

RESEARCH ON DEFINING THE BEST ONLINE PLATFORM TO PROMOTE FINLAND AS A TRAVEL DESTINATION IN CHINA

Developing tourism between Finland and China

Abstract

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Title of publication Research on defining the best online platform to promote Finland as a travel destination in China Developing tourism between Finland and China		
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Abstract <p>The aim of this thesis is to find the most suitable tourism marketing platform to promote Finland to Chinese consumers. The author uses qualitative methods to study the following three topics: what kind of Chinese people travel abroad? which online travel agency (OTA) platform is the most suitable for promoting Finnish tourism services? What challenges and opportunities will Finland face in entering the Chinese tourism market?</p> <p>The results of this study show that Trip (Ctrip) is the most suitable choice for Finland to promote its tourism services to Chinese consumers. The Finnish tourism market is very mature and has been very active in cooperating with China, but it still needs to improve its influence in China. The author's comments and opinions are also based on the judgments and conclusions made by analyzing these resources.</p>		
Keywords Tourism market, digital marketing, OTA (online travel agency), economy development		

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

From the perspective of China's socio-economic development, tourism is a way to satisfy the upgrade of consumption structure, release consumption potential and drive the most important way for consumption growth (Xinhua net 2018).

Nowadays, the world's most promising travel market, China has the most wanted customers by global travel companies. However, throughout many decades of development, this market has becoming increasingly complicated and challenging with Chinese tourists becoming more sophisticated, knowledgeable and wealthy (Tourism industry 2019). With the advancement and development of science and technology, as an emerging tourism e-commerce, people have gradually realized that e-commerce has extremely beneficial effects on promoting the development of tourism. Tourism e-commerce is to improve the Tourism Institutions of internal and external connectivity by means of advanced information technology, which makes the relationship between tourism enterprises more closely, information communication more smoothly, a kind of electronic commerce form the relationship between tourism enterprises and tourists (Meng 2017). Therefore, if other countries want to enter the Chinese tourism market quickly, they must understand how tourism e-commerce works in the Chinese tourism market. "Online travel agencies" will replace the traditional travel business models and become the mainstream and future of the travel market. According to Dai Bin, the director of the China Tourism Academy, believes that online platforms are intervening in the tourism market, adapting to the current trend of individualized development of China's tourism industry (Travel Daily 2011).

In the entire Nordic tourism industry, the Finnish tourism market has been growing in recent years. Compared with the popular U.S. or Western European tourism market, Finland possesses a wealth of rare beauty, a truly distinctive ambience, with midnight sun in the summer, and the ephemeral allure of the Northern Lights in the winter (Discovery Finland). Judging from the analysis of big data, "niche tour" will become the mainstream of the travel industry in 2020 (Create A Premium Stay 2019). Hence, it is more in line with China's current niche trend.

1.2 Research objective and questions

The thesis aims to find the most suitable shortcut for Finnish travel agencies to enter Chinese market through online media marketing. The objective of the thesis is to gather a

series of market surveys and compare the various indicators related to Chinese tourism e-commerce platform.

The thesis analyzes the problems Finland and China have had regarding tourism. In addition, the thesis explores how to integrate resources so that both countries could improve their economy through tourism.

This thesis will focus on the following three questions:

1. What kind of Chinese people choose to travel abroad?
2. Which Chinese online travel agency platform is the most suitable one for promoting Finnish tourism services?
3. What opportunities and challenges will Finland face in entering the Chinese tourism market?

1.3 Research method

This thesis applies a qualitative research method. Qualitative research is focuses on obtaining data through open-ended and conversational communication (Adi 2020).

Qualitative research is designed to reveal the meaning that informs the action or outcomes that are typically measured by quantitative research (Ashley 2020). The author summarizes the types and influencing factors of Chinese outbound tourists through the literature and survey questionnaires written by previous scholars. In order to find the most suitable Chinese tourism electronic platforms for media marketing in Finland, the author selects the three most representative applications and compares and analyzes these. Finally, the author also uses the collected resources and literature to analyze the current status of tourism in China and Finland in tourism, and then summarizes the future development direction of the two countries.

1.4 Thesis structure

The main body of this thesis consists of six chapters, including references that support the entire thesis. Here is a brief overview of each chapter:

Chapter 1: This chapter presents the background and current status for the thesis, and explains which research methods the author wants to use to solve the research questions to achieve the objective and goals.

Chapter 2: This chapter introduces the development of China's tourism market through data and tables and describes three popular travel categories and media marketing in China's tourism market.

Chapter 3: This chapter analyzes the consumption psychology and behavior patterns of Chinese outbound tourists, and which factors affect their behavior.

Chapter 4: This chapter introduces Chinese business platforms and compares and analyzes to find out which one is most suitable for Finnish cooperation and media marketing.

Chapter 5: This chapter analyzes the current status of tourism in China and Finland and explores the challenges and opportunities in tourism between the two countries.

Chapter 6: This chapter aims to draw conclusions, to explore the most suitable direction for the development of tourism in Finland and how to use tourism to promote economic development in the future.

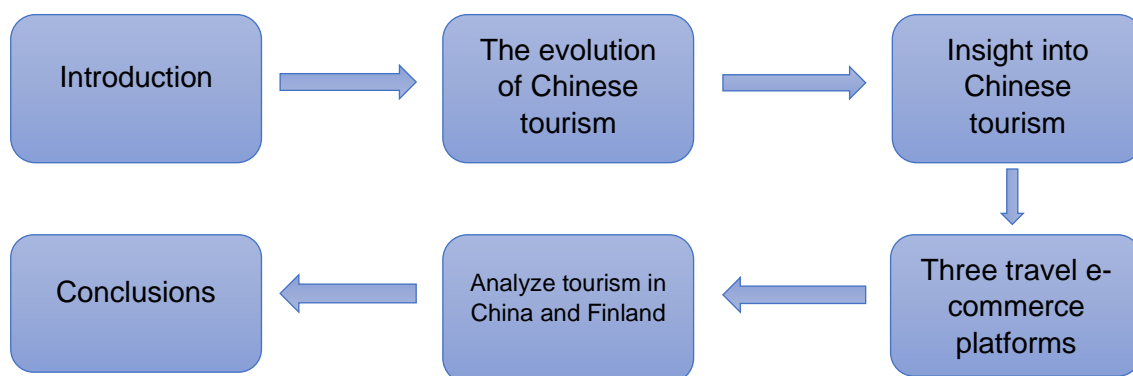


Figure 1 Thesis structure

2 THE EVOLUTION OF CHINESE TOURISM

This chapter mainly explains the transformation of China's tourism industry from weak to strong in the past forty years, and especially introduces the development process of China's tourism market, tourism types and tourism media marketing.

2.1 Development of the Chinese tourism market

Since China's reform and opening up, the entire Chinese economy and society have undergone tremendous changes. As far as China's tourism industry is concerned, despite a series of ups and downs in these forty years, as the population increases year by year and the living standards improve, people's thirst for the spiritual world is growing. Therefore, China's tourism is also showing a state of advancement today. After 40 years of development, the tourism industry has made great achievements in promoting socio-economic development, enhancing China's international status, driving population employment and increasing people's well-being (Li & Liu 2019, 10). This is the development process of the Chinese tourism market. In this process, there are ups and downs and fluctuations (Zeng 2019).

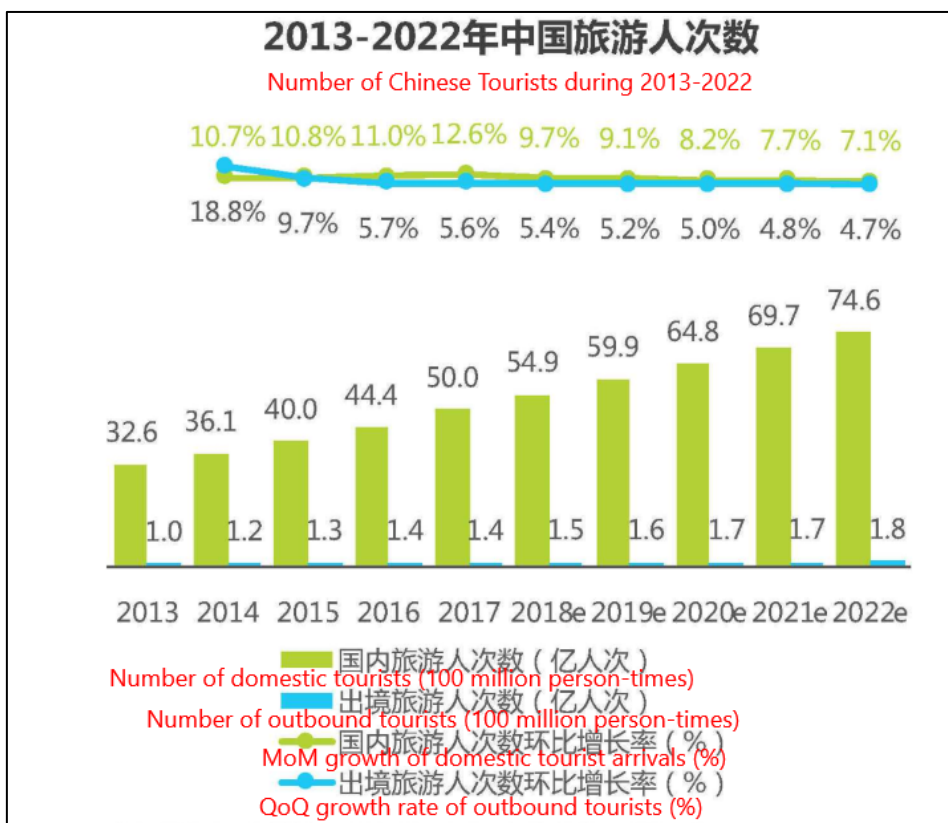


Figure 2 Number of Chinese tourists 2013-2022 (iResearch 2019)

According to the overall process of China's reform and opening up, combined with the characteristics of the reform and opening up of the tourism industry, the basic course of China's tourism reform and opening up for 40 years can be divided into three stages, which are the opening-up and preliminary reform stages from 1978 to 1991. , The period of domestic opening up and accelerated reform from 1992 to 2011, the two-way opening up and deepening reform from 2012 to the present (China Beijing Attractions Expo 2019).

2.1.1 Formation

In the early days of China's reform and opening up, citizens were more concerned about their food and clothing. Instead of not having a sense of tourism, they might as well not understand what tourism is. In the early 1980s, the country's door just opened, and in the newspapers and television, more and more blond, foreign-style tourists came to China. These people walked the streets, neither producing nor laboring, which made people feel curious, only to find out later that they came to travel (Dai 2019). Therefore, China's tourism industry has not yet formed an independent industry in that era, but it was only because of the founding of New China that it began to appear on the world stage, thereby attracting international friends and professionals from all countries to see a new look of the early development of New China. On the other hand, overseas Chinese compatriots and overseas Chinese miss the hometown of their homeland, which has created a series of visits.

