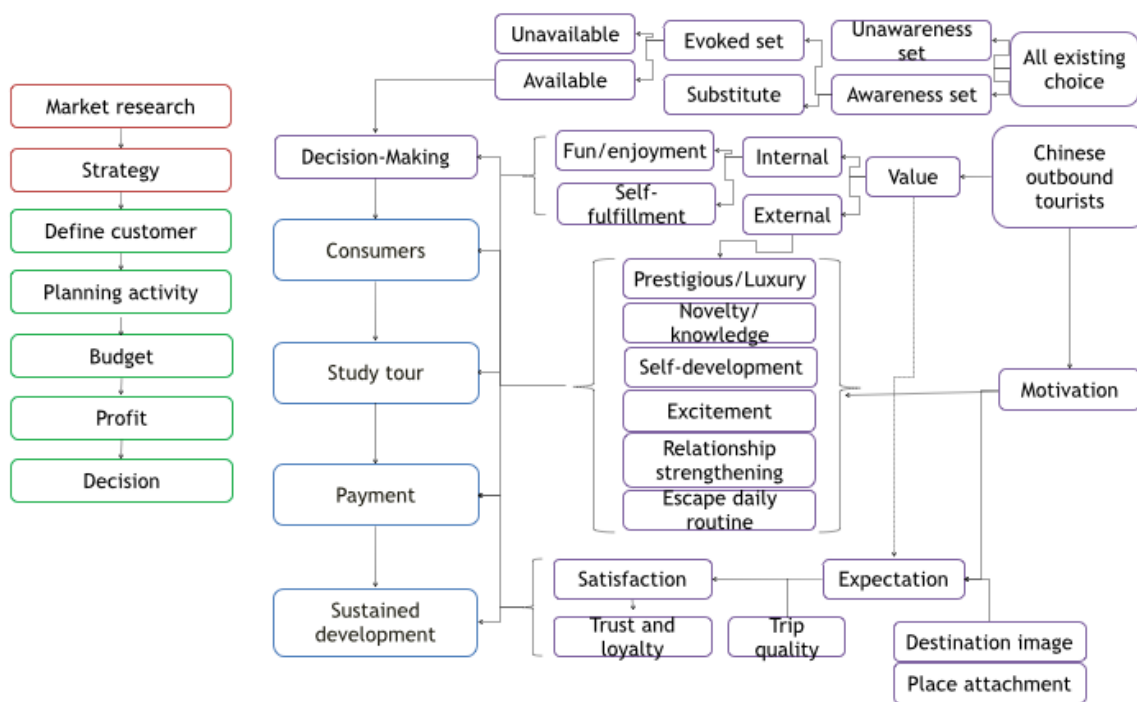


Figure 5. Customer Behavior Chart

The responding collection duration was two weeks. During the first week the number of respondents reached 160, which was encouraging. On day 10, the number of respondents' increases to 193, however, during the coming five days the number stuck. As a result, the questionnaire link was closed. The total visiting amount is 409, and the respondents' number is 193. Hence the responding rate is around 47%.

4.1 Interest level towards Finland study tour

Among the 193 respondents, about 80% of them shows interest in Finland study tour, and 14% percent said no interest at all. 6% of the respondents did not make their choices on the first question but still answered the rest of the survey. The reason for not willing to participate the study tour was categorized into following main aspects:

- Freezing weather in Finland
- I do not have time for a study tour
- I have no idea about Finland
- My English skills are not equivalent
- Not enough budget
- I am still considering

As the chapter 2.3.1 Craze of Studying Tour Heat in China indicates, the overseas study tour becomes popular in China and the market growth is at an optimistic rate, which around 40%-50% yearly. Also, with 80% of respondents are interested in Finland study tour, the data let the case company see the positive potential of implementing such an activity. Besides, based on the chapter 2.3.2, the major reason for the rejection is that Finland leaves people an impression of coldness. Hence, many people, based on the experience on television, are reluctant to come to Finland.

