

The suitability of Finnish slow tourism products for the experienced Chinese tourists

Yingjun Chen



Author(s) Yingjun Chen	
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<p>The aim of this thesis is to research on slow tourism in Finland and the experienced Chinese tourists, in order to find out are Finnish slow tourism products suitable for the experienced Chinese tourists. Slow tourism has been a new trend in the western world for the past years, while it is yet hardly mentioned in China. Finland has its great conditions and advantages to offer slow tourism products. As the amount of incoming Chinese tourists to Finland has been increasing rapidly, it arouses my interest to investigate the Chinese tourists who have had international traveling experiences, are attracted by Finnish slow tourism products.</p> <p>The theoretical framework is concentrated on discussing tourism, slow tourism, Finnish tourism and Chinese outbound tourism in a nutshell. In general tourism, the human needs, tourism motivators, travel destination and tourism trend will be discussed briefly. The definitions of slow tourism will be introduced in the following part, as well as its features and development. The Finnish tourism and slow tourism in Finland will be analyzed before final discussion of Chinese outbound tourism.</p> <p>I chose to use both qualitative and quantitative research method to conduct my research. The qualitative research was conducted in the form of qualitative interviews with experts from the industry to gather the valid and reliable information. The quantitative research was conducted in the form of a web-based questionnaire in order to acquire the direct feedbacks from the target group.</p> <p>The result revealed that the young generation, the Chinese tourists who have abundant outbound travel experiences and the Chinese who resident in western countries have higher potential in choosing slow tourism products. Currently, most of the incoming Chinese tourists to Finland are fascinated by Finnish winter activities, Santa Claus and Aurora lights. They tend to travel with a guided group. The main stream for the next coming 5 years will remain the same. However, the number of individual and family travellers has been growing rapidly, as well as the tourists with sophisticated travel demands. The majorities of the survey respondents showed their interest in Finnish nature and different features of slow tourism.</p> <p>I developed this thesis idea in Spring 2016, and the thesis was initiated officially in June of 2016 and finished in January of 2017. The whole process took approximately 8 months. For the further research, I would suggest to conduct a survey in a bigger scale and get even respondents at different age range. In the other hand, further sources in other languages should also be referenced.</p>	
Keywords Finland, slow tourism, Chinese tourists, cottage holiday	

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1 Introduction

Over the decades, tourism has been an industry that grows continuously. Tourism became one of the fastest economic growing sectors in the world. Today, the business generated by tourism equals or is even greater than that of oil exports, food products or automobiles (World Tourism Organization). Tourism has contributions in directing employment, as well as in supporting other industries and professions. According to World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), tourism constituted 9% of the global GDP, offered 1 in 11 job and reached 1.5 trillion dollars in exports in 2015. Considering the tremendous economic impacts of tourism, many countries have placed great effort in the development of the tourism industry.

Certainly, the Finnish tourism has influence on its economy as well. In 2014, a total of €14.2 billion was spent on tourism in Finland. This includes the consumption expenditure of Finnish and foreign tourists. Foreign travellers accounted for 28 %, which is 4.03 billion euros, of total tourism consumption. In the same year, the profits derived from tourism reached to 4.4 billion euros, which constitutes 2.5% of Finland's GDP. The employment in tourism industry was 140,000 people. (Visit Finland 2014).

China, with the vigorous economic growth, has been the biggest outbound tourism country in the world since 2012 (Li 2016, 4). China reached a total of US\$ 165 billion expenditure abroad, which increased by 27% in 2014 (UNWTO 2015). In Finland, the number of Chinese visitors has been growing simultaneously. The Chinese overnight stay in Finland increased 41.3% in 2015 compared to year before. They spent around 182,000 nights in 2015 (Visit Finland 2015). However, nearly one third of the Chinese tourists coming to Finland were day visitors, more than one third were transit passengers and the rest spent overnight (Visit Finland 2014). Considering the fact that Chinese tourists have a reputation for spending a lot of money while traveling, it would be highly profitable for the Finnish inbound tourism. Even though there are still significant amount of Chinese group tourists doing long haul travels, the growing number of young independent travellers who are looking for unique travelling experiences may indicate the future trends of Chinese outbound tourism. The Chinese tourists are getting tired of the traditional travel mode by following a group leader and visiting 5 countries within 10 days. The diversification of the demand from the sophisticated Chinese tourists made the old-fashioned long haul packages gradually exit the market and the in-depth tours are getting popular. Li (2016, 6) indicated that the market segmentation has shifted from sightseeing to experience and from brand to lifestyle, which increases the necessity to create larger number of niche markets.

Finland is a unique, non-mainstream holiday destination. Finland has been marketed as a country that attracts visitors who have seen enough metropolises and historical attractions, who appreciate pure nature and quality of life (Visit Finland 2016). Unlike the other popular tourism destinations, Finland is not famous for having a long history and numerous cultural sites. Most of the tourists who come to Finland do not stay for more than 5 days, from whom many are day visitors. According to the Visitor Survey made by Visit Finland in 2014, the most preferred activities during the stay in Finland were shopping, dining in restaurants and sight-seeing. These activities do not differentiate Finland from the other travel destination countries. Most likely, the visitors would get disappointed after their stay due to the limited shopping places, restaurants and attractions in Finland compared to the rest of European travel destinations. From my work experience with the Chinese tourists, I discovered that most of them stay in Finland for relatively short time and they expected more from Finland. Considering the fact that the Chinese normally spend only one day in Helsinki to visit all of the popular attractions of the city, it is very challenging to make Finland an impressive destination for them. That is when I started to think what type of holidays might interest the Chinese. Since I love to travel and I have always preferred to travel slow than just follow a to-do-list, I started to wonder would a Finnish summer cottage holiday be appealing to the Chinese tourists. Even though the awareness of slow travel or green travel has gained its recognition in Europe, it is still a new concept in China. That decides China might be a potential market for slow travel. China definitely is one of countries that have the fastest rhythm of lives, which also indicates that people need to slow down and enjoy a relaxing holiday.

The aim of this thesis is to research on slow tourism in Finland and Chinese outbound tourism, as well as the Chinese tourists, in order to find out are Finnish slow tourism products suitable for the experienced Chinese tourists. As the Chinese outbound tourism has been developing rapidly and demands of the travellers have become more diversified, I wonder whether slow tourism products will satisfy the experienced Chinese tourists' needs. Additionally, the amount of the Chinese tourists coming to Finland has increased dramatically during these recent years. However, they remain to stay in Finland for a very short time. Therefore, they are not able to enjoy the beauty of the Finnish nature and its uniqueness. In today's hectic rhythm of life in China, fresh air, unspoiled water and nature of Finland might be a unique selling point for the Chinese tourists. And the ultimate objective is to find out would the experienced Chinese travellers are interested in holidays in Finnish nature.