However, at that time, China's economic level was not enough to support the development of the tourism industry. For example, there were not enough hotels and restaurants, and a series of facilities such as transportation were lagging behind. Many reasons restricted the development of tourism. Therefore, the birth of China's tourism industry is not for leisure, but to promote China's economic development through tourism. On November 17, 1977, when talking with the then Guangdong Provincial Party Committee leader, Deng Xiaoping

made it clear that China can easily earn 2 to 3 billion foreign exchange by doing a good job in tourism (FengHuang Tourism 2018)

	The beginning of modern tourism		Tourism development stage	
Factor 因素	现代旅游起始阶段: 1978-1988年	国内旅游培育阶段: Domestic tourism cultivation stage 1989-1996年	旅游大发展阶段: 1997-2007年	旅游新常态阶段: New normal stage of tourism 2008年至今 To date
Policy factor 政策因素	赚取外汇 Earn foreign exchange	重要产业 Important industry	经济新增长点 New economic growth points	战略支柱产业 Strategic pillar industries
Management factor 管理因素	政府统一领导 Unified government leadership	部分权力下放 Partial decentralization	尊重市场 Respect the market	市场决定 Market decision
Demand factor 需求因素	人均GDP 183~283 \$ 只有入境旅游 GDP per capita Inbound tourism only	人均GDP 310~709 \$ 国内旅游兴起 Domestic tourism cultivation stage The rise of domestic tourism	人均GDP 781~2695 \$ 国内旅游繁荣 Domestic tourism development stage Domestic tourism boom	人均GDP 3471~8826 \$ 出境旅游增强 New normal stage of tourism Outbound Tourism Enhancement

Table 1 The basis for dividing tourism development in China (Zhang, Weng & Bao 2019)

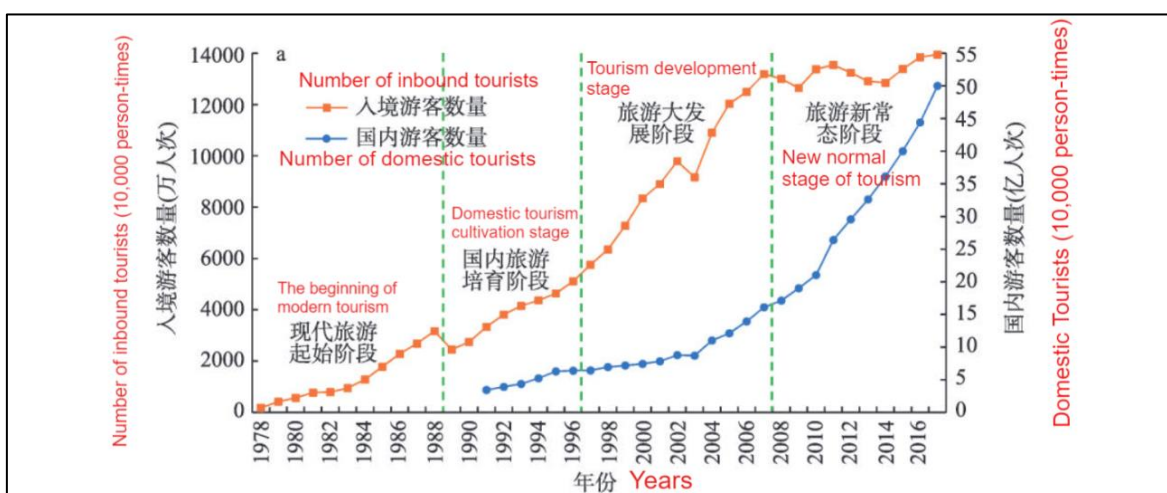


Figure 3 The division of tourism development stages in China since 1978 (Zhang et al. 2019)

2.1.2 Growth

From the "Seventh Five Year Plan" of the national economy in 1986 to December 1998, the Central Economic Work Conference identified tourism as a "new growth point for the national economy (Du 2018)." With the gradual maturity of reform and opening up, the Chinese tourism industry no longer needs to help the country develop economic construction by earning foreign exchange. The government has decided to expand the area of the tourism industry. Instead of focusing on international tourism only, let international and domestic tourism develop together. The task of tourism work is to promote the development of inbound tourism, break the institutional barriers that restrict

the development of inbound tourism, and then promote the opening up to the outside world, let the world understand China, and let China enter the world(Xia & Xu 2018).

With the gradual understanding of the tourism industry by the Chinese government, the continuous optimization of tourism facilities and the improvement of people's income level, the tourism industry entered a new stage and developed rapidly. However, before the mid-to-late 1990s, for most people, travelling was a luxury, and it was difficult for ordinary residents to bear the costs of international and domestic tourism (Li 2018). Based on this background, the country takes tourism reform as its core goal. First of all, it strives to develop the tourism market to meet people's needs for domestic and outbound tourism. At the same time, it strengthens the management of the tourism industry and upgrades various facilities. In terms of tourism market-oriented reforms, its outstanding performance is the establishment of the standard management scope of tourism industry, promoting the process of the reform of tourism marketization, and the growth of the tourism market players; to promote the development of domestic tourism and outbound tourism, it is mainly to reform the holiday system and tourism development guidelines (Xia & Xu 2018).

Since 2012, China has entered a new stage, and the tourism industry has also entered a new era. Tourism consumption has the first place in service consumption, which is also related to the people's livelihood happiness index, and is an important factor to stimulate economic growth. Since the beginning of the 21st century, with the deepening of reform and opening up and the sharp improvement of the country's overall economic level, the tourism market has flourished, showing a trend of "high-speed development of the domestic tourism market and steady development of the inbound and outbound markets" (Li 2018).

2.1.3 Prospect

Data show that in the early years of the reform and opening up in 1978, there were only 1.81 million inbound tourists in China, only 220,000 inbound tourists from foreign countries, and foreign exchange income from international tourism was only \$ 263 million. By 2017, the number of domestic tourists in China reached 5.01 billion, with domestic tourism revenue of 456.6 billion yuan; inbound tourists totaled 13.948 million; international tourism revenue was \$ 123.4 billion; and domestic residents went out of the country by 14.273 million (Li 2018). With the changes of the times, the tourism industry has successfully penetrated into the daily lives of ordinary Chinese people in just 40 years. From the luxury items that people could not imagine in the early days of reform and

opening up to the necessities of leisure and entertainment, significant changes depend on the increasing awareness of Chinese people and the optimization of tourism methods. With the rise in consumption levels and the expectations of Chinese people for the quality of tourism, this is also providing a direction for the future development of the tourism industry.

2.2 Tourism classification

With the gradual improvement of the Chinese people's material living standards, tourism products have become affordable for everyone. Tourism has become the first choice for people to spend time. In order to meet different needs, the tourism market tries to provide different ways to travel to satisfy all customers.

2.2.1 Tour package

Group tourism is organized by travel agencies and consists of elements such as food, accommodation, travel, tourism, shopping, entertainment, etc, which are jointly participated by group tourists (Liu 2019). Because people are not familiar with the various facilities and services of the destination, the group tour has become a trusted way of tourism in the development stage of China's tourism industry. From this, we can see that the group tour in China has developed for a long time, so follow the group Tourism is currently the most mature and well-recognized tourism product in the Chinese tourism market. The reason why group travel is sought after by the masses is because it has these incomparable advantages (Philpott 2019):

- 1) Someone to show you the way
- 2) Instant friends
- 3) Tried and tested best of a destination
- 4) Safety if anything should go wrong
- 5) A good way to organise group travel
- 6) Reassurance for your parents
- 7) Group discounts
- 8) See things you would not be able to usually
- 9) Have someone for the photos

On the other hand, due to the lack of innovation in group tours, poor service quality, strong buying and selling, and asymmetric information (Zhou 2017), for which kinds of news that has harmed the interests of customers has repeatedly been exposed to the public. This makes Chinese tourists question whether to sign up for group tours. There still has a large potential market demand to explore in Chinese tour group, and how to carry forward the advantages and break the traditional concept of package group is to use "customer-centric" to strengthen customer experience instead of "shopping centered" wrong values (Wang 2017).

In the past two years, participating in travel agencies and group tours is still the first choice for Chinese outbound tourism. According to the China Tourism Academy's annual outbound tourism report, the percentage of tourists who traveled out of the group in 2018 reached 55.24%, and 50.65% of the respondents indicated that they would like to participate in tour groups in future outbound tourism (Fang 2019).

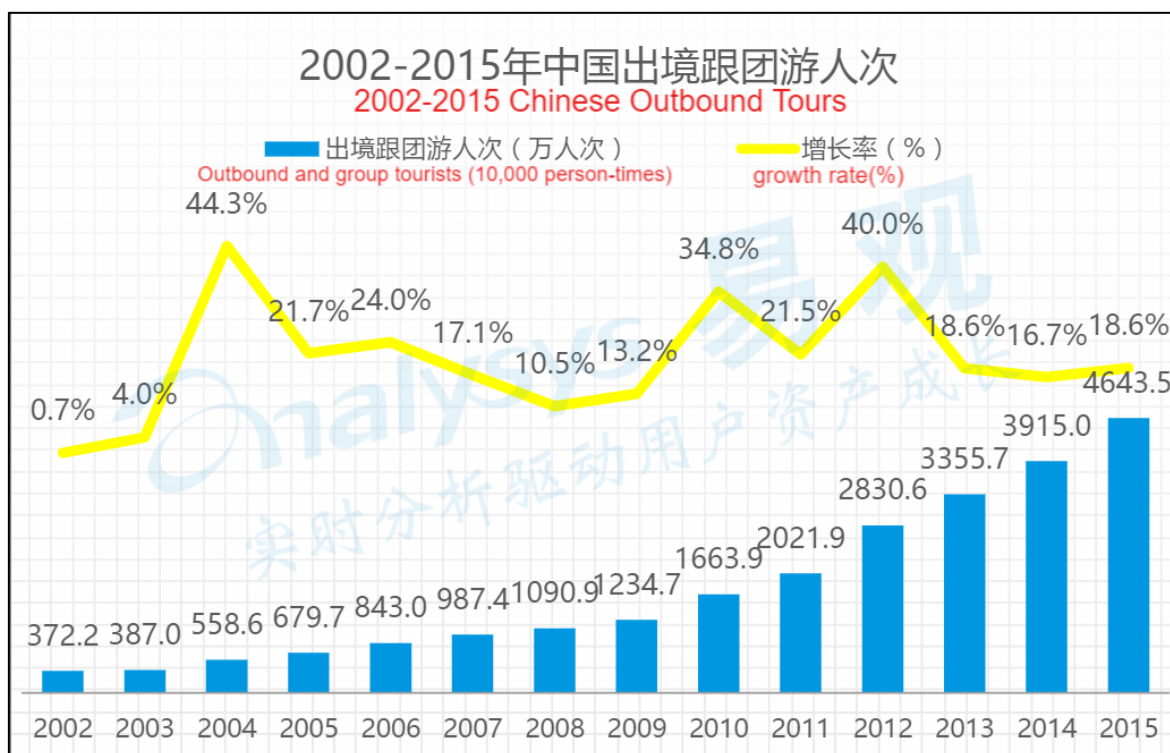


Figure 4 Chinese outbound tours 2002-2015 (Zhu 2016)