In question 2, Finland was compared with other top 4 favorite European countries of study. The university students were asked to choose two countries. As the Figure 6 shows, around 48% of respondents prefer to have a study tour in the United Kingdom, 26% in Germany, 39% were willing to go to Italy. Approximately 27% of the students chose Sweden. The rate of choosing Finland was roughly 45%. As it mentioned in Chapter 2.2.1, Chinese tourists incline to the European countries with a long history and rich cultures such as UK and Germany. This question is mainly made to explore the decision making of the potential customers, as it mentioned in Figure 5, the customer starts with all existing choices, and consider the relative familiar choice. The decision making is a key element in deterring if the customer is interested in Finland.

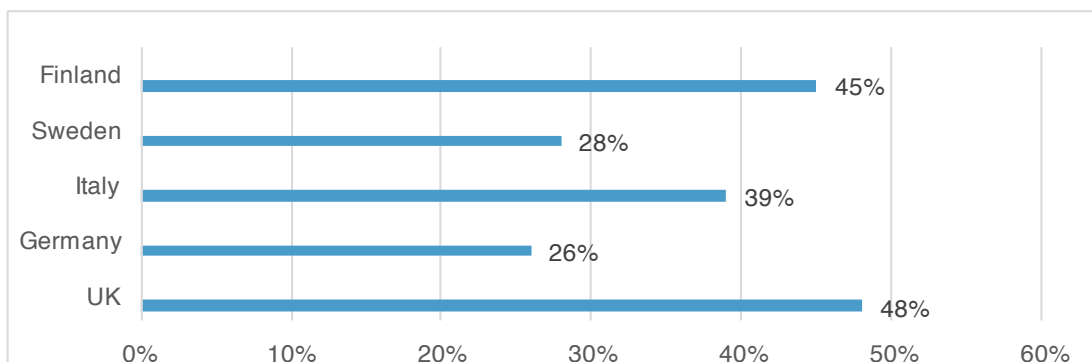


Figure 6. Country Preference

The respondents were asked to rate Finland as a study tour destination from 1-5. 1 represents very bad and 5 the best. According to the data, almost 6% of respondents thought to have a study tour in Finland was a very bad idea; 7% of participants rated 2; 26% of the students gave a score of 3; 33% of the respondent rated 4; 28% of the target Chinese students regarded this project as a very good idea. In general, Finland was optimistically rated, mostly got score 4. Like it is mentioned in Chapter 2.3.1 Craze of Study Tour Heat in China, the amount of Chinese student to have study tour experience are largely raised, although the United States and the United Kingdom are still the top choices. Thus, by referring to the data of the question 3, the start-up company could be certain that a considerable amount of target customers show interest in Finland study tour.

4.2 Respondent Financial Ability

As for the expected budget for the target students, they were asked to choose the options range from 15000RMB to 50000RMB (1923EUR-6410EUR), if none of the choices are preferred, the respondents are asked to specify their acceptable budgets. As Figure 7 shows 51%of the respondents chose 1923-2564 EUR; 21% of the students prefer 2564-3846 EUR; 17% of the responding peoples' acceptable budgets are3846-5128 EUR; for5128-6410 EUR, only 5% of the participants went to the option. Besides, 6% of the students specify their acceptable budget, which mainly under1282 EUR. Based on the research, most of the study tour program, which lasts for ten days, cost 3846 EUR on average. From the survey result, most people's acceptable budget is 1923-2564 EUR, which means that the company's study tour program length could be shortened or make an economy package in regards to the study tour. Thus, such a result reflect the potential customers' expectation range on budget and for the 7% who wish to pay less than 1282 EUR will not be considered as the company's target customers.