The research problems formulated to help to reach the main research objective are as follows:

1. What are the needs and expectations of the Chinese tourists who travel to Finland?
2. What is the trend of Chinese outbound tourism in 5 years?
3. Will slow tourism products of Lakeland region be appealing to the experienced Chinese tourists?

This thesis will be research oriented. In order to reach the aim, I will research on slow tourism and explain some slow tourism products in Finland. To limit the research range and give readers a clearer image of slow tourism in Finland, I decided to take a deep look into the typical Finnish summer cottage holiday in Lakeland Region. The reason that I chose to analyze Finnish cottage holiday will be explained more in detail in the following chapter. I will conduct both qualitative and quantitative research to find out whether the Chinese tourists who have international travelling experiences are into slow tourism products of Lakeland. On the one hand, the qualitative research will be conducted by interviewing 3 persons who have sufficient working experiences in the tourism industry and experiences with the incoming Chinese tourists in Finland. The interviews are meant to discover their opinions towards the expectations of the Chinese about Finland, based on their knowledge and personal working experiences. Their opinions towards the near future trend of the Chinese outbound tourism and the potential of slow tourism products in Chinese market will also be examined. On the other hand, the quantitative research will be carried out in the form of an online questionnaire and sent to the experienced Chinese tourists, who have travelled outside China for at least once. The purpose of the questionnaire is to investigate the Chinese tourists' needs and preferences in travel in order to get the conclusion whether they are suitable for slow tourism products.

After this introduction part, this thesis will be followed by the theoretical part. The general tourism theories, as well as the slow tourism theories will be explained combining the current situation of the Finnish slow tourism will be described. The history of the Chinese outbound tourism and its development will also be discussed in this part. Besides, the current and future trend of the Chinese outbound tourism will be studied. Some examples of the existing slow tourism products in the Finnish tourism industry will be introduced to give an impression to the readers what are the features of the slow tourism products. The third part of this paper will be the empirical research, in which the research methods will be explained more in detail. In the end, the findings and the personal opinions of the author will be discussed, as well as the future research suggestions and the learning process of this research.

2 Slow tourism, Finnish tourism and Chinese outbound tourism

“Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or other purposes.” (Holloway & Humphreys 2012, 7). Tourism became one of the fastest economic growing sectors in the world and accounts for an important part of the global GDP. Some regions and countries are even highly dependent on the tourism development, for example, travel and tourism contributed to 87.2% of Macau’s GDP and 74.7% of Aruba’s GDP etc. (Holloway & Humphreys 2012, 107). In this chapter, the general tourism concepts will be discussed. How does demand affect the supply in tourism industry? What is slow tourism? How has tourism been developed in Finland? When did the Chinese outbound tourism start to grow and how did it expand? The above questions will be responded sequentially in the following parts as well.

2.1 Tourism in general

People travel to the places outside their usual living environment for less than a year is called travel. Different persons travel due to different motivations. Purposes of travels can be divided into three distinct categories:

1. Holidays (including visits to friends and relatives)
 2. Business (including meetings, conferences, etc.)
 3. Other (including study, religious pilgrimages, sport, health, etc.)
- (Holloway & Humphreys 2012, 11)

People have different needs. Maslow grouped those needs into "physiological needs", "safety needs", "belonging needs", "esteem needs", and "self-actualization" hierarchically. The higher level of needs will be achieved only if the fundamental needs like physiological needs and safety needs be satisfied. In the author’s opinion, the need to travel belongs to the esteem needs or self-actualization depending on different travellers. For example, some people travel to show their social status and gain recognition from the others. Typically, they travel to the developed countries, where have relatively high living standards and prices, go to fine-dining restaurants, live in high standard hotels and shop for luxury-branded-clothing. This type of people is travelling to satisfy their esteem needs. However, there are also some people who love travelling genuinely and who expect to meet the locals and learn the local culture during their travel. They travel for broadening their horizons. In this case, people travel for self-actualizing.

A need has to be translated into a motivation for a person decides to travel. The translating process is pretty complex. Once a consumer has a need, he will have his perception of what will satisfy need. When the actual attractions meet the consumer perception of the attractions and match his perception of need, this person will get the motivation to visit the destination. The motivators can be summarized as 4 motivators category, which is illustrated through Table 1.

Physical motivators	Cultural motivators
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Refreshing the body 2. Reducing mental stress 3. Improve physical health 4. Exercising 5. Having fun and enjoyment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Curiosity about foreign lands and people 7. Developing historical or cultural interests 8. Attending cultural events 9. Exploring local music, folklore, lifestyles, art etc.
Interpersonal motivators	Status and prestige motivators
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintaining and enhancing relationships with friends and family 2. Making new friends 3. Escaping own routine environment (including escape from one's own family) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gaining status and recognition from others 2. Pursuing one's hobbies 3. Continuing education and self-development

Table 1. Tourism motivators (McIntosh et al. 1995)

The demand of the consumer determines the supply from market. A skilled travel agent will cleverly obtain the individual needs and interests from the customer and offer the corresponding product (Holloway & Humphreys 2012, 70).

A travel destination can be a specific resort or town, a region, one country, a continent or a larger area of the globe (Holloway & Humphreys 2012, 15). When travellers go to visit a country that is far away from home, it is reasonable to travel more than one city or even country. For instance, Chinese tourists prefer to travel more than one country when they go to Europe if their travel purpose is to experience European lifestyle and learn European culture. Destinations are either 'natural' or 'constructed'. Generally, we can divide destinations into seaside tourism, which includes all forms of holidays by the sea and coast; rural tourism, meaning tourism by the lake or in the mountains, also include countryside touring, such as farm holidays, visit to wine yards and national parks; and urban tourism, which includes visits to cities and towns (Holloway & Humphreys 2012, 16).

General tendency or direction of tourist behavior indicates the tourism trend. The tourism trend is influenced by the tourist behavior, namely tourist demand. As for the factors influencing changes in tourist demands, Holloway & Humphreys (2012, 88) pointed out eco-

conomic or political issues, climate and natural disasters, cultural, social and technological changes. Over the past decades, the tourism trend has gradually shifted from mass tourism towards sustainable tourism. Some new modes of tourism, such as sustainable tourism, volunteer tourism, and slow tourism etc., have gained momentum.

2.2 Slow tourism

'Slow concept', which concerns for locality, ecology and quality of life, is a concept that was originated from Bra, Italy in the 1980s. Carlo Petrini and a group of activists started slow food movement, with the objective of defending regional traditions, good food and a slow pace of life (Slow Food 2016). Subsequently, other relevant concepts such as slow movement, slow cities, slow travel and slow tourism have been developed.