2.2.2 Self-service travelling

This type of tourism is called "self-planned tour", which means that tourists arrange tourism activities according to their own wishes. They do not completely rely on travel agencies and are not accompanied by tour guides. They are very autonomous travel methods (Dong 2015, 33). Based on the maturity of the development of China's tourism

industry, the way of travel is no longer limited to group travel. With the changes in people's needs and consumption concepts, and the increase of self-consciousness, self-service travelling begins to rise. When people browse on various software, they will make a series of travel plans. This is the emergence of free travel ideas, such as the development of Ctrip, Tuniu, Donkey Mom, Meituan, etc, which makes it easier for people to book flights and hotels (Chen & Yang 2018, 8). Depending on the development of the tourism e-commerce platform and the strengthening of the network system, people can understand and formulate strategies more intuitively and comprehensively. Therefore, there is no doubt that free travel has become one of the important trends in the future development of tourism. There are several benefits to choosing free travel as a way to travel (Mehmedova 2020):

- 1) You will get to know yourself better
- 2) It will get you out of your comfort zone
- 3) It is cheaper
- 4) You will make new friends easier
- 5) You get to choose your own route
- 6) You will learn how to rely in yourself
- 7) You reflect on the experiences better

Nonetheless, independent travel still has bottlenecks. For example, tourists have high requirements for themselves, and tourists need to have good itinerary planning and execution capabilities. For price flexibility, some payments outside the scope may occur. The choice is small, and the destinations selected by tourists need to have good facilities. Therefore, the current "freedom" is limited to relatively fixed destinations, departure

places, and time constraints, and lacks flexibility (Chen 2008, 500).

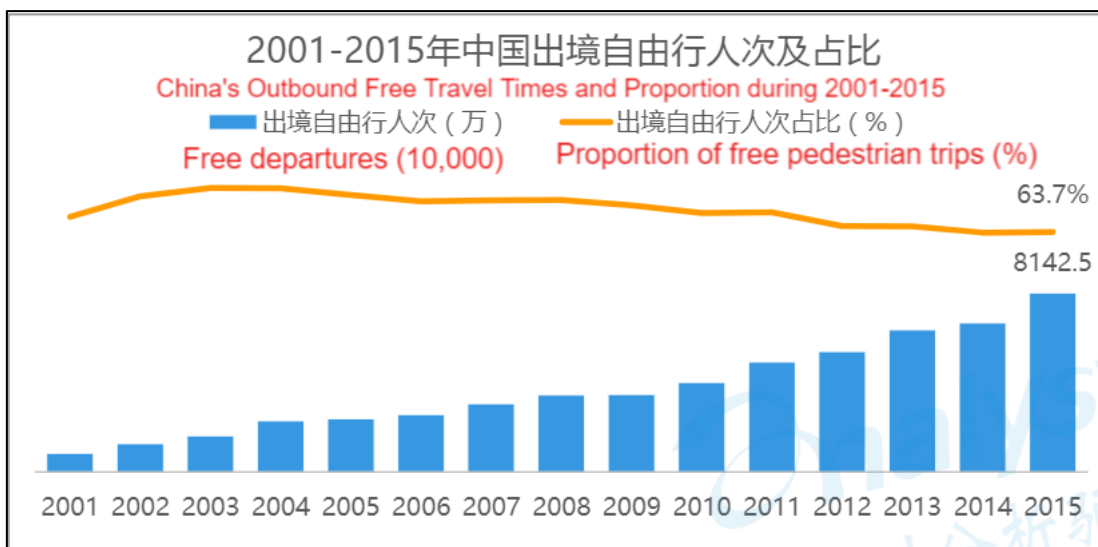


Figure 5 China's outbound free travel times and proportion 2001-2015 (Zhu 2016)

2.2.3 Tailor-made travel

Tailor-made travel is a new concept and method developed under a personalized background. It is a marketing mix based on individual specific needs to meet the specific needs of each customer (Meng, Gu, Guan, Zheng & Lai 2016). Customized travel is a combination of the advantages of group tours and free travel. It not only can develop personalized travel products according to customer needs, almost eliminates middlemen, but also can ensure the smooth implementation of the journey. Customers can freely allocate their own time. Therefore, customized tours can be said to be a completely customer-centric form of tourism. According to statistics from the National Tourism Administration and the China Tourism Academy, the scale of the customized travel market in 2016 was about 120 billion yuan. Looking at the situation as of November 2017, the market for customized travel has shown an upward trend, and the penetration rate has been increasing every year. With a 2.5% increase, we expect the market size to reach

1.06 trillion yuan in 2020 (Dou 2017).



Figure 6 Classification of the main supply methods of China's customized travel market (iResearch 2019)

Compared with China's mature traditional group tourism and well-known free travel, because only high-end consumer groups and highly educated people are interested in tailor-made travel products, customized tourism has not yet entered the mainstream tourism market in China, despite its market potential It is worth digging, but there are five pain points of custom tourism (Cheng 2019):

- 1) Traffic acquisition methods are relatively single
- 2) Service efficiency is low
- 3) Talents are difficult to recruit and train
- 4) Lack of supply chain management capabilities
- 5) Lack of product system and marketing capabilities

More and more OTA(online travel agencies) and travel e-commerce platforms have expanded their market scope, trying to find a balance between the quality and price of travel products. This is because of the demand generated by the public from the material level to the spiritual level. It also makes tourism gradually change from a seller's market to a buyer's market. The market potential and development space of customized tourism do not require any demonstration. However, the development of customized tourism market will take time. This requires the joint efforts of the government and tourism enterprises (Gao 2019, 136).

2.3 Tourism digital marketing

Digital marketing encompasses all marketing efforts that use an electronic device or the internet. Businesses leverage digital channels such as search engines, social media, email, and other websites to connect with current and prospective customers (Alexander 2019). With the rapid development of the Internet and digital technology, digital marketing models have emerged as the times require.

In the early days of digital marketing, everyone used online forums as a tool to express personalized ideas. By 2005, people have increasingly used the Internet in their lives, and the penetration rate of the Internet has been higher than 50%, social media has gradually become the mainstream media; by 2010-2017, the online penetration rate of the Internet has reached more than 80% (Chen 2018, 91-92). Digital marketing is a subversion and transcendence of traditional marketing methods. It changed the unidirectional, centralized, closed, and limited information transmission of traditional marketing, and replaced it with interactive, participatory, open, massive information, and precision (Yao & Qin 2013, 62).

Social media marketing (SMM) is the use of social media websites and social networks to market a company's products and services. Also known as "digital marketing" and "e-marketing," social media marketing has purpose-built data analytics tools that allow marketers to track how successful their efforts are (Kenton 2018). The rapid development of the Internet industry has laid the foundation for marketing promotion and created the environment. At the same time, many social media forms have sprung up, and media marketing is a new type of marketing model in this background. In 2013, the number of Chinese mobile Internet users reached 618 million. Affected by the gradual decrease in the price of smartphones, the number of Chinese mobile Internet users will continue to grow rapidly in 2014 (Han 2014, 17). Focusing on disseminated content and creativity, and more on user engagement and interaction, are the main driving forces of social media marketing. The future trend of social media marketing will tend to develop interactive, public opinion, visibility, and precision (Bangyuewang 2017).

New media marketing centers on promoting brands and selling products and services through established and emerging online channels, harnessing these elements of new media to engage potential and current customers. More and more people have joined this industry, so e-commerce platforms and the emergence of various media platforms has also provided people with a variety of ways to obtain information. In 2019, the number of social mobile users in China Mobile was expected to reach 780 million. At the same time, both short video and online live broadcast users have maintained a rapid growth

momentum, providing a better traffic basis for new media marketing (Luo 2019).

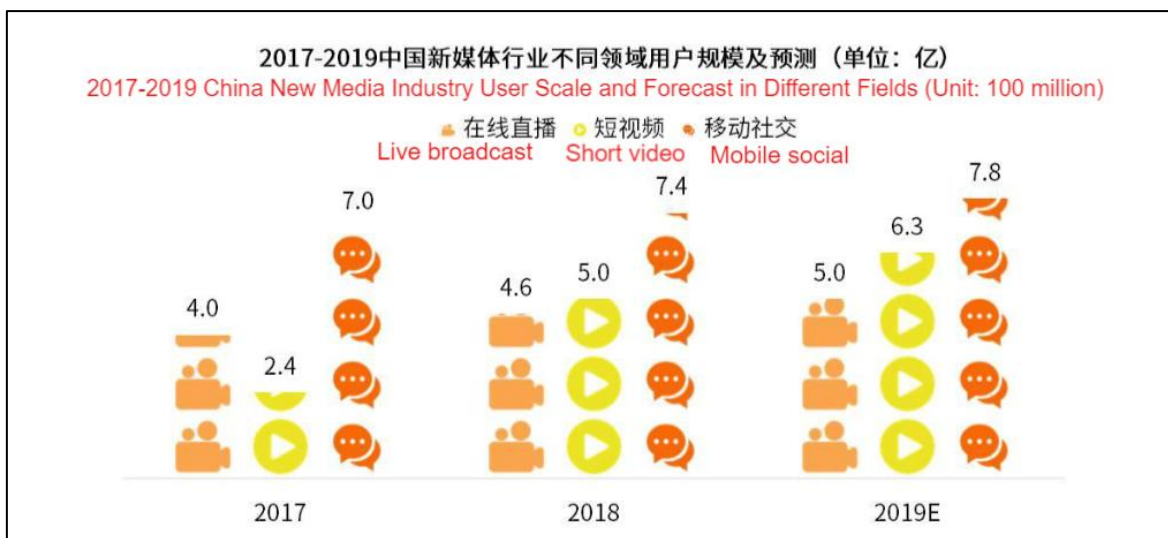


Figure 7 China new media industry user scale and forecast in different fields 2017-2019 (Unit: 100 million) (Luo 2019)

We Media is a way for the general public to strengthen their digital technology and connect with the global knowledge system, and then start to understand how the general public provides and shares their own facts and their own news (Xu 2019, 15). Since the media is a non-traditional new media marketing model, its emergence proves that no longer only companies can do media marketing, but more and more people can create and publish their own through the internet and mobile devices anytime "Media" also proves that the platform for self-media has low thresholds, low cost and simple operation. At present, WeChat, Weibo, QQ, and various online communities have a huge user base, which is also an important advantage of self-media marketing. Due to the huge number of self-media platforms, self-media marketing has a large influence and the scope of influence is unmatched by traditional media marketing (Zhai 2017, 47).