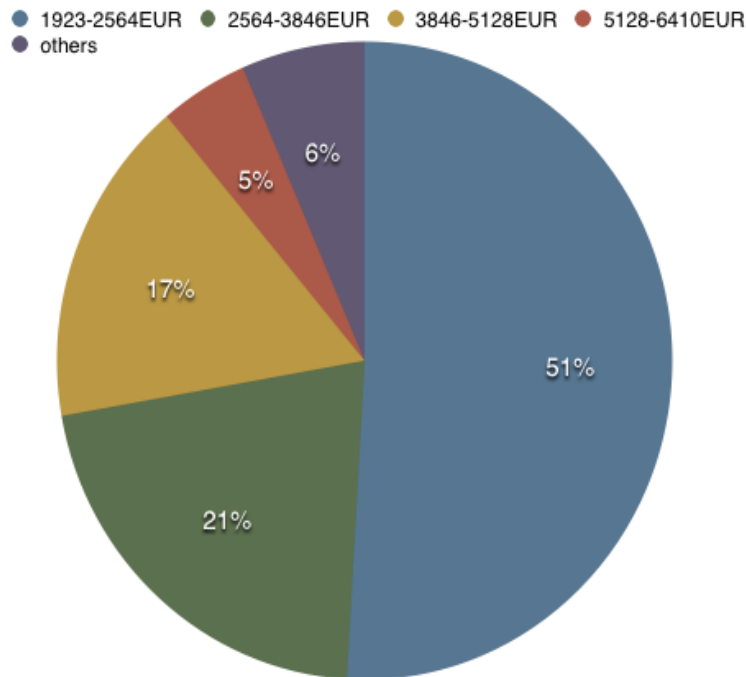


Figure 7. Customer Acceptable budget

4.3 Customer Behavior Of The Target Chinese Students

When students were asked about their expectation on the study tour length, the given options were less than five days, 5-10 days and more than ten days. Based on the result, 12% of them answered less than five days; roughly 41% preferred 5-10 days; more students inclined to more than ten days of study tour period, which accounted for 47% in total. As it mentioned in chapter 2.5, when making a decision on purchasing a service, those students would have different expectations on the same activity. Additionally, according to Figure 5, customer make their choices on tour length based on both internal and external value. In the survey result, the potential customers' choices are more external-driving such as for excitement and self-development purpose. Based on the result, the company would set the study tour length of more than ten days, perhaps 10-12 days. Such length of period deems to be long enough for the student to fulfill the value.

In regards of the time arrangement between studying and travelling, most students, around 59%, deemed it is better to split the study and travel time equally. 24% of the answer went to more time for study; thus, only 17% of the participants chose more time for traveling. Such result reflects that more people are more external value oriented when decide to participate the Finnish Study tour, and one of the most influencing factors are self-development.

When the potential customers made their choices on shopping time preferences, the given options were: 0%, 0-5%, 10%-15% and 15%-20%. Among those choices, 47% of the students went to 5%-10% of total time spend on shopping. The second preferred option was 0-5% and approximately 28% of the people chose it. 16% made their choices on 10-15%. Only 6% of students chose 15-20% and 2% showed no interest in shopping. According to Chapter 2.5, it explains that the customer expects the company to arrange the short time of shopping time for them and they do consider it as a necessary activity, though should not take too much time. As it shows in Figure 5, the customer internal value and motivation are affected by enjoyment and luxury product.

As for the transportation aspects, there were city transportation and cross-city transportation, the choices were walking, bus, train and airplane. Among the city transportation preference, 52% of the students expect to take the bus; 43% of the students wanted to walk. Only a few people chose the train and airplane, which accounted 2% and 3% in total. As for the cross-city section, more people, about 51%, preferred to take the train. Bus and airplane were equally selected, which were 21%. Least people, around 6%, wished to walk across cities. As chapter 2.3.1 and Figure 5 indicate, the way of arranging the transportation options will largely determine the satisfaction of the tour quality.

Based on the same chapter, usually the customers' perception image of a travel destination is quite important since what they imagine is exactly what they are expecting. As a result, with a better understanding of customers' the needs, the company could set a concerted plan based on it and will make the journey easier and more satisfied. In regards to customer expected living condition, the most popular answer was host family, which accounted for 39%. The second popular option was the hotel with reasonable price, which was around 19%. 18% of the participants chose to live in the youth hostel and 16% was okay for any living condition. Only 8% wished to live in luxury hotel. Similarly, in Figure 5 the destination image is a vital factor for customers' expectation and satisfaction, since their words of mouth directly affect other potential customers trust.