2.2.1 Slow tourism definition and features

"Slow travel is an emerging conceptual framework which offers an alternative to air and car travel, where people travel to destinations more slowly overland, stay longer and travel less."(Dickinson et al 2010,1). Gardner (2009, 11) defines "slow travel is about making conscious choices. It is about deceleration rather than speed. The journey becomes the moment to relax, rather than a stressful interlude imposed between home and destination. Slow travel re-engineers time, transforming it into a commodity of abundance rather than scarcity. And slow travel also reshapes our relationship with places, encouraging and allowing us to engage more intimately with the communities through which we travel." It is important to travel to and within a destination engaged with the local transportation, slow food and beverages, local culture and local life at a slower pace (Dickinson et al 2010,1).

Slow travel has a lot in common with eco-travel and eco travel, but they are not exactly the same concepts. Eco-travel concentrates on the environment conservation and reduction of carbon footprints caused by tourists during travel. The philosophy behind slow travel is party slow down, but also the connectedness with sustainable development of locality. One essential element of slow travel is the possibility to become part of local life and to connect to a place, the people and the local culture.

The characteristics of slow travel summarized from the ideas of the writers, advocates and scholars who researched on the topic during the past two decades are as follows:

1. Slow equates to quality time
2. It is about physically slowing down to enjoy what is on offer
3. A quality experience

4. Meaning and engagement
 5. In tune with ecology and diversity
 6. The avoidance of staged authenticity
 7. It is about a critical appreciation of the journey and with an underlying value that travel need not impact heavily on the environment
 8. It is related with local gastronomy
 9. The transportation used to and around the destination is slow and ecological
- (Dickinson & Lumsdon 2010, 4)

Slow is an antithesis to fast. Slow travel encourages people to slow down from their daily hurry life and take a slow break, during which they will spend quality time. Slow travel engages tourists with local way of living, including taking local transportation such as local buses and trains, tasting local gastronomies, contacting with the locals and doing the local activities, for instance, visiting the local markets. It is suggested to start travelling slow with destinations near your home. But it doesn't mean travelling far away from home is not recommended. Even though slow travel suggests travellers to abandon air travel, it is possible to travel to a long distance destination with slow travel purpose.

2.2.2 Slow tourism development

Carlo Petrini and a group of activists started the slow concept with slow food movement in Bra, Italy in the 1980s. The idea was initiated as a response to the McDonaldization in Italy. The objective was to defend regional traditions, good food and a slow pace of life (Slow Food 2009). The slow food movement presents five core benefits:

1. Fresh-tasting food made from local varieties
2. Reduced food miles saving on energy
3. Gaining local knowledge and control about what we eat
4. Survival of local recipes and methods
5. Enhancement of local landscapes.

(Slow Food 2009)

The Slow Food movement was officially constituted in 1989, the movement has expanded to 132 countries with 100,000 members of the Slow Food International organization (Slow Food 2010). Today Slow Food involves with thousands of projects and millions of people in more than 160 countries (Slow Food 2016). Slow Food International's mission statement is 'to defend biodiversity in our food supply, spread taste education and connect producers of excellent foods with co-producers through events and initiatives' (Slow Food 2010).

Cittaslow is an organization found in Italy in 1999, which was inspired by Slow Food movement. Cittaslow's main goal is to enlarge the philosophy of Slow Food to local communities and to government of towns, applying the concepts of eco-gastronomy at prac-

tice of everyday life (Cittaslow 2016). Slow Cities concentrates on 'the development of places that enjoy a robust vitality based on good food, healthy environments, sustainable economies and the seasonality and traditional rhythms of community life' (Knox 2005, 6). The Cittaslow movement has expanded to 100 towns and 10 countries all over the world since 1999, connecting administrators, citizens and Slow Food partners (Cittaslow 2016).

Just like Slow Food and Cittaslow movements, slow tourism emphasize on consuming local foods cooked with traditional recipes or based on the organic principles, as well as slowing down and experiencing a different temporality in a particular place (Fullagar, Markwell & Wilson 2012, 4).

During the last few years, slow travel has emerged as a topic discussed in several academics, tourism sector and media contexts. Slow travel has gradually gained its recognition among experienced travelers around the globe. People have noticed the downsides of mass tourism and long haul trips. However, the numerous tourists who are travelling with a bucket list full of attractions to stop over and move on still exist, especially as Chinese tourists. For this reason, the author has the desire to research on slow tourism in Finland, where she has been living for years and find out is it suitable for the Chinese tourists who are active travelling.

2.3 Tourism in Finland

In this chapter, the tourism of Finland will be analyzed from the general picture. Slow tourism is not yet very developed in Finland although the country has great advantages of developing it. The one and only slow city in Finland, kristiinankaupunki, is located in the western part of the country.

2.3.1 Finnish tourism in a nutshell

In 2014, a total of €14.2 billion was spent on tourism in Finland. This includes the consumption expenditure of Finnish and foreign tourists. Foreign travellers accounted for 28 %, which is 4.03 billion euros, of total tourism consumption. In the same year, the profits derived from tourism reached to 4.4 billion euros, which constitutes 2.5% of Finland's GDP. The employment in tourism industry was 140,000 people. (Visit Finland 2014.)

Finnish accommodation establishments recorded almost 19.8 million overnight stays in 2015, of which domestic tourists accounted for 14.2 million and international tourists for

5.5 million. Russia and Sweden remained to be the largest markets for overnight stays, followed by Germany, UK, France and China. Chinese overnight stays increased 43.3% than the previous year, which was the fastest growing number among the foreign markets. (Visit Finland 2015)

Visit Finland has divided tourist destinations of Finland into four parts: Lapland, Lakeland, Helsinki and Coast & Archipelago. In 2015, Southern Finland and archipelago are the most visited destinations by the overnight stay tourists, which accounted for 63% of the total overnight stays. The Lakeland area accounted for 17%, which shows the increasing interest to the Lakeland from the tourists. Lapland had 21% of total overnights. (Visit Finland 2015)

2.3.2 Slow tourism in Finland

“Slow travel is an emerging conceptual framework which offers an alternative to air and car travel, where people travel to destinations more slowly overland, stay longer and travel less.”(Dickinson et al 2010, 1). Slow travel requires people to travel to and within a destination engaged with the local transportation, slow food and beverages, local culture and local life at a slower pace (Dickinson et al 2010, 2).

Not every city or even country has the conditions for developing slow tourism. The place has to be accessible with the suggested modes of transportation, namely bikes, buses, ferries, trains etc. There should be adequate resources, including natural resources, accommodations, foods and etc. Gardner (2009) suggested a manifesto for slow travel as follows:

1. Slow travel should start at home by exploring nearby places of interests.
2. The mode of travel is important; travellers should travel slow and avoid aircraft. Ferries, local buses and slow trains should be used.
3. The journey is part of the pleasure.
4. Local markets and shops should be visited.
5. The traveller needs to slow down and enjoy the cityscape.
6. It is significant to feel the languages and dialects.
7. The traveller should engage with the community at a right level.
8. It is advisable to do as locals do, such as eating times, restaurants, promenading, etc.