In the era of under-developed information technology, tourist destinations need to experience firsthand, and then use traditional media such as newspapers, radio, and television to complete information dissemination. In the era of new media, every tourist is the voice of the destination. The openness of new media and the sharing of tourism coincide to a certain extent (Zhi 2019). It can be seen that the strong impact of digital marketing on the tourism industry cannot be underestimated. Digital marketing has not only stimulated the rapid development of the tourism industry, but also strengthened the connection between various types of social media platforms and the tourism industry and achieved mutual success. The tourism industry uses digital marketing for five reasons (Telle 2018):

- 1) More customer engagement
- 2) Exposure on search engine results
- 3) Usage of social media to communicate
- 4) Growing number of experience-hungry consumers
- 5) Use data to create personalized travel experience

Today's Chinese information technology market is flooded with a variety of application platforms, and the number of downloads is also increasing. According to the data of China Internet Watch in the first quarter of 2018, an average of 42 applications are installed per Chinese mobile phone user (Gupta 2018). It is inferred that the time spent by the Chinese people on these application platforms is quite long, and from the current trend, these data will continue to rise in the future. Therefore, it is important to understand and make full use of these applications if the foreign tourism industry wants to successfully carry out digital tourism marketing in China.

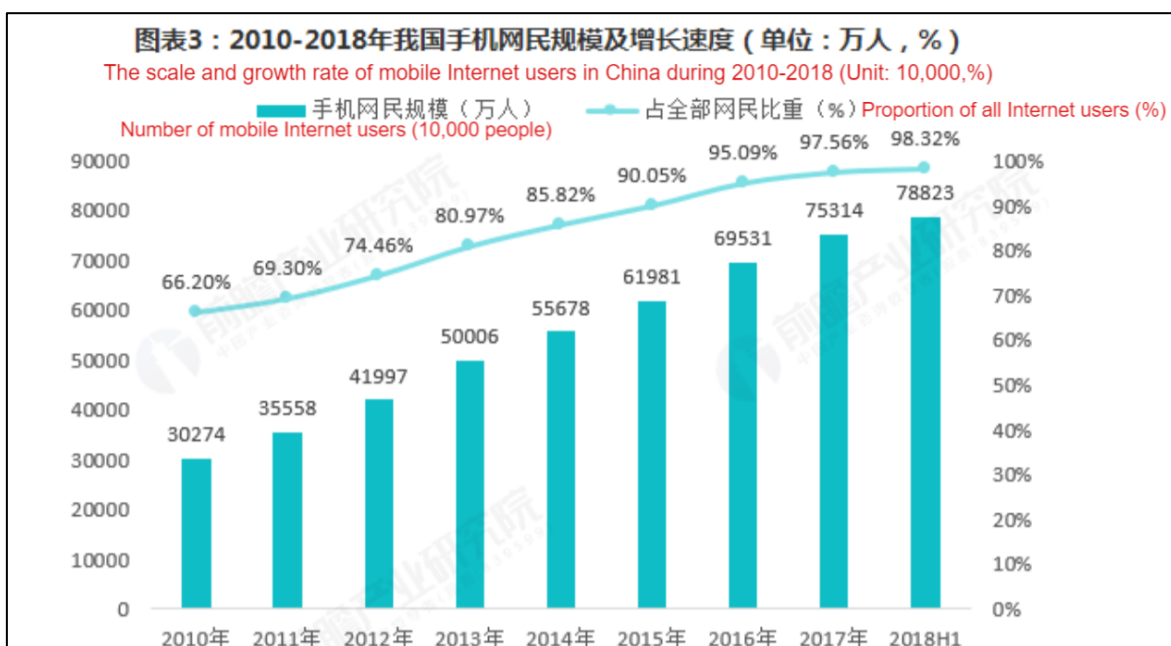


Figure 8 The scale and growth rate of mobile Internet users in China during 2010-2018 (G 2019)

3 INSIGHT INTO CHINESE TOURISM

3.1 Psychological needs

Needs, motives and motivations are the engines of human conduct and they play a fundamental part in the mechanics of tourism (Gisolf 2014). With the gradual improvement of the living standards of the Chinese people, there is a demand both in material and spiritual terms, and the idea of going out is born because people have such psychological needs, which has led to a variety of tourism products. This is the principle of "people's hearts are the market" (Zheng 2012, 1).

With the increasingly competitive and rapidly changing international environment, in tourism, the key is to focus on travelers. Therefore, the key lies in the public's travel psychology. Only by understanding the tourists' thinking and their potential psychological needs, the travel market can continue to develop. Because travelers have different motivations, and their motivations have also varied over time, here are some scholars' opinions and conclusions on tourism motivations collected by the author:

Thomas (1964) classified tourism motivations into four types: educational cultural motivations (such as understanding the customs and customs of other countries, looking at special scenic spots, etc.), and recreational motivations (such as breaking away from routine work and duties and having a good time) , Ethnic traditional motivations (such as root-seeking trips), and other motivations (Lin & Wang 2010, 147).

Mackintosh (1990) proposed that people's travel motivation may have the following types: first, physical motivation; second, cultural motivation; third: interpersonal motivation; fourth: status and fame motivation (Lin & Wang 2010, 147-148).

In the travel career mode, escape and relaxation, self-development, relationship strengthening, stimulation, isolation, Fourteen potential factors of nostalgia, relationship, independence, social identity and romance (Li 2015).

3.2 Consuming behavior

Tourism consumption behavior includes a number of key concepts that are closely related to the decision-making process of purchasing a tourist service or visiting a particular destination (Nistoreanu, Pădueran, Nica & Tănase 2018).

Values are lasting beliefs that people have formed about specific behavior patterns and meanings in life. They are a standard for evaluating the meaning and utility of specific things and behavior patterns. They have a central place in individual cognitive systems.

The importance of values lies in guiding social attitudes and individual actions, and has an important influence and guiding effect on consumer behavior. It is considered to be the root factor of consumer decision-making systems and behavior patterns (Yu, Huang & Hou 2017, 117). As a result of people's desire for tourism, the demand for travel has resulted in a series of travel-related consumer behaviors. Values are linked to consumption, so the first task of analyzing Chinese consumer behavior patterns is to understand their consumption values. Since the reform and opening up, most Chinese people have shifted from a diligent and thrifty consumption mode to a modern consumption mode that values the quality of life. The main tourist population and influencing factors

After understanding the needs and motivations of Chinese people for travel, and recognizing their consumption behavior patterns and reasons, in order to develop a more targeted publicity plan, it is necessary to segment the type of Chinese outbound tourists, and analyze the different groups and influence their behavior. Factors to think about which program will attract them. After analyzing the literature searched by the author, Chinese outbound tourists are divided into student tourism market (including teenagers and college students), family tourism market (including men, women and couples), and elderly tourism market.

3.2.1 Student tourism market

The author divides the Chinese student market into two markets: youth and college students. In fact, the 18-year-old divides the Chinese student tourism market into two regions. There are more than 220 million school-age adolescents in China, and there are tens of millions of school-age adolescents in the urban population (Dong 2017, 93). On the other hand, according to the National Bureau of Statistics, the number of young students in China is about 100 million (Feng, Zhou & Yang 2019, 38). Compared with office workers, students with winter and summer vacations have more time to travel. It can be seen that the youth tourism market has great development potential and grasping the consumption motivation and behavior characteristics of this consumer group can expand the entire tourism market and make a good profit. The following are some relevant data collected by the author on the travel of students under the age of 18:

- a) According to the questionnaire statistics, 85.5% of young students like to travel, and 41% of them are very favorite. As for the tourism activities organized in the school, 65% of young students said they would take the initiative to participate.

- b) 55% of young students chose leisure vacations, and broadening their horizons was also the main motivation for traveling for students, with 27.5%.
- c) After investigation and statistics, it can be ground in a variety of information source channels, mainly biased to obtain information from the Internet, accounting for 83.5%. And the second is word of mouth, accounting for 47.3%.
- d) 96% of students said that this sharing behavior not only provided the scenery for everyone to enjoy together, 74.1% of young students chose to post pictures in the circle of friends, Weibo, and space.
- e) Travel agency group and semi-self-service type accounted for 66% of the way to travel. Friends and family travel are the choice of almost all young students. Among junior high school students, 64% choose to travel with their families, but high school students are different, they choose to travel with friends first.

- (Feng et al 2019,
38-39)

Chinese students are positive about travel according to the above data. But mainly because young students want to get rid of the heavy learning life, so they choose travel to relax and relieve stress. Another main reason is that they want to broaden their horizons and increase their knowledge through travel. In addition, the popularity of smartphones in China is increasing year by year. More and more young people can obtain information through mobile phones and other electronic products. After the trip, teenage students are willing to share their travel experiences and feelings through some social media platforms, and this channel is also an indirect help for tourism destinations to promote. Therefore, it can be inferred that the outside world has a strong appeal to the curious youth group through digital marketing propaganda.

As far as China is concerned, young students are consumers, and there is no independent source of economics. Tourism consumption is mostly from parents or scholarships, so the consumption level is limited (Dong 2017, 93). Compared with European and American families, despite the liberalization of the second child policy in China in recent years, most Chinese families now have only one child. Most of this group lacks social practice knowledge and the ability to live independently. Therefore, it is a matter of economic independence and security. Judging from the fact that most of China's youth travel consumption comes from their parents, they also need to be accompanied by adults.

Compared with the youth student group, the psychological needs and consumption behavior of Chinese college students entering adulthood have undergone a certain change.

Like the youth student group, college students also have winter and summer vacations, but the difference is that due to less academic pressure, college students have more time to travel. And college students with sound minds have mature thinking modes and strong curiosity, they have hope for the future and are full of uncertainty for the society, the direct way is to travel (Li 2016, 24). In addition, the financial resources of college students, in addition to relying on their families, will also make money by working on holidays. Therefore, there are various indications that the potential for the development of the university student tourism market is also huge.