As Chapter 2.5 explains that the customers give responses to a situation primarily based on their past experiences. According to the result, 70% of the people wanted to try both Chinese and Finnish meal and 25% of them would like to try mostly Finnish style. Only 5% of the students refused to try the exotic food but only Chinese one. Furthermore, the figure indicates that the potential customers expect to try exotic cuisine, since they value the novelty and excitement in trying various unknown things.

When students were asked if they would like to have friends or families together during the study tour. Based on the statistics, 77% of the students were willing to take their family members and almost 93% of the students wish to be with friends, whereas only 7% of the respondents would like to travel alone and 23% refused to travel with family. Chapter 2.5 indicates that most of the students have the expectation of traveling with families and friends, and in figure 5 indicates such behavior is driven by relationship strengthening external value.

As it explains in Chapter 2.5, motivation, from students' aspects, could be considered as a process of satisfying the needs. Hence, the majority, roughly 50%, of the respondents show the interests in studying in Finland for a master degree in the future, through taking the study tour. Only 20% of them said no. However, 30% of the students were not sure if they would consider studying in Finland after visiting. As shown in Figure 5, more customers make their choices on available choice set, however, for those who could not make the decision, offering the evoked set is rather necessary, in order to guide them to choose the service from the case company business.

50% of the respondents answered that they acquire information about Finland and Finnish study tour from the internet. 25% of them knew it from others such as relatives and friends who had participated in study tour before. 15% of the students said they know it from the news and TV show. 7% of them knew it from newspaper and other 4% were from different ways. The company requires this question as they would like to know the most efficient way of advertising.

As for the expected achievement through the Finland study, students were allowed to choose more than one options. Generally, customers engage in one activity usually have different expectations, and they usually pursue more complex goals for example, the desire for dignity and power, or self-value. As result from question 18: 73% of the choices went to broaden views to see the world and to experience different cultures had 64%. The language skills accounted for 60% in total. Independent ability improvement took 59%. Famous universities visiting accounted for 38%. Social network expanding had 28% and rest 18% was for the master degree preview in Finland. According to the result, the total percentage sum is 340%, which means that most students chose 3-4 options. In addition, students were asked what kind of class students expect to take during the Finland study tour. According to the statistics, 36% of the respondents would like to take forestry lecture. 27% of the students wanted to take art lesson. 19% of the participants wished to have language course and 16% would like to take computer technology lesson. Figure 5, in this

question, suggests that the customer's expectation is determined by motivation, consisting of pursuing knowledge external value.

When the respondents were asked if they would like to choose small-medium size travel institution, 33% of the students said that they would consider. 25% of the respondents would not consider. However, most people, which accounted for 42%, would depend on the situation. This question was required to ask by the organization. The company will see how many people will consider the start-up and prepare the budget for advertising.

4.4 Target Chinese Students General Background Information

Both question 15 and 17 are required by the case company. The question 15 asked if the potential customers like to consider developing in Finland in the future. Most students, about 35% of the students, would like to consider but no not had enough budget for this. 30% of the participants would like to pursue their career or degree in Finland in the future and 20% said they were not interested in. Moreover, 16% of the students were not sure. Question 17 would like to know the student's current study process. Based on the answer, 35% were first-year students. 32% were in the second year. Third-year students accounted for 15% and senior students were 18% in total.

As for the students' current major, 52% of them are forestry. 25% are from Information Management. 15% are from Software Engineering and rest of few percentages is from Computer Science, Electric Engineering and Finance.

5 Discussion

5.1 Major findings

Among the 192 participants, 14% show that the main obstacle for people coming to Finland is the negative impression about coldness, and 80% show interest in coming to Finland through a study tour. The other 6% did not make their choices on whether they were interested in or not, however, they had completed the survey according to Webropol. Hence, their behaviors were understood as: they expressed their interest to the program but were still considering if to participate. Consider Finnish tourism market is growing considerably fast in recent years, it is a positive sign that the majority of respondent of the survey are interested in the study tour. This would give the case company confidence to launch Finnish study tour project.