Kristiinankaupunki (kristinestad) is a town located in the western part of Finland by the Bothnian Sea. This small town with a population of 6,798 became the first and the only slow city in Finland in 2011. Kristinestad Municipalities share the same value with Citaslow of respecting citizens' health, the authenticity of products and good food. The town

is rich of fascinating craft traditions of valuable works of art, squares, theatres, shops, cafés, restaurants, places of the spirit and unspoiled landscapes, respect of traditions through the joy of a slow and quiet living (Kristinestad 2016).

Officially, the slow concept hasn't been advocated in Finland based on the fact that there is only one slow city in the whole country. Nonetheless, Finnish people have the slow concept in mind for centuries. In Finland, almost every family has a summer cottage. According to Statistics Finland, there are close to half a million official summer cottages in the country in December 2012. The number even reached to 500,000 if larger leisure homes are counted. (This is Finland 2013.) Normally, the summer cottages are located in the forests or by the lake away from their residential city. In Finland, people spend time in their summer cottage with families and friends to get away from busy routine life in the city to relax. They will enjoy sauna, go to swimming, go fishing, go strolling and make food with the fresh local ingredients. The cottage life is part of Finnish culture.

Finland is famous for its unspoiled forests, lakes, and pure nature. Serenity of Finland can be marketed to distinguish Finland from most of the other mainstream tourism destinations. Finnish tourist board has been using the theme "Silence, please" to marketing Finland as a getaway from hectic rhythm of daily life. In their official website, the articles related with cottage life can be found. Visit Finland stated that rarities like space, quietness and time are the things modern people value the most nowadays in our rush life and Finland is the right place to find those things people are lacking of. (Visit Finland 2015.) Even though, it is not officially promoted as slow tourism, this type of holiday is qualified to be. Typical activities of a cottage holiday in Finland involves renting a cottage by a lake, going to traditional smoke sauna, fishing, picking berries and mushrooms in the forest, biking, hiking, kayaking, tasting local cuisines and so on. All of these activities are representative examples of how Finnish people spend their summer in their cottages. Slowing down to experience a local life in nature and learn about local culture is exactly what slow tourism recommends people to do. Therefore, I want to narrow down the scope of the research to a typical Finnish summer cottage holiday as a model of slow tourism product.

2.4 Some examples of existing slow tourism products in the market

As I mentioned in the "Finnish Tourism" section, the concept of slow tourism hasn't yet been developed maturely in Finland. However, renting a summer cottage in the quite nature and by the lake is considered as traveling slow. Slow tourism is the opposite of mass tourism, which involves a tremendous amount of tourists going to the same resort at the same time of the year.

Slow travel gives the travellers the opportunity to become part of the local life, to connect to the place, the nature, the people and the culture. Generally, slow travellers spend more than a week in one place and stay in holiday rentals, for instance, houses, cottages and apartments. (Slow Movement 2016) On Visit Finland's website, several links to cottage renting were provided, as in Figure 2.5.

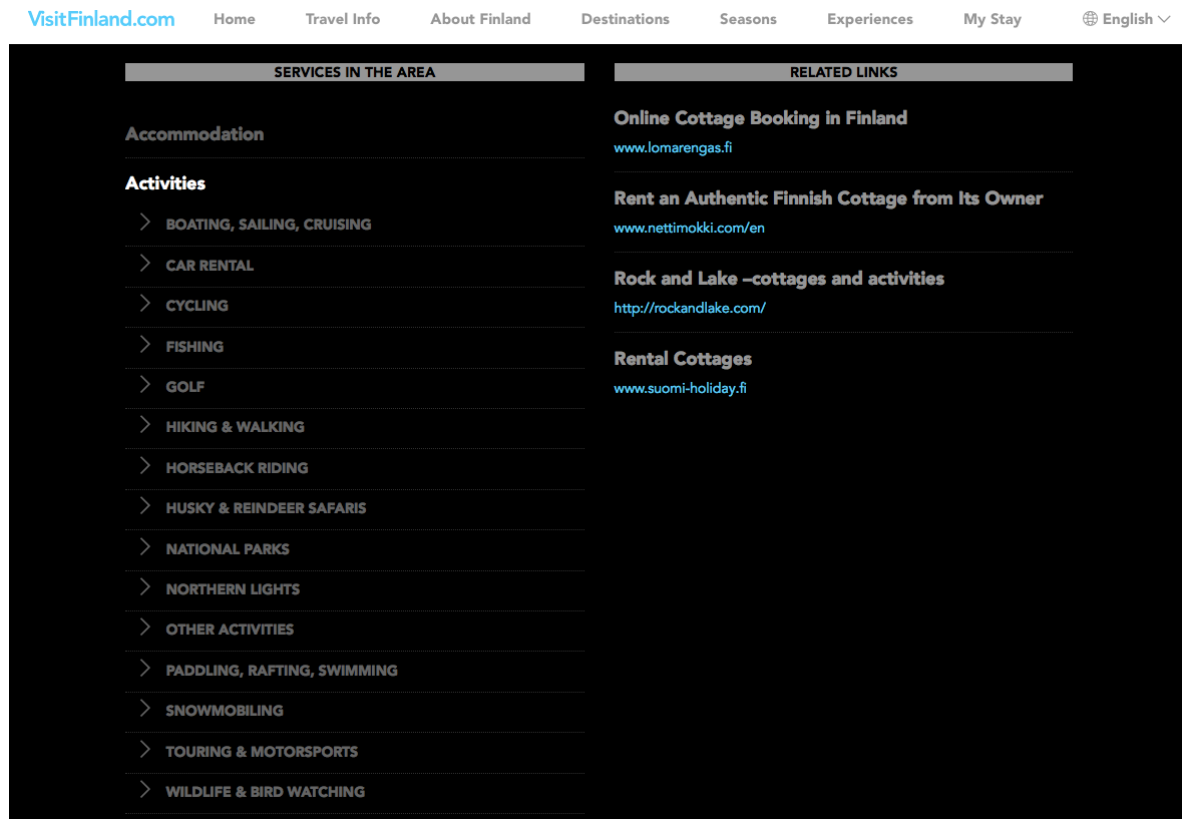


Figure 1. Services in the Lakeland area and links to cottage rentals. (Visit Finland 2016)

As a great example of cottage holidays by the lake, Rock and Lake offers cottage holiday packages that include cottage itself, activities and rent equipment, which are reserved directly from their web shop. Rock and Lake promises every cottage is situated by the lake, with a private beach, yard, jetty, rowing boat and traditional Finnish sauna. Activities like fishing, attending a guided fishing trip, boating tours, canoeing, picking wild berries and mushrooms in the forest, trekking, biking and nature photographing can be done independently or booked through the webpage together with the cottage. (Rock and Lake 2016)