3.2.2 Family tourism market

Women, especially modern women, have strong tourism needs (purchasing desire) (Xie 2006, 63). Affected by Chinese traditional culture and its nature, most women have the habit of frugality. Therefore, when buying tourism products, female tourists want to minimize the relevant costs, including currency costs, time costs, mental costs and physical costs, and at the same time hope to obtain more practical benefits from them (Xie 2006, 64). In addition, Chinese women of different ages have different needs for travel. From the perspective of age structure, the younger the age, the wider the interest. Young and middle-aged women have a preference for leisure, shopping, and beauty. Older women prefer to engage in sightseeing and religious activities (Yu 2008, 158).

The monitoring data of Tuniu Tourism Network shows that male tourists in the 26-35 age group account for 32%, and those males in the post-80s generation who are strong and have a certain economic foundation are the main force of travel (Travel Weekly China 2017). According to the figure 9, compared with women, there are not many male tourists, but men's tourism consumption is more generous, and adventure style tourism products are welcomed by men.

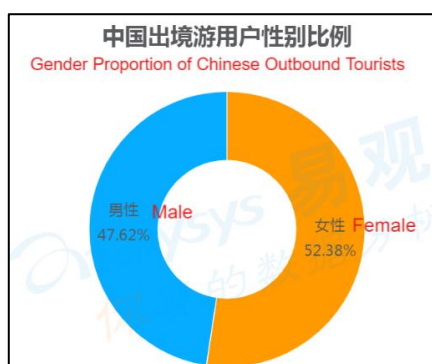


Figure 9 Gender proportion of Chinese outbound tourists (Han 2019)

The author divides the family travel market by the presence or absence of children. Based on the travel needs and behaviors of men and women mentioned above, the same applies to the couple's travel market. In the context of traditional Chinese culture, young couples consume based on their economic ability. In view of the fact that young people generally have low incomes and low savings, in the process of tourism consumption, they often will make a wise choice. Young couples consume money based on their economic ability; but in a modern society that is changing rapidly, young couples are also vulnerable, resulting in tourism consumption in pursuit of fashion personality, because the existence of this special relationship between couples can make this relationship lasting and stable. Sublimation, the expansiveness of tourism consumption expenditure and the taste of tourism consumption objects naturally become important heating energy. As a result, some young men and women have produced irrational tourism consumption in order to get the other party's unexpected approval (Zou 2011, 219).

Chinese people have a strong family concept, so the Chinese family tourism market is different from other tourism markets in that there are many factors that affect tourism consumption behavior. Income is the most important factor influencing tourism consumption expenditure of tourists. However, household disposable income is not the only factor influencing consumers' tourism expenditure. The property (assets) owned by tourists is also an important factor influencing tourism consumption expenditure; the second one is economic conditions. Family / individual characteristics also have an impact on tourism consumption expenditure, the characteristics here include age, gender, education level, marital status, and number of children. Third is different environment, resources and economic conditions (Jiang 2017, 75-76).

3.2.3 Elderly tourism market

China has the world's largest elderly population. With the development of the economy, the tourism pension market has huge potential. According to international standards, China has entered an aging society at the end of the last century. It is estimated that by 2020, the number of elderly people over 60 will reach 240 million, accounting for about 16% of the total population at that time (Jin 2015, 38). Under the influence of Chinese traditional culture, the Chinese elderly do not like extravagance and waste. They are more willing to save money for their children. But with the improvement of living standards, these elderly people began to attach importance to their spiritual life, especially retired elderly people, who have a fixed income. Secondly, at this time, most children have already joined the work. No small amount of "pocket money" to show filial piety (Xu & Chen 2001, 11). Traveling for the elderly is one of the popular ways. According to information

uploaded by an elderly tourism conference held in Shanghai, 17% of the elderly in the country currently have ample economic conditions, and the requirements for tourism are high-end. Nearly 70% of the elderly have the desire to travel but hope that the economy is affordable (Wang 2007, 9). It can be seen that the price of travel products is also one of the factors that affect the elderly in China. This is also the habit of frugality of most elderly people. Otherwise, safety issues in travel are gradually becoming an important factor for most older people because older people do not have a healthy and active body and mind. There are two factors that affect the consumption behavior of the elderly in China. The first is reflected in the companionship method. Because the children are busy working, the elderly will choose to travel with their peers. This shows that the relevant groups that affect the purchasing behavior of elderly consumers are mainly the elderly; the second is also advertising (Xu 2001, 12). The marketing model is different from young people. Older people are not used to getting propaganda information on digital media. Newspaper advertisements or audiovisual advertisements are more likely to affect their consumption behavior.

Advertising media with the biggest impact on older consumers						
表 1 对老年消费者影响最大的广告媒体						
Advertising media	Audiovisual advertising		Outdoor billboards	Live advertising		
广告媒体	报刊广告	视听广告	邮寄广告	户外广告牌	广告传单	活广告
	Newspaper advertising	Mailing advertising			Flyers	
百分比(%)	31.4	56.1	1.9	3.6	2.8	4.2
Percentage (%)						

Figure 10 Advertising media with the biggest impact on older consumers (Xu 2001, 12).

4 CHINA'S THREE MOST POPULAR TRAVEL E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS

This chapter mainly introduces China's three major tourism e-commerce platforms, and analyzes their strengths and weaknesses to infer which one is more suitable for cooperation and tourism marketing in Finland.

With the rapid development of China's economy and the advancement of the Internet, people have begun to pursue a fast-paced life. Compared to buying travel products from travel agencies or ticket centers, the emergence of travel e-commerce platforms is very suitable for today's lifestyle. In response to the needs of the general public, the tourism market quickly launched a variety of platform tourism e-commerce.



Figure 11 China's online tourism and vacation industry industry chain in 2018 (iResearch 2020).

4.1 Tuniu

Tuniu Tourism Network was founded in Nanjing in October 2006. With the mission of "making travel easier", it provides consumers with travel product booking services from 64 cities including Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Nanjing. The product is comprehensive, the price is transparent, 400 telephone reservations are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and it provides a wealth of follow-up services and guarantees. Tuniu Travel Network provides more than 80,000 kinds of travel products for consumers to choose from, including group tours, self-driving, cruise ships, hotels, visas, scenic area tickets, and corporate travel (Tuniu 2020). Although when Tuniu was

established, well-known online travel platforms such as Ctrip had already occupied a considerable market position, Tuniu responded accordingly according to the market conditions at the time and focused its business development on tourism planning. Instead of imitating other travel platforms to focus on hotel air ticket reservations, after years of development, Tuniu has gradually become well known to the people.

In detail, Tuniu became a rising star because of these advantages: Tourism products have many resources and high cost performance; complete service system and high user satisfaction; high brand awareness; Tuniu can provide personalized product customization services; Tuniu's "special product market" is unique and inspires and solves tourists' shopping needs Tuniu has a large number of offline stores, mainly based on destination travel agencies; the country's first "website + call center + tourist routes" business model; online team travel, especially outbound team travel is the core business of Tuniu (Zhang 2017; Xia 2018; Xu 2019). In addition, on October 19, 2018, the Finnair Tuniu flagship store was officially launched, Finnair added a Chinese partner again and became the first European airline to enter Tuniu (Souhu 2018). This move not only strengthened itself Competitiveness in the travel market has also provided Finnair with an online marketing channel for travel in China, and the two sides have achieved a win-win result. According to iResearch data, in China's online outbound travel market in 2018, Tuniu is the market leader with a share of 39.9%:

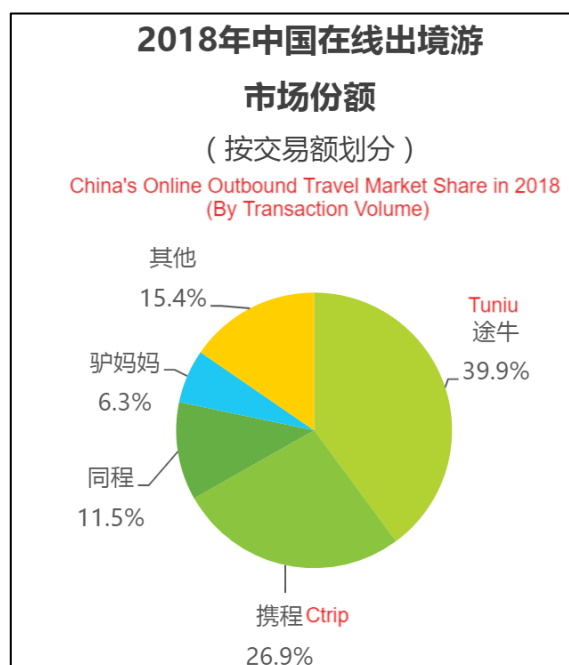


Figure 12 China's online outbound travel market share in 2018 (By Transaction Volume) (iResearch 2020)

With its own advantages and unique market positioning, Tuniu has received a large number of orders. At the same time, more and more problems have gradually emerged: The funds and strength are relatively weak and the user accumulation is small; the source of income is relatively single and the structure is unbalanced; the ownership structure is multi-party checks and balances, and the future is full of uncertainty; the consumer demand is not targeted; the high cost brings continuous losses; the lack of convenience poor user experience; less customer interaction, weak social attributes (Xia 2018).

4.2 Trip.com Group

Trip.com Group (Hereinafter referred to as "Trip") is an online ticketing service company founded in 1999 and headquartered in Shanghai, China. Trip.com Group has more than 600,000 member hotels at home and abroad for booking. It is China's leading hotel reservation service center. Trip.com Group has established branches in 17 cities including Beijing, Tianjin, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Chengdu, Hangzhou, Xiamen, Qingdao, Shenyang, Nanjing, Wuhan, Nantong, Sanya and more than 25,000 employees. In December 2003, Trip.com Group was successfully listed on NASDAQ in the United States (Trip.com Group 2020). As a leading company in China's online travel industry, after years of operation, Trip has a huge network of resources, and various businesses have been integrated into packaged sales. This shows the product advantage and the brand has extensive recognition and authority (Wang 2013, 48). The following are the five model innovations and four product advantages about Trip since its inception which has collected by author:

Innovation

- a) **One-stop innovation:** Trip uses information technology to effectively integrate the resources of many domestic hotels, airlines and tourist destinations, and established the first national hotel booking platform and ticket booking platform;
- b) **Management innovation:** Six Sigma---Trip introduced the quality management method of manufacturing industry "Six Sigma" into the tourism industry first, and realized large-scale replication of quality services to ensure that every guest can enjoy standardized and high-quality travel services. Standardization---With the help of information technology and digital technology, Ctrip quantifies individual excellent travel service skills and experience models, and solidifies it into a service process that can be inherited and a service link that can be evaluated. Uniform practice of service staff at all times;

- c) **Innovative connotation:** Free travel and transparent group---Trip advocates tourism, leisure and leisure methods for free enjoyment and in-depth experience. It pioneered the free travel model in China, breaking the domestic tour group model. Take the lead in launching the "Transparent Tour" to transparently disclose the details of food, accommodation, travel, travel, shopping, and entertainment in team travel products. Real hotel reviews---Trip's original hotel reviews-all staying members can comment on all aspects of the service of the hotel where they live, realizing the effective interaction between the client, Trip, and the three parties;
- d) **Service innovation:** Hotel lowest price commitment---Trip members are publicly committed to book hotels in China through Trip. If the price of Trip is higher than the current price of the hotel front desk, or if the price of Trip is higher than the open price of other websites, Trip will pay consumers 3 times the difference. 1 hour trapeze passage---1 hour before the flight departure, as long as there is still space, passengers pay with credit card and choose to mail the itinerary, they can successfully book the ticket and board the flight smoothly;
- e) **Marketing innovation:** Travel Credit Card---Ttrip pioneered the travel credit card. Ctrip Travel and Vacation Experience Center---Trip has established Trip Travel and Vacation Experience Centers in airports in domestic large and medium cities such as Shanghai, Beijing, Chengdu, Hangzhou, and Nanjing. Guests can book hotel, air tickets, travel and vacation products on-site, and apply for Ctrip co-branded cards.