Regardless of the positive attitude of the participants, the level of competition for study tour is high in Europe. As mentioned in section 4.1, countries such as UK, Italy and Germany are traditionally popular destination for Chinese to pursue a study whereas Finland has only become attractive in the recent decade. In this case, based on the concept of decision making regarding awareness and unawareness sets that is explained in section 2.5 and Figure 5, these traditionally popular destinations that customers are more familiar with are expected to be more competitive than Finland. In our result, apart from selecting the top 4 popular countries in Europe (as mentioned in section 4.1) for study tour, 48% of the students are willing choose Finland as their destination. Without surprise, most students, close to 51%, made their choices as the UK. This result is in high consistency with the idea that the UK, as one option in the awareness set, is more competitive than the unawareness option, Finland. Thus in order to be more competitive, Finland needs to be made more aware to the customers. In addition, much advertisement needs to be conducted to introduce to and familiarize the potential customers about the advantages of Finland such as natural attraction and high quality education. This follows the concept that after becoming an awareness set, an evoke site should be vigorously developed to let more potential customers choose the product (as explained in section 2.5). Nevertheless the comparison between Finland and other popular destinations for study tour helps to estimate the customer quantity for Finnish study tour, this could determine the amount of budget that the company would invest in the program. However, as indicated in section 4.4, only 33% of customer are willing to choose the small-medium size travel company. 45% are not sure, suggesting that the small-medium size travel company in Finland is not highly competitive. Thus, this study tour suits smaller investments. Another interesting point is that since UK receive such high popularity as destination of study tour, the case company could consider UK as a favored market for expanding business in the future.

In addition to the comparison between Finland and its competitors, the answers from the survey (section 4.1) indicates that the motivations for most of the students are to enlarge their views, experience different culture, improve the language skill and develop their independent abilities. This agrees with the previous finding that novelty or knowledge is the tone of the major external value motivating the Chinese outbound tourism (Li & Cai 2012, 473-478). Based on the concept of motivation explained in section 2.5 and Figure 5, the customer's expectation is primarily determined by their motivation and value that overlap and influence each other. In our case, the external value of customers would be quality of education, and internal value would be how much they could receive this education and further development themselves. Good values are what they expected from the study tour, and motivate them to make the decision of choose our company. As shown in Figure 5, fulfilling customer expectation leads to satisfaction and increase in loyalty. . Thus, based on their preferences, the case company should focus on meeting customer need (detail explained in next section). In addition, according to the statistics, students would most likely to study Forestry and Art in Finland. This may be due to other external values such as self-development and excitement, as they wish to get further professional training or study something with full novelty (Li & Cai 2012, 473-478). Hence, before starting the tour, the company should emphasize on making collaboration with the corresponding universities to arrange the lecture in the relative fields. In addition, the students from study tour should be able to share and exchange experience with local students while attending the same lecture and workshop.

Respond to survey in section 4.2 indicates that, financially, 51% the potential customers appreciated with the 15000-20000RMB for the tour expense, which is 1923-2564 EUR and 21% of the respondents chose 20000-30000RMB (2564-3846 EUR). There are a minority of participant are willing to afford more than 40000 RMB (5128 EUR) or less than 1000RMB (1282 EUR) for the study tour, the company would focus on arranging a budget plan only targeting the majorities whose acceptable budget is 1923-3846 EUR. As the market demand and supply are coordinated and balanced by the price, it is vital for company to set a good price that meets the customer expectation. Based on the statistics, the company would have to carefully adjust the factors affecting the expense of the tour such as transport, living and eating conditions according to the budget expected majority of customers

Respond from the survey from section 4.3 indicates that almost half of the students wish a study tour of more than ten days, and people would like to travel with friends and most of them show clear inclination of trying local Finnish food, having Finnish cuisine and living with Finnish families. As it explained in Figure 5, these responds give a good indication of

the internal values (fun/enjoyment) and external values (excitement) that are expected by the customers during the tour. This would help the case company to design and to execute the right programs for the customers.