Surprisingly, I found out that there are also similar products offered by Chinese travel agencies, which again reveals the big potential in the Chinese market. Mustard Seed Oy is a online travel agency, founded in Helsinki by a young Chinese graduate in the year

2011. Differentiated from most of the other Chinese travel agencies, this one focus on the customized travel and small groups travel. On their webpage, there is package called re-freshing summer holiday in Finland, Sweden and Norway. This tour lasts for twelve days in three different countries. Technically, this is not a slow tourism product. Nevertheless, some activities from this package have alike features with those cottage holiday packages from Finnish websites. Travellers will spend three days in a small Finnish town called Anttola, which is located in the Lakeland region. They will live in a cottage by the lake, enjoy fishing, traditional Finnish food, picking berries in the forest and of course traditional Finnish sauna. In Sweden and Norway, the travellers will do sightseeing but also typical local activities, for example, going to a local farm in Norway and picking fruits. (Mustard Seed Oy 2016)

2.5 Chinese outbound tourism in nutshell

The rapid economic growth of China over the recent decades has made China become one of the leading economies in the world. China has also been the biggest international outbound tourism source market since 2012. (Li 2016, 6)

However, China does not have a long history in the modern outbound tourism. Instead, the gate of China was closed for quite a long time. In the beginning of the Chinese outbound tourism development, the government was still reluctant about opening the gates to outbound travel (Li 2016, 8). Fortunately, the situation has been altered with time, the government has switched its unwillingness to open the travel gate to advocating Chinese citizens to travel.

China's modern outbound tourism began with "family visits" back in the early 1980s to Hong Kong and Macau, and later to some countries in Southeast Asia (Li 2016, 8). In the late 1990s, the Chinese government officially recognized the existence of outbound leisure tourism and signed the first approved destination status (ADS) agreements with Australia and New Zealand (Li 2016, 9). The approved destination status is an agreement between the Chinese government and another country to allow Chinese citizens to travel to that country for holiday within guided groups and with a special tourist visa. Afterwards, many more countries signed ADS agreements with China during the first decade of 21st century.

The attitude, as well as the policy of the Chinese government towards the outbound tourism play crucial role in its development. The Chinese government officially declared tourism as a pillar industry in 2009, and China started to celebrate Tourism Day annually on

March 19 two years later. Since then, outbound tourism has become a tool to show the world that the capabilities of Chinese citizens (Li 2016, 10).

Since 2012, China has been leading the global outbound travel. The spending made by Chinese travellers in 2015 increased by 26% compared to the year before, and reached to 292 billion dollars (UNWTO 2016). The new Chinese government emphasized its support for the outbound travellers expressly for the first time in 2013. The president of China, Xi Jinping made a speech at the Annual Conference of the Boao Forum for Asia and pointed out that China will invest 500 billion dollars in foreign countries in the following 5 years (Li 2016, 11).

Another big development of Chinese outbound tourism is that way of travel has shifted from traditional type of guided tours only to different varieties of choices, which also indicated a growing diversification of tourists' demands. (Li 2016, 6)

3 Empirical research

I chose to use both quantitative and qualitative research methods to conduct my research because I need to comprehend both the opinions of the experienced Chinese tourists and the persons who have insights of the travel industry in Finland and at the same time have experiences of the Chinese tourists who travel to Finland. In this part, I will present the target, objectives, research problems and the research process in detail. Besides, I will also describe the research method, plan, implementation and final result in-depth.

3.1 The chosen research methods and the reasons behind

“Qualitative research is an approach that allows you to examine people’s experiences in detail, by using a specific set of research methods such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observation, content analysis, visual methods, and life histories or biographies.” (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey 2011, 8) Additionally, Qualitative Research Consultants Association (QRCA) defines qualitative research is a method that devised to disclose the behavior of a target group and the perceptions that drive it with reference to specific topics or issues. (QRCA 2016)

The reason that I chose qualitative research method is I want to obtain deeper insights from the experts of the industry and their personal opinions in order to understand the behavior of my target group, that is the Chinese tourists. Data was collected and analyzed through structured interview of 3 people who have worked in the tourism industry with the Chinese tourists. Considering my target group is Chinese tourists, the methodology required to use is ethnography. Besides, the growing amount of Chinese outbound travellers and their diversified demands indicate their potential interest in the slow tourism products. My objective is to find out whether they will choose this type of products. I also used case study methodology.

As for quantitative method, I utilized it to gather numerical data and generalize the travel purpose, preference and behavior of a group of experienced Chinese tourists. Even though I was able to get some insights from the industry experts, I also wanted to get the direct opinions from the target group. Moreover, the slow tourism concept hasn’t gained its recognition in the Chinese market yet. The data I got from the structured interviews are more or less subjective.

3.2 The target, objectives and research questions

The target markets of this research are the experienced Chinese tourists who have had international travel experiences. The main objective of this thesis is to find out are Finnish slow tourism products suitable for experienced Chinese tourists. The research result can be beneficial for the travel agencies who are targeting on the Chinese market or on the advanced Chinese travellers. A skilled travel agent will cleverly obtain the individual needs and interests from the customer and offer the corresponding product (Holloway & Humphreys 2012, 70). The travel agencies targeted for attracting Chinese tourists to Finland could make use of the result of this research to offer relevant tourism products. Meanwhile, the conclusion should indicate the near trend of the Chinese outbound tourism.

As I explained in the introduction part, the research questions formulated in order to reach the main research objective are as follows:

- What are the needs and expectations of the Chinese tourists who travel to Finland?
- What is the future trend of Chinese outbound tourism in five years?
- Will slow tourism products of Lakeland region be appealing to the experienced Chinese tourists?

3.2.1 Questions designed for the qualitative research

The qualitative interview questions were designed to dig out the insights of the Chinese market in the tourism industry in Finland. Meanwhile, getting to know the interviewees' opinions on the trend of Chinese outbound tourism in the near future. I also need to know their opinions about slow tourism and whether Chinese travellers would be interested in slow tourism products. I had my assumptions before the interviews were carried out. As Finland being a non-mainstream travel destination, it should attract travellers with quite a lot of travelling experiences. I supposed the expectations of the Chinese tourists towards Finland should be mostly the Northern lights and winter activities. Therefore, asking relevant questions to the experts from the industry is also one way to prove my assumptions.