Product Advantage

- a) **Hotel reservation:** Major hotels have reserved rooms, and bookings are confirmed instantly. And hotel Lowest Price Promise;
- b) **Pre-book fly ticket:** Provide local ticket booking and off-site pickup service. And 1-hour trapeze passage;
- c) **Holiday:** Travel guarantee for major natural disasters and transparent tour;
- d) **Order service:** Application of Ctrip service experience and service model in the field of ordering food.

- (Trip 2020).

In addition to the advantages mentioned above, Trip also has two points worth introducing. The first is that Trip is the first travel company in China to release a customized division certification system, which created a precedent for customized travel in China. The second is a cooperative relationship with the National Tourism

Administration of Finland. In the Nordic market, Ctrip Destination Marketing has established a long-term stable cooperative relationship with the Finnish Tourism Administration, providing Finland with a diversified one-stop shop including online advertising and social media promotion, accurate marketing and promotion services promote the continuous upgrade of Finnish tourism brands (Tourism Bureau 2018).

Although Trip is an established online travel company in China and has always occupied an important position in the Chinese online travel market, with the continuous development of the market, more and more OTAs are grabbing the cake of this industry, so Trip has exposed its own problems: high operating costs; the proportion of "tickets, hotels" is too large; slow development of new business; monopoly is broken; the industry has anti-unified standards leading to confusion in pricing; single user groups; stagnation of online penetration; incomplete industry chain leads to online disconnected; Trip mainly relies on intelligent online customer service, the service lacks length and humanity (Wang 2013; Chi 2017; Xu 2019).

4.3 Fliggy

Fliggy refers to a comprehensive travel online transaction service platform that provides Taobao members with airline tickets, hotels, and tourist routes, including websites and clients. Originally known as Ali Trip, it was later renamed "Fliggy" (Fliggy. Baidu). In the Chinese tourism online platform market, compared to Ctrip and the unique Tuniu who have been occupying the market for many years, Fliggy is still a "newcomer". The reason why Fliggy is welcomed by the masses is In addition to the needs of young people, the most important reason is that it is a brand of Alibaba, so it has unmatched advantages in technology and resources compared with other two companies. Specifically, Fliggy has three major competitive advantages:

- a) The expansion of Alipay's major entrance into Alipay's overseas business has provided its users with more convenient and personalized consumer services;
- b) More than 83% of Ali Travel's users are post-85s and post-90s people, and they may become middle class in 5-8 years. In comparison, this group is more advocating personality, innovation, and strong Internet consumption habits, which can form a sustained user group;
- c) Achieved strategic cooperation with many foreign countries; many entrances and large traffic; based on the advantages of Ali big data, perfect tourism personalization and precise marketing.

- (Jianshu 2017)

Apart from above, the cooperation between Fliggy and Finland has been very frequent in recent years. Fliggy launched the "Aurora Dedicated Line" vacation IP in cooperation with the Finnish Tourism Board and Finnair in 2016, which led the Chinese people to watch the Northern Lights travel boom. During the Double Eleven period alone, Aurora products on the Fliggy platform attracted more than 5,000 bookings. According to reports, the number of Chinese travellers in Finland has increased by 600% (Fliggy 2017).

Tourism is essentially a kind of service industry. Therefore, in this industry, the most important thing is the quality of service, but this is also what Fliggy is doing insufficiently. The deficiency of experience characteristics and heavy service characteristics is the main disadvantage of Fliggy (Guo & Zhang 2018, 2). According to consumer feedback on the use of the Fliggy app, there are four points in the Fliggy that still need to be improved:

- a) Insufficient rectification of online merchants, affecting user experience;
- b) Improper page layout, too much text, and unclear marking of important content;
- c) The content of the user evaluation page is not true, and the evaluation system needs to be improved;
- d) Platform product prices are unstable and there are no corresponding compensation measures.

- (Shi & Shan 2019,
172)

4.4 Comparison and analysis

According to iResearch data(Figure 13), the transaction scale of China's online travel market is increasing year by year. On the whole, the online travel industry has entered a state of stable development. It is further deduced that the proportion of online travel tourism in the entire travel market will gradually expand in the future. Therefore, it is the

best choice for Finland to promote tourism through China's online travel platform.

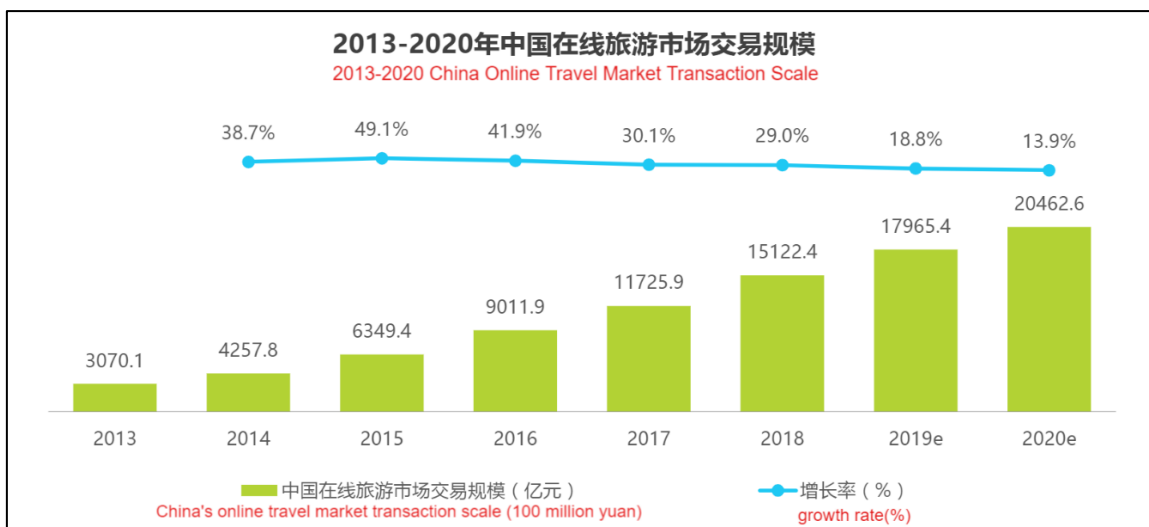


Figure 13 China online travel market transaction scale 2013-2020 (iResearch 2020)

The author uses Tuniu, Trip and Fliggy as three typical examples of China's online travel platform for analysis. First of all, the user interface of their App, Trip and Tuniu are very similar. The homepage focuses on the company's main business functions and the characteristics of its own travel services. It looks comprehensive and stable, but cumbersome. The homepage of Fliggy looks very clear by comparison, and the style also tends to be cheerful and young.

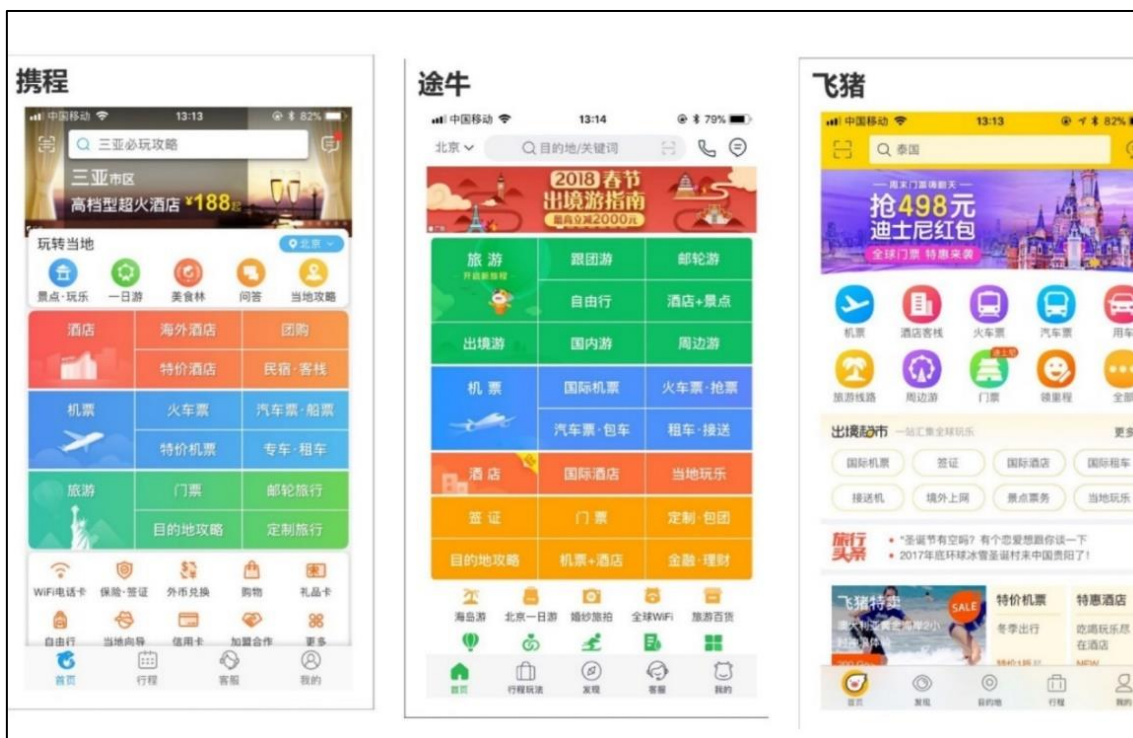


Figure 14 User interface of Trip (left) and Tuniu (middle) and Fliggy (right) (Jianshu 2017)

In general, the travel products provided by these three online travel platforms are basically the same, and the application functions are not different. In terms of advantages, Tuniu focuses on cattle routes to provide users with high-quality tourist routes; Trip's position as a leader in the OTA industry after the merger has become difficult to shake, under the current trend of "content + e-commerce", Trip's functions are very Comprehensive; Fliggy has Ali's endorsement, and the main young people's overseas travel market has huge potential, and it is continuously promoting content and integrating destination resources, trying to establish an integrated tourism platform, and product positioning and product design are significantly different from other tourism products. In terms of disadvantages, Trip's OTA attributes are too strong, and there are still disadvantages in content operation, at the same time, Trip should continue to improve product quality and remove the impact of low-quality products on user experience among numerous tourism resources; Tuniu's differentiated advantages are already being chased by large manufacturers and the number of users is small; Fliggy still has a large gap in market share with Trip due to its late start (Jianshu 2017). On the other hand, the three OTAs are also different in cooperation with Finland. Trip has cooperated with the National Tourism Administration of Finland for many years, which has laid a good foundation. Although Fliggy started late, with the help of Ali, it obtained a lot of resources, so it has cooperation with Finland in all parties. Tuniu has only cooperated with Finnair for a short time, so Tuniu is at a disadvantage in this regard. In general, Fliggy and Tuniu still have some problems, so Trip is still the main media marketing channel for promoting tourism in Finland.