In addition, section 4.3 reflects the fact that most respondents would like to take art and forestry lecture during the study tour, also they would like to experience the different culture, improve language skills and improve personal abilities. Thus, the case travel agency and university in cooperation should arrange the lecture and activities according to the target students preferences. 64.2% of the students inclined to consider developing their studies and careers overseas, however, among those people, 34.5% were having trouble with the budget issue since their families could not afford it. However, the individual wealth in China varies and can be regional dependent. Thus the survey result is also regional dependent, and should always be made before expanding new customer sources in China.

In section 4.4, background information indicates most respondents are the first-year forestry students. Many students are willing to continue study in Finland, but financial issue hinders some of them. The information provides a reference when the case company is willing to recruit additional customers in China.

5.2 Recommendation For the Company

In conclusion, the project of the study tour in Finland is optimistic since the majority of customers show interests in coming to Finland. However, among our potential customers, small-medium size travel agency is not as competitive as the larger agency, and tour in Finland is unable to compete with tour in other popular countries such as UK. As a result, the customer quantity would be relatively low, and thus large amount of investment would not be advisable. In order to increase the customer quantity, more advertisement should be done. For example to eliminate the negative impression of coldness, the company could do more advertisement on comfortable Finnish summer, because the summer in China is generally unfavorably warm. Another option is to advertise the possibility to experience of snow to some Chinese students from South China, who have hardly ever seen snow in their life. Providing additional after-sell service could also increase competitiveness of the company, such as offering opportunity for exchange study and master degree study in Finland.

Taking into consideration about the popularity of the competitor countries such as the UK, it is quite crucial for the company conduct market research early enough in these countries, and considering expanding the business to popular destinations such as the UK in order to increase the case company profitability in the future. This ensures sustained de-

velopment of a business. Statistics can serve as a reference when the case travel agency expanding the business and recruiting additional customers in other cities in China. For example, when the travel company would like to expand its Finnish study tour in Beijing, new students in faculty of forestry should be considered first as the target group.

Most of the student would like to budget 1923-2564 EUR for the tour expense, and they expect to live in host families, to try local Finnish restaurant and to take the transportation in and cross city. The company should consider how to balance the travel condition and the budget, to best fulfill customers' satisfaction, since there can easily be mismatches between the customer's acceptable budget and expected condition cost. Thus, the company could either raise the budget to match customers' destination image such as living condition and food choices or cut the budget to match customers' expected range but lower the quality of the tour such as choose a cheaper hostel and food. However, because all these services must be purchased from other companies, the case company must spend enough time to search and negotiate in order to have the best cost-effective service for its customers.

To meet the value and motivation of the customers, the company should contact Finnish universities and try to recruit local student, who are willing to act as a host family. Hence, through this way, Chinese students could have reduced living expense, and simultaneously have better experience in the different culture exchange, making new friends and improving their language skills. As majority showed the interest towards studying in Finland in the future, the case travel agency could expand its own business by establishing a branch section such as the study abroad agency, or collaborating with other study abroad companies in regards of study exchange program or study abroad program. Additionally, the company possibly expands its business to other countries such as UK and Germany.

Most important of all, the company should develop and make a good use of social media platforms such as WeChat. As the result has showed in question 14, half of the respondents knew Finland and Finnish study tour via internet, which provides a way of advertising the study tour and the case travel agency. Thus, by posting information including universities, weather and places of interests on WeChat platform, customers would know more about the concrete plan for the trip, as specific as a day to day plan of the tour if they are interested in. This will enable customers to have a better image of the universities they are going to visit during the trip by doing researches in advance. Apart from WeChat, the case company should develop its company image on other social media, for example they could develop an official webpage or tourism forums on the internet. In addition, the firm

could put effort on overseas social media tools such as Instagram and Facebook since the initial goal is to become an international company.

5.3 Further Investigation

In the next step of market research, the company could consider analyzing and recruiting customers from further geographical regions, such as other northern cities in China and southern cities either, since this research survey's main respondents are from the limited number of universities. Thus the data cannot represent a general situation of north part China in regards to the fanatical condition, value, motivation and expectation.