There are 7 questions in total for the qualitative research, which are attached in the appendices in the end. From question 1 to question 4 are designed to find out the needs and expectations of the Chinese tourists before coming to Finland. Being conscious of the needs of the target group helps to understand its consumer behavior. According to Holloway & Humphreys (2012, 70), the demand of the consumer determines the supply from market. Question 4 and question 5 are meant to discover the Chinese outbound tourism for the coming 5 years. The last two questions should indicate whether slow tourism prod-

ucts attract the experienced Chinese tourists. The Chinese market segmentation has shifted from sightseeing to experience and from brand to lifestyle, which increases the necessity to create larger number of niche markets (Li 2016, 6). With the last questions of the qualitative interview, I should be able to get a general image of the current outbound tourism trend, as well as its development in the coming 5 years.

Before conducting the qualitative interviews officially, I discussed the questions with a friend of mine who works for one of my qualitative interviewees. Afterwards, I revised the questions based on her feedbacks. For example, I had a question asking about the future trend of the Chinese outbound tourism. She expressed that future trend of Chinese tourism is too big to give describe, it would be better if I could narrow down “the future trend”.

3.2.2 Questions designed for the quantitative research

The questions of the questionnaire are formulated to investigate the needs of the Chinese experienced tourists and to find out whether Finnish cottage holiday attract them. For instance, questions like what attract them to come to Finland, whether they are interested in nature and which kind of holiday they prefer will be asked. The ultimate goal is to find out are Finnish slow tourism products suitable for the experienced Chinese tourists. To reach that goal, questions containing features of slow tourism are designed with the purpose of not confusing them with the term ‘slow tourism’. The reason behind is that slow tourism is not a well-known concept in China, the questions that respondents can easily comprehend will help to get more accurate and reliable result.

From question 1 to question 4 are made to explore the demographic factors like age, residential city, profession, as well as monthly income. I think those factors have certain influences on the consumer behavior of the target group. Question 5 asks about frequency of travel, in order to find out whether the respondents have sufficient travel experiences and to acquire the connection between their frequency of travel and travel choices they make. Slow travel engages tourists with local way of living, including taking local transportation such as local buses and trains, tasting local gastronomies, contacting with the locals and doing the local activities, for instance, visiting the local markets. Therefore, all questions from number 6 to number 12 all contain features of slow tourism, which are designed to comprehend the acceptance of the respondents regarding to slow tourism. Finally, the last question gives the information about a typical Finnish cottage holiday and inquires the respondents whether it seems attractive to them.

3.3 The research implementation

I spent more than two weeks on devising the qualitative questions and the questionnaire. My thesis supervisors approved my qualitative questions the first time I sent my work to them. However, the questionnaire was revised after receiving their comments and suggestions.

As soon as the questions had been approved, I started to carry out my research. The qualitative interviews were conducted between October 2016 and November 2016. The face-to-face interview was conducted in the beginning of October. And the interviews using Chinese social media were conducted in November. I arranged the time for face-to-face interview with the interview on Internet. And it took place in the company office in Helsinki on 3rd of October. The second interview took place on 14th of November. The questions were sent to the interviewee online, afterwards she replied with audio messages. Finally, I sent the qualitative interview questions to the interviewee on 15th of November and got his response on 17th of November. The face-to-face interview is relatively interactive in comparison with the two other interviews conducted on Chinese social media. Nevertheless, I tried to enquire the interviewees about the responses that puzzled me.

I began to send the online questionnaire on 30th of November 2016. The questionnaire was active online for 2 weeks, after which I spent another 2 weeks on analyzing the data of the survey.

3.3.1 The interviewees chosen for the qualitative research

For the qualitative interviews, I chose to interview 3 people who have insights and working experiences in the travel industry. Besides, their working experiences should somewhat be sufficient enough to answer my questions regarding to the needs and preferences of the experienced Chinese tourists. Coincidentally, all the interviewees are Chinese graduates of Finnish universities. I will refer them to interviewee A, interviewee B, and interviewee C in my future statement.

Interviewee A is male, a young graduate from Helsinki University who established his own travel company in 2011. His company offers customized tours to the Chinese tourists who are interested in depth tour or looking for a new experience in Northern Europe. Interviewee B is female, also a young graduate from a Finnish higher institution, which is Tampere University of Applied Sciences. She works as international sales manager for a leading cruise company in the northern Baltic Sea region. She is mainly responsible for the

Chinese sales. Interviewee C is male, a graduate from University of Helsinki, works as key account manager for a Finnish tour operator that specializes in “experience travel” to Northern Lapland and Northwest Russia. The main reason that I chose them to be my interviewees is that they all have deep insights of the Finnish tourism industry in the aspect of marketing themselves in the Chinese market. In the other hand, I was looking for some agencies that have been offering “experience travel” or depth travel to study at. These companies suit my qualifications well.

3.3.2 The respondents of the questionnaire

As I mentioned, the goal of the quantitative research is to get to know the opinions of the experienced Chinese travellers themselves. Therefore, the questionnaire was only sent to the Chinese who have abroad travel experiences. The process was complicated considering the fact that I couldn't just post it on my social media due to the limitation of the research group.

What I did was to send the online questionnaire to the Chinese people I know who travelled abroad, and to some tour leaders who lead outbound traveling groups. I kindly asked them to send the questionnaire to their clients and the groups they were responsible for in the past. I got 97 replies. The response rate was 45%.

3.4 Data collection and analysis

The structured interviews were conducted in two different ways. The interview with interviewee C was conducted through face-to-face interview. The one with interviewee A and interviewee B were conducted through Wechat, which is the most used Chinese social media and has similar functions like WhatsApp. I sent the written questions to the two interviewees. Interviewee A gave the responses in the form of written messages. Interviewee B gave her responses in the form of vocal messages. Afterwards, I analyzed the data according to their responses.

The quantitative data was collected through online questionnaire. I created an online questionnaire with Tencent QQ questionnaire. Tencent QQ is a Chinese instance messaging software service developed by Tencent Holdings Limited. And Tencent QQ questionnaire is a free online questionnaire system created by this company. I chose to use this system because it is easy to use and also because of the popularity of Tencent QQ as a social media in China. Once the questionnaire was created, I started to send it to the

Chinese that I know who are experienced travellers. I also sent it to some tour leaders who I knew from my previous work and asked them to send the questionnaire to their customers.

The data collection process of the questionnaire was complicated due to the fact that I need to research on the Chinese tourists who had travelled abroad. I couldn't just post it on my page and ask people to fill it in. The tour leaders were great helps, even though I had to wait for them to get free time to help. The questionnaire was open for approximately two weeks online. Finally I got 97 replies in total.

Recent questionnaire summarized the data automatically mostly by using charts. However, the open questions like the residence city and province, I needed to analyze by myself.