5 ANALYSING TOURISM IN CHINA AND FINLAND

Due to the late start of China's tourism, the state of the tourism market is not as mature as the development of the tourism market in Finland. Therefore, this chapter mainly introduces the current situation of China's tourism market and its influencing factors. Problems, explore how to solve problems and integrate resources to maximize benefits.

5.1 Impact of the Chinese government on the tourism market

The current achievements and problems of the Chinese tourism market are inseparable from the role of the government in it. According to the evolution history of the Chinese tourism industry introduced by the author, we can see that the reality of the Chinese economic system is that the government has always been the development of the national economy, the leading nature of the industry; the characteristics of the industry determine the necessity of government actions; competition in tourism in various countries has risen to the national level, forming the so-called "national competition system"; the role of demonstration in other countries or regions (in the middle and late 20th century, the success of tourism in Southeast Asian countries and regions is mainly due to government intervention in the economy) (Xiang 2012, 44). Therefore, it is inevitable for the Chinese government to guide tourism. The following is the author's collection of guidelines issued by the Chinese government on the tourism market in previous years:

- a) On August 21, 2014, the State Council promulgated 《Several Opinions on Promoting the Reform and Development of the Tourism Industry》. Among the policy factors, multiple measures were taken to promote the development of tourism shopping consumption. At the same time, it responded to concerns and implemented the paid vacation system at the legal level.
- b) In 2015, the General Office of the State Council issued “Several Opinions on Further Promoting Tourism Investment and Consumption”. The Opinions centered on the core of “further promotion of tourism development”, with investment and consumption as the two wings, from improving the tourism consumption environment and promoting various types of tourism Starting from three aspects of investment and opening up new markets for tourism consumption.
- c) In December 2016, during the "Thirteenth Five-Year Plan" period, the tourism industry was positioned as a strategic pillar industry of the national economy.

- (Zhang 2017, 48;
Xia 2018, 62)

Even though the Chinese tourism market has developed steadily with the help of the government, it is undeniable that the government's excessive control of the market economy will inevitably lead to disadvantages: the economic benefits of the industry are generally not high; the enthusiasm of the tourism enterprises is suppressed; the contradiction of interests between local and department causes the disorderly development of tourism (Xiang 2012, 45).

5.2 Tourism items currently being promoted in Finland

Through the official website of the National Tourism Board of Finland, tourists can clearly discover and plan their own itineraries. The Finnish Tourism Board introduces Finland's scenery in three main areas: destinations, seasons and themes. To be more specific, destination promotion is mainly Lapland, Helsinki, lakeland, coast and Archipelago, and the website also use the animated map in order to make tourists get familiar with their four regions and key attractions; the website carefully shows visitors the distinctive characteristics of Finland in four seasons with text and pictures, and also explains what kind of journey is suitable to start in different seasons; in order to meet the needs of tourists, the website launches five themes of culture, food, wellbeing, outdoor and luxury, allowing visitors to experience Finland from all aspects (VisitFinland, 2020).

It is worth mentioning that the tourism products launched by Finland do not cater to the needs of all tourists, but are targeted to match tourists with similar interests based on Finnish characteristics. Based on a study conducted in 2017, we identified six (6) main segments of travellers who are interested in visiting Finland. These segments are Nature Wonder Hunters, Nature Explorers, Activity Enthusiasts, Comfort Seekers, City Breakers and Authentic Lifestyle Seekers (Business Finland, 2020).

5.3 Finland's current tourism marketing channels in China

Due to China's national conditions and firewalls, social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and Youtube cannot be used in China. Therefore, the serveral main social media promotion channels of the Finland Tourism Board in China are Weibo(same with Facebook), WeChat(same with Messenger), Xiaohongshu(users share via text,

pictures, and video notes) public account.

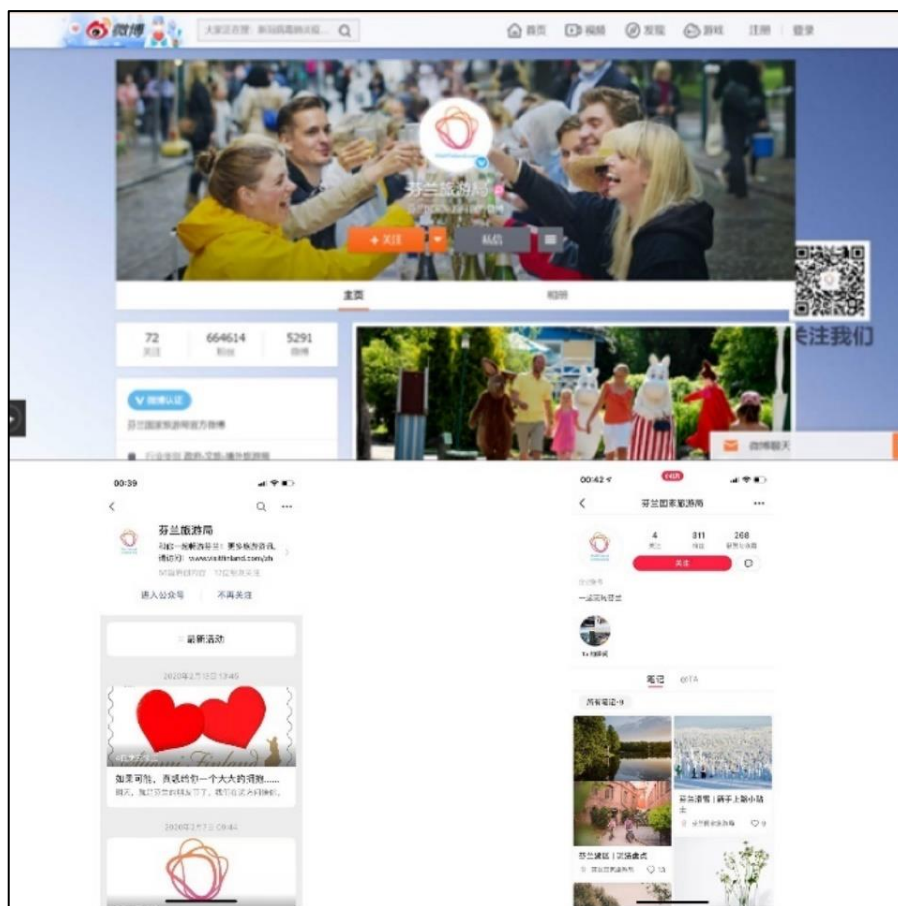


Figure 15 User interface of Weibo(up) and WeChat(bottom left corner) and Xiaohongshu(bottom right corner)

In the author's opinion, it is not enough to just attract people by posting text and pictures on social media such as Weibo. Finland can promote Finnish tourism products through star effects or inviting celebrities on Weibo. In addition to the three social media software mentioned above, China's Douyin(same with Tiktok) and other applications are also very popular with Chinese today. However all in all, understanding the personality and preferences of Chinese tourists as an opportunity to discover and locate the market is one of the goals of the current Finnish tourism industry, so Finland's promotion path can continue to widen.

5.4 Comparing the differences between the official website of the Finnish and Chinese tourism administration

By observing the Figure 16, we can see that the focus of the performance of the Chinese and Finnish Tourism Boards is completely different. In 2018, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China merged and changed its name to the Ministry

of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China. Wang Yong (Central Commissioner) clarified this change: in order to enhance and demonstrate cultural self-confidence, coordinate cultural undertakings and Industrial development and tourism resources development, improving the national cultural soft power and Chinese cultural influence, promoting the integrated development of cultural undertakings, cultural industries and tourism, the plan proposes to integrate the responsibilities of the Ministry of Culture and the National Tourism Administration, and establish the Ministry of Culture and Tourism as a constituent department of the State Council (Tong 2018). The combination of culture and tourism means that the number of Chinese outbound tourists is increasing year by year. Tourism is no longer limited to recreation, but also the exchange of Chinese and foreign cultures. It is also hoped that Chinese culture can be promoted to the world through tourism. However, as far as the website structure is concerned, compared to the official website of the Finnish Tourism Board, which has rich content and clear themes, the official website of the Ministry of Tourism and Culture of China focuses on expressing national strategies. Publicity, which is extremely inconvenient for foreign tourists.