Regarding a precise trip plan, the case company should do further research on Finnish universities that could provide courses matching students' value and expectations. In addition, the company should do more research on other popular destinations for the study tour and take them as references. These destinations have high possibility that they would become the further target destination, as the company is internationally orientated. Consequently, the case company could consider the UK as a destination in the future.

As this thesis is a research-based, hence, other research of a similar topic should take into consideration as well. By comparing the research results, for example, market research on the same region of China but different universities with more potential respondent quantity. The company is provided with a deeper and more objective information about the market as a whole.

5.4 Reflection on Learning

The topic of study tour has been one of the author's interests through the study since the author has some working experience within the industry chain. Hence, this research thesis helped the author to learn further about the tourism especially the study tour, as it is a trend in China.

Through systematically researching on articles of the thesis topic, the author has improved the researching ability and acquired the knowledge of study tour of many aspects including education, tourism in both Finland and China. With a more concrete image on study tour planning and market statistics, besides benefiting the case company, the author could apply that knowledge and be better prepared for future working life in the travel company.

In general, concerning the whole process of the dissertation, the author found it exciting, since there were challenges happened in progress and to overcome was a great

achievement. In the beginning, it was quite hard to conclude the theory since there were many resources but a few were related the thesis topic. However, under the company travel tour guidance, the author managed the research and narrowed the scope down through different key words.

Besides the topic, this research thesis significantly benefited the author in academic writing. With the strict guideline of thesis format, the author learned how to write academically and such ability is crucial for both future studies and works.

5.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the author successfully explored the customer behavior in the Chinese study tourism market in Finland through a survey-based research. Through the survey result, author offered valuable advice and recommendation to the company that will aid the company to make the business plan. Overall, the research question has been answered that it is feasible to introduce Chinese tourism to Finland through study tour.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Survey Questionnaire English version

Brief instruction

In regards of tourism, Finland is located up north. Though small in size, but there are a lot of fascinating features are waiting for you to explore and enjoy such as the clean nature environment, lovely Santa and amazing Northern lights e.c.t. In regards of education, Finland higher education is ranking the first, with the highest number of English language programs, comparing to other countries in Europe, whose mother language is not English. Hence, based on the survey, we could know more about your situation and better prepared for your journey!

Are you interested in Finland study tour?

Yes

No, please specify the reason:

2. If you have a chance, which following countries would you like to have a study tour?

You can choose more than one option.

1. UK.

2. Germany.

3Italy

4 Sweden.

5. Finland

3. What do you think about Finland as a study tour destination?

12345

4. How much would you like to pay and what is your expected budget?

1923-2564EUR

2564-3846 EUR

3864-5128EUR

5128-6410EUR

Others, please specify:

5. What is your expected date for the study tour?

Less than 5 days

About 5-10 days

10-15 days

6. How would you like to arrange your time in Finland?

I would like to have more time for traveling

I would like to have more time to visiting the universities and experience lectures in Finland

I would like keep them half-half

7. How many percentage do you wish to spend on shopping during the trip?

None

0-5%

5-10%

10-15%

15-20%

8. What transportation you wish to take?

City: Bus Plane, Train, Walk

Cross-city: Bus Plane, Train, Walk

9. Are you willing to live in hotel or live in the host family?

Host family

Youth Hotel

Luxury Hotel

10. What type of meal would you prefer?

Finnish cuisine only

Chinese cuisine only

Both

11. Do you wish to travel with your friends?

Yes

No

12. Do you wish to travel with your family?

Yes

No

13. Would you like to study in Finland for a master degree in the future?

Yes

No
Not sure

14. By what way you know about Finland?

Internet
Relatives and friends
TV
News
Others

15. Would you like to develop in Finland in the future?

Yes
No
Not sure

16. What is your major?

Software Engineering
Computer Science
Electric Engineering
Information Management
Digital Media and Art
Finance Management
Others, specify:

17. What is your current study process?

First year
Second year
Third year
Fourth year

18. Through the Finland study tour, what is your expected achievement?

Broaden views
Experience the different culture
Improve the language skills
Develop independent ability
Expand the social network
Visit famous universities

19. What kind of class you wish to take during the study tour?

Art

Computer Science

Forestry

Language

20. Will you consider small to medium size travel institution?

Yes

No

Depend on the situation

Thank you!