3.5 The results

3.5.1 Qualitative research result

Interviewee C indicated that there has been a large range of different types of Chinese tourists travelling to Finland. Both old travellers and young travellers are interested in Finland. At the moment, group travellers are the main incomers. However, the amount of individual travellers has been increasing during the recent years. Interviewee A expressed that the type of tourists who travel to Finland differs according to the seasons. During the summer, the family travellers with children are their main clients. During the winter, there are family travellers, as well as couples without children. Interviewee B indicated that there have been changes in the incoming Chinese tourists during these years. Few years ago, the Chinese who traveled to Finland were mostly experienced travellers and had outbound traveling experiences. However, some Chinese travellers who had never travelled outside China also travelled to Finland during the recent one or two years. There has also been a rise in the number of the Chinese who are fascinated by the Nordic culture or Nordic scenery. The main travellers are the elderly people whose ages are over 50 years. She also pointed out the group travellers are their major clients.

Due to the company business idea and its marketing segmentation of interviewee C is mostly focused on Lapland in winter, most of their clients only have the expectations of Northern lights, some winter landscape and winter sports. In the summer, their customers mainly visit Helsinki only. Interviewee A revealed that their clients who travel to Finland also have high expectations on the Northern lights and winter scenery, yet the clients of the summer season have expectations of Finnish nature, high standard accommodation

and city sightseeing. Interviewee B has almost the same opinions with Interviewee A about the expectations of the clients. Moreover, the clients of the cruise company that interviewee B works for have the expectations on the “ice-breaking” experience with the winter cruises.

As for marketing Finland to the Chinese market, the company of interviewee C emphasizes on the Northern light and unique winter activities, for example, accommodation in the glass hotel, husky safari and etc. Thanks to some TV programs of Chinese celebrities coming to Lapland for holidays, the awareness of Lapland as a fun destination has raised relevantly during the recent years. Interviewee A considers the unspoiled Finnish nature, unique Aurora lights, excellent accommodation, convenient transportation system and Finnish design and art are the main factors that should be publicized. Interviewee B believes the marketing of Finland is normally connected with the marketing of Northern Europe. The direction of the marketing is mostly focused on Santa Clause, Finnish nature, Finnish art and design.

When the interviewees were asked whether there have been changes in the customers’ demand these years, all of them indicated that their clients have shown diversification in demands. Interviewee B expressed that most of the travellers remain to be the elderly group travellers and their needs remain to be sightseeing and shopping. However, the needs of the growing amount of the young travellers tend to be more complex. They want to experience something unique and have more contacts with the locals. Speaking for interviewee C, she also thinks the main customers are still the elderly group tourists, yet more and more customers are into “experience travel”. They have received some special orders on theme tours, for instance, family tour, educational tour, photographer club, honeymoon photograph and so on. Meanwhile, interviewee A also noticed changes in the customers’ needs, he suggested that there has been an obvious growth in the number of experienced tourists from China. The development of internet and technology also have made individual travels simpler.

The responses from the 3 interviewees regarding to the Chinese outbound tourism trend in the near 5 years are basically the same. The mainstream will continue to be the group travellers, however, there will not be significant growth in this category. At the same time, customers will require more unique experiences other than just doing sightseeing whole day. Manifest growth in the individual travellers and experienced travellers will appear with no doubt.

Finally, I asked for their opinions about the future of the slow tourism products in China. Interviewee C informed me about one survey her company did during the summer, which was also about holiday by the Finnish lakes. The result of the survey indicated that this type of holiday is more appealing to the Chinese who live in the western countries and the ones who have been travelling frequently. Nevertheless, most of the Chinese tourists are not conscious of slow tourism or similar way of travel. It will take some time until people to get mature enough to understand the concept of slow travel and accept it. Interviewee A considers slow travel as an attitude of life, and not everyone will enjoy being “slow”. Besides, only mature tourists who have plenty of travelling experiences will be interested. He personally prefers a combination of sightseeing and few days of relaxation. I found out that they have a product that contains 3 days’ stay at Saimaa Lake region in Finland from his company webpage, as well as some other city tours in Sweden and Norway. I was told the feedbacks from the customers who had purchased it were very positive. In the eyes of Interviewee B, there will not be big potential for slow tourism products in China in the recent 5 years. It will be a long process until the Chinese travellers to get mature enough for this type of travel.

3.5.2 Quantitative research result

The questionnaire contained 13 questions. The page was visited 214 times, however, only 97 out of all the visitors submitted their replies. Therefore, the response rate was 45%. The average time of completing the survey was about 4 minutes. I will illustrate the questionnaire result using charts, to make the result more visible and easier to comprehend for the readers.

As Figure 2 shows, the majority of the respondents were between 15 years old and 25 years old, which accounted for 41% of the total respondents. Around 32% of respondents were from 26 years old to 35 years old. The figure for respondents from 36 years old to 45 years old stood at 17%. The responses from 46-year-old to 55-year-old only accounted for 7% and the rest 3% were respondents who are over 55 years old.

The reason for the uneven age distribution is mostly due to the use of Internet at different age. In other words, it was rather challenging to find sufficient respondents who are over 45 years old and knowing how to answer an online questionnaire in China. The most active internet surfers are the young people who are under 30 years old.

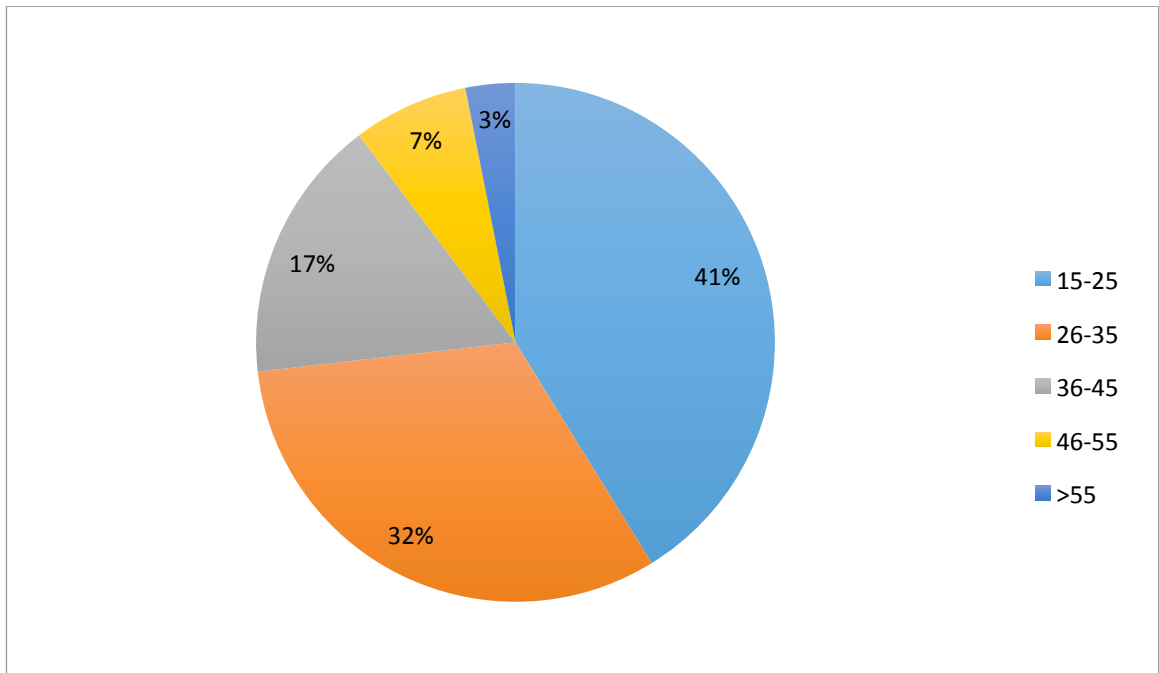


Figure 2. The age range of the respondents (equivalent to 97 respondents)