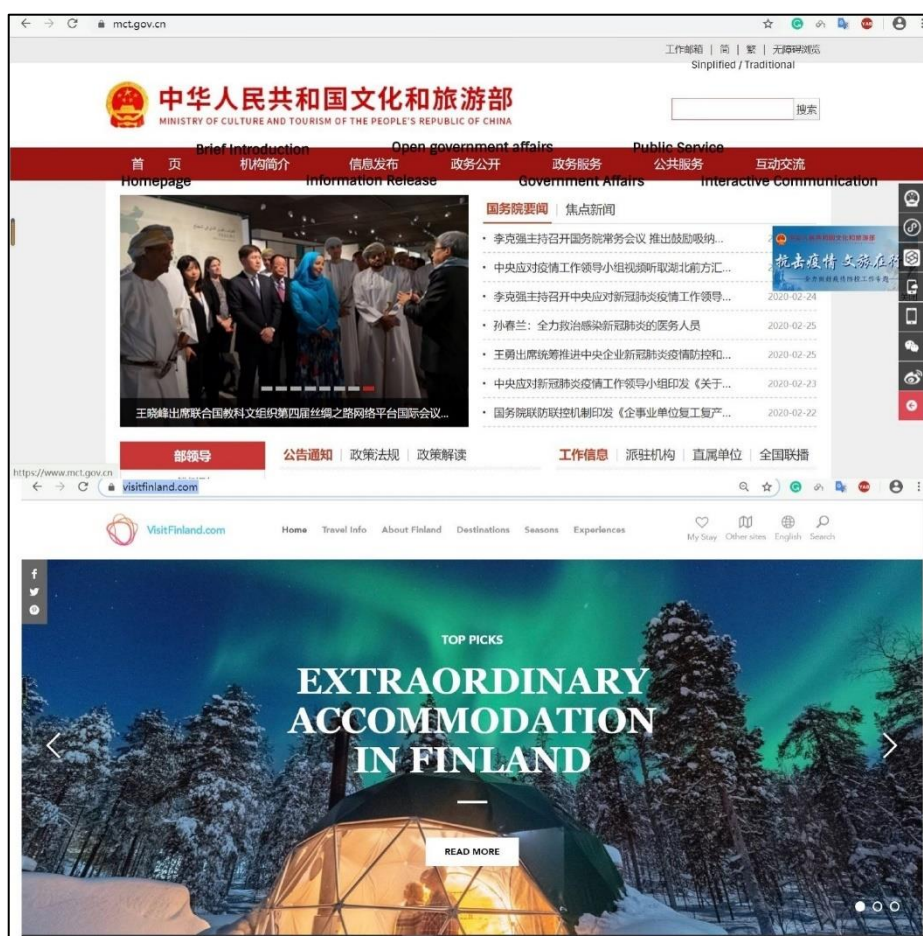


Figure 16 Homepage of China(up) and Finland(down) official tourism bureau

'Achieving more together – sustainable growth and renewal in Finnish tourism' is the name of Finland's national tourism strategy for 2019–2028 (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland). Compared with China's tourism industry, which is still developing, Finland's tourism industry is relatively mature. Not only the multi-language options are set, but also all the information that foreign tourists want to learn in Finland, but the only thing that needs to be strengthened is that there are not enough social media promotion channels for China.

5.5 Opportunities and challenges for Finland to enter the Chinese tourism market

In the Chinese search engine Baidu, for instance, Finland is the second most searched Nordic country, preceded only by Iceland (News 2020). Because of such close cooperation in technology, travelling and tourism marketing, despite not having the obvious tourist attractions of destinations such as Paris or Rome, Finland has become one of the most popular travelling destinations and stopovers for Chinese visitors (Han 2019). In addition, China's Juneyao Air, Tibet Airlines and Sichuan Airlines all started flights to Helsinki in 2019, Finnair also has flights to and from China every week, which are the reasons for the growth of Chinese tourists (Mu 2019). China's tourism industry will give people a feeling of "living like a local" when promoting Finland, which is also very attractive for tourists. Based on the line chart below (Figure 17), we can see that the number of seasonal overnight stays in Finland in China is increasing year by year. More and more people are beginning to pay attention to Finland, and they are eager to learn about Finnish culture and explore everything new. The Chinese tourism market also has huge potential for Finland to tap, which also shows that there are more opportunities waiting for Finland in the future.

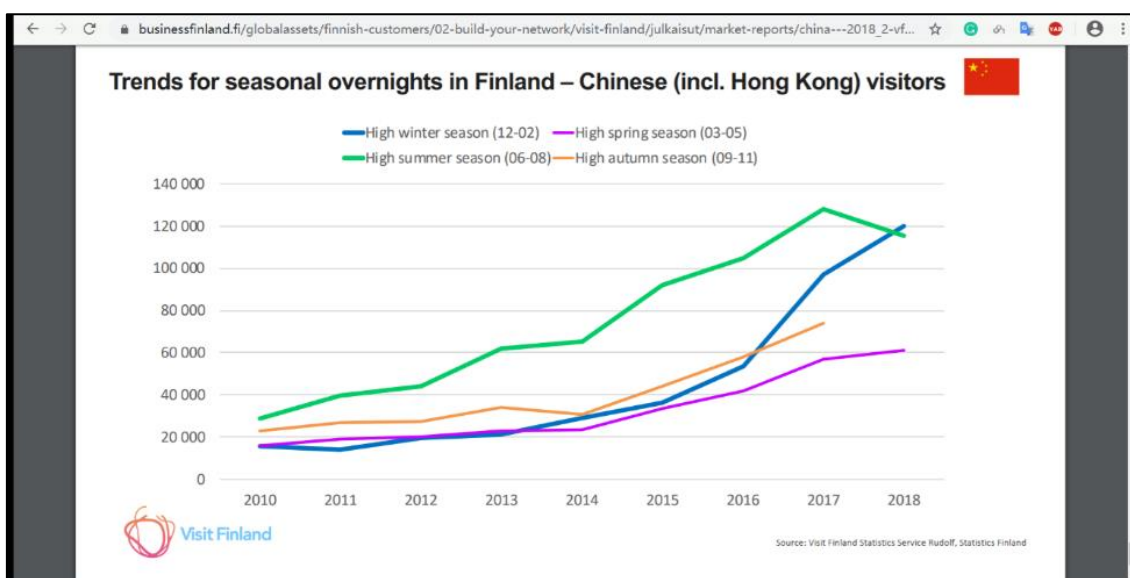


Figure 17 Trends for seasonal overnights in Finland – Chinese(incl. Hong Kong)visitors (Business Finland)

Through the three Chinese tourism electronic platforms listed by the author, it can be found that China and Finland maintain a stable cooperative relationship in tourism, but the limitation of this relationship is that Finland cannot directly target Chinese tourists but needs to sell Finnish travel products through these platforms. And these OTA platforms not only have a cooperative relationship with Finland, compared to the popular Southeast Asian and Western European tourism markets, the Nordic tourism market is not the first recommended by these OTA platforms, so Finland lacks dominance and competitive in this marketing channel. In addition, due to China 's national conditions, Finland is not able to promote media in China through social media such as Facebook and Instagram, which limits the Chinese people 's access to Finland. The participation of the Finnish Tourism Board in Chinese social media is also very high. According to the author's observation, there are only accounts on the Weibo and WeChat APPs, and the activity and followers are not very high, which is not conducive to publicity. Some Chinese tourists visiting Finland also reported that some of Finland's attractions, shopping malls and restaurants are not open for a long time, which is also a challenging problem.

6 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter mainly draws conclusions and ideas by analyzing the above content, laying the foundation for the tourism industry of the two countries and also pointing out the direction for the future development.

6.1 The two ways of promoting Finnish tourism services in China

In the minds of Chinese citizens, the preferred outbound destinations are generally Japan and South Korea, the United States or Western Europe. Although the Nordic tourism market is slowly becoming known, it is limited to millennials. According to the author's analysis, it is found that the future development of the Nordic tourism market is nothing more than two directions: follow the flow or stay unique.

6.1.1 Pursuit of uniqueness

To make a horizontal comparison from the natural resources of tourism, the similar warm environment and customs of the four Nordic countries also face the high entry barriers that are different from the tourism markets of Western Europe and Asia (Yao 2002). To be more specific, compared to the resource-rich western or southern European markets, northern Europe is remote, resources are scarce, and prices are expensive. In addition, visa issues have become one of the main reasons hindering Chinese tourists. However, because of the unique natural resources, such as "Midnight Sunshine" and "Aurora Journey", tourism products are very unique and different from other popular tourism countries. Everything is two-sided, the Nordic market's ability to attract repeat customers is weak, so it has been difficult for the Nordic tourism market to surpass popular tourist countries like France or Italy for so many years. But today's Chinese millennials (1984-1995) prefer maverick living styles, and tourism markets like Finland happen to meet their needs. For example, Karoliina Korhonen (Finnish graphic designer)'s manga-the Finnish nightmare is sought after by the Chinese people, and the reason for this is because Finns and Chinese are a little bit shy, introverted and shy in nature, and this comics also show the authenticity of life and resonate with the Chinese. Therefore, the development direction of the Finnish tourism market can still maintain the current state, instead of following the current, but to attract tourists' attention with its uniqueness as a word of mouth.

6.1.2 Follow the trend

Whether it is a travel agency in China or various OTA platforms, Southeast Asia, Western Europe, and Australia are their main tourist destinations, and these countries have also been popular for many years with their own advantages. Except for their rich natural tourism resources, they are relatively Nordic. In addition to the cheap prices attracting tourists, the cost of publicity and investment in tourism is also worthy of attention, such as inviting celebrities as national tourism spokespersons and providing places for domestic film and television shows or variety shows are all ways to attract Chinese tourists. In addition, most countries of this type are also very friendly to China in terms of visas. Diplomatic measures such as visa-free entry or visa-free are also the main reasons for their large number of Chinese tourists. Hence, the Finnish tourism market wants to attract the attention of a wide range of Chinese tourists. First of all, it is necessary to analyze the needs of Chinese tourists and make a lot of publicity for targeted programs. The second is to occupy a dominant position. In addition to cooperating with China in many aspects, it can also create multiple channels directly for Chinese tourists. This method can help the Finnish tourism market slowly penetrate into the lives of Chinese people and gradually increase people's awareness, instead of thinking that Northern Europe is out of reach.

6.2 Driving the economy of Finland and China through tourism

The main purpose of the two directions for the future development of the Finnish tourism market provided by the author is to hope that Finland and China can strengthen the relationship between the two countries through tourism, help the Chinese understand this pure and quiet country, and at the same time convey to the Finnish Chinese sincerity and simplicity character traits. It is undeniable that for these two countries, tourism is the support of the national economy, so it is inevitable to develop tourism in both countries.

7 SUMMARY

The research theme of this thesis is to study China's most suitable travel marketing media platform for Finland. The author uses qualitative methods to study the following three issues: Find out what types of Chinese people will choose to travel abroad by analyzing the Chinese tourism market; which OTA platform in China is most suitable for Finnish cooperation and tourism promotion; what will Finland face when entering the Chinese tourism market Such opportunities and challenges. All the above questions are supported by the author by collecting relevant literature and data.

The author first introduces the background of the development of China's tourism industry to lay the foundation for the full text, and briefly describes the emergence of different tourism methods and digital tourism marketing methods over time; secondly, it guides the main tourism in China by explaining human psychological needs and consumer behavior Crowds and influencing factors, and the outbound tourism crowd is divided into three types for analysis; then the three most representative OTA platforms in China are selected, and analysis and comparison are used to determine which one is the most suitable for Finland's tourism promotion; next It is to observe the current status of tourism in China and Finland, to explore what opportunities and challenges Finland faces in entering the Chinese tourism market; finally, to explore the future tourism path of Finland through all the above academic research and analysis.

The results of this study show that Trip is the first choice for Finland to promote tourism on the Chinese OTA platform. The Finnish tourism market is very mature and has been very active in cooperating with China, but it still needs to improve its influence in China. The author's comments and opinions are also based on the judgments and conclusions made by analyzing these resources.

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