Appendix 2. Survey Questionnaire Chinese Version

芬兰位于北欧，是一个以自然森林，湖泊和北极光著称的纯净国度。芬兰被世界权威的旅行杂志《孤独星球》评为**2017**年度最佳旅行地点排名第三。除此之外，芬兰的教育质量享誉世界。和其他欧洲国家相比，芬兰提供的英语课程的课程明显要多。因此，我们希望通过游学的方式来让您体验芬兰的纯净和顶级的教育质量。游学乃行万里路胜读万卷书，在游览芬兰人间风景的同时，您还可以在芬兰知名大学和当地学生交流，在一起上课，参加集体活动，了解芬兰大学的教学模式以及当地的风土人情！欢迎您来芬兰考察和访问！通过这次问卷，我们会根据您的回答来精心安排策划北欧芬兰游学的更多细节。

1. 您对芬兰游学这个活动感兴趣吗？

感兴趣

不感兴趣，请您简单说明理由：

2. 以下的五个国家均为欧洲游学热国，如果您有机会去国外游学，你最希望去哪个国家？可多选

- 英国
 德国
 意大利
 瑞典
 芬兰

3. 从游学角度上讲，您认为芬兰怎么样？**1**代表非常不好，**5**代表非常好

	1	2	3	4	5	
不好	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	非常好

4. 您可以接受的费用是什么范围呢？（费用和时间长短以及食宿条件有关）

- 15000-20000人民币
 20000-30000人民币
 30000-40000人民币
 40000-50000人民币
 其他，请说明：

5. 您希望在芬兰游学多久？

- 5天以内
 5-10天
 10天以上

6. 您希望如何安排您在芬兰的时间安排

- 我希望更多时间来旅游
 我希望更多时间在芬兰大学体验
 我希望游玩和学习时间平分

7. 您希望购物占整个游学行程的百分比是多少：

- 0
 0-5%
 5-10%
 10-15%
 15-20%

8. 在市内和长途行程上，您希望的交通方式是

	步行	巴士	火车	飞机
城市内	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
跨城市	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. 在住宿上，您希望是

- 我希望住星级酒店
- 我希望住普通旅店
- 我希望住寄宿家庭
- 我希望住在青年旅馆
- 我无所谓

10. 在饮食上，您希望的选择是

- 吃不惯芬兰餐，我希望大部分是中餐
- 我希望中餐芬兰餐都尝试
- 我希望大部分吃当地的芬兰餐

11. 您想和家人一起来芬兰游学吗

- 是的
- 不想

12. 您愿意邀请朋友一起来芬兰游学吗

- 是的
- 不想

13. 通过游学方式了解芬兰，您有没有来芬兰留学的意愿呢？

- 有
- 没有
- 我不确定

14. 如果您感兴趣的话，您是通过哪种途径了解芬兰的

- 电视新闻
- 网络
- 报纸
- 参加过游学的朋友和亲属提起
- 其他，请说明：

15. 您将来有在国外发展的意向吗

- 有
- 没有
- 有意向，但是家庭状况不允许
- 我不确定

16. 您目前的专业是：

- 软件工程系
- 计算机科学系
- 电子工程系
- 信息管理系
- 数字媒体与艺术系
- 财经管理系
- 其他，请说明：

17. 您现在的学业进度是：

- 大一
- 大二
- 大三
- 大四

18. 选择出国游行，您最想收获的是：（可以多选）

- 到访国外名校
- 开阔自己的视野
- 提高语言水平
- 拓展国内外人脉
- 了解当地文化和风土人情
- 锻炼自己的独立能力
- 考察芬兰大学为自己留学做准备
- 其他，请说明：

19. 您希望在芬兰参加哪方面的课程：

- 语言
- 人文艺术
- 计算机科学
- 农林业
- 其他，请说明：

20. 您会考虑选择小型的游学机构吗

- 会考虑
- 不考虑
- 看情况，有可能

感谢您的参与