I tried to reach respondents from all over China, in order to get a more reliable result. In Table 2, I listed all of the residential provinces of the respondents. The provinces where most respondents live were Jiangsu, Shanghai, Jiangxi and Guangdong. The relatively higher amount of interviewees from Jiangxi was my personal contacts, which is the group of people that I know who love travelling internationally. That is the province where I am from. In the other hand, there were plenty of interviewees from Jiangsu, Shanghai and Guangdong. This is because people there travel more often due to better economic situation they have.

Table 2. Residential provinces of the respondents.

Province	Number of re- spondents	Province	Number of re- spondents
Shandong	2	Hubei	3
Jiangsu	10	Beijing	7
Shanghai	26	Tianjin	1
Zhejiang	2	Inner Mongolia	1
Anhui	1	Sichuan	4
Fujian	3	Yunnan	2
Jiangxi	13	Chongqing	1
Guangdong	12	Liaoning	3
Hainan	1	Overseas	4

Hunan	1		
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Figure 3 shows the map of China's provinces, in case the readers do not know China well geographically. It is obvious that most of the respondents are from the east coast of China, from where people tend to travel more frequently. The east coast of China is a better-developed area in the whole country.



Figure 3. China's provinces map. (The Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding 2016)

The professions of the respondents are well shown in the Figure 4. I divided the professions into 7 categories, as the legend of the chart shows, which are: business, service industry; technicians; artists; office clerks; production and transportation; politicians and enterprise responsible persons and the others. The biggest category group is people who work in business and service industry, which was 32% out of the all interviewees, followed by 25% of the art workers. Then 15.5% of the respondents were technicians and 14.4% were politicians and responsible persons for enterprises. Only 2.1% of them work in production or transportation field, and 1% work in the office as clerks. Finally, there was also 10.3% from the whole group work in other areas that are not listed above. I made this

question up because I supposed that there is a connection between the profession and your values, needs and final decision.

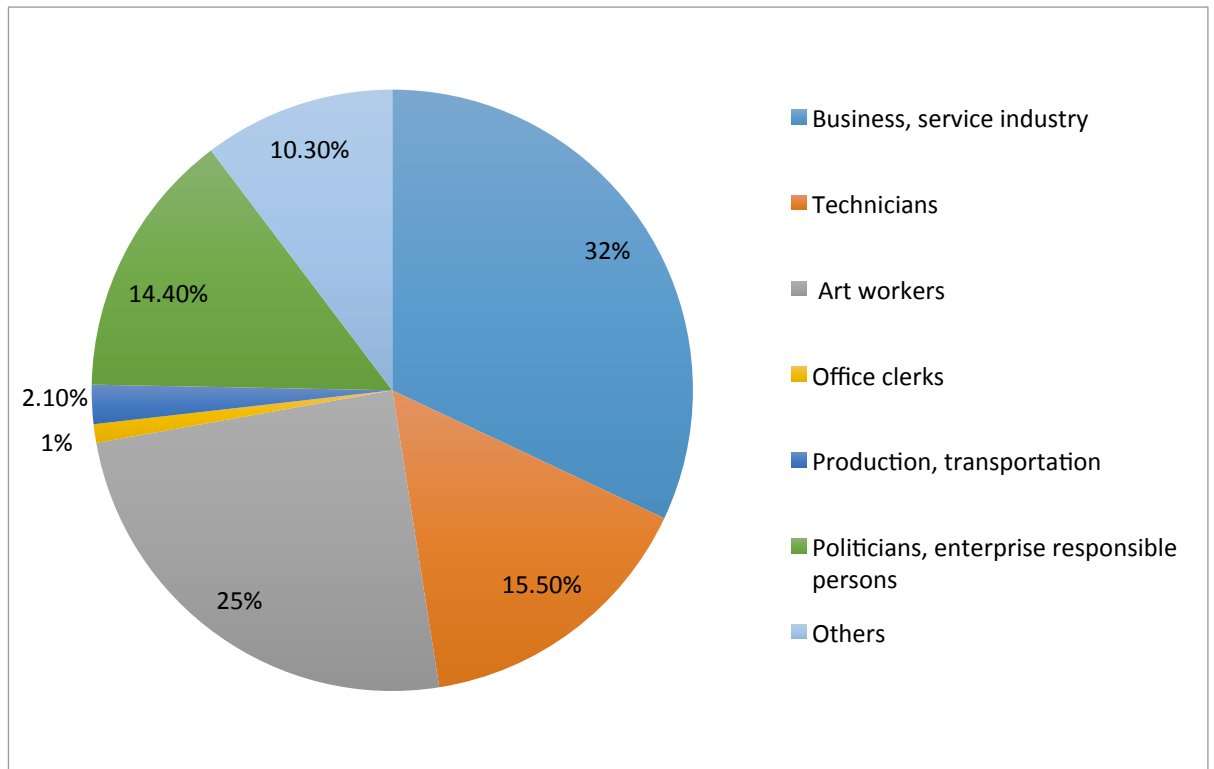


Figure 4. Profession of the respondents. (equivalent to 97 respondents)

Definitely salary is one of the factors that influence the opinions and decisions of the travellers. The average monthly salary in China in 2015 was 5169yuan (Trading economics, 2016), which is around 715 euros based on the exchange rate of 1:0.14. The Figure 5 displayed the percentage of the respondents having distinct monthly income ranges. The people whose monthly salary is below the average level accounts for 25.8%. Most of my respondents (26.8%) have their monthly income between 5,000-8,000yuan, that is between 692€ to 1107€. The people whose monthly salary is between 8,000-10,000yuan (1107-1384€) stand for 24.7% of the whole, while 19.6% have it between 10,000-15,000yuan (1384-2076€). At last, 1% out of the entire respondents has salary between 15,000-20,000yuan (2076- 2768€) and 2.1% gets more than 20,000yuan (2768€) per month. It is evident that the majority of my interviewees have higher salary than the average. That is also the reason they could afford outbound travels at least once in their life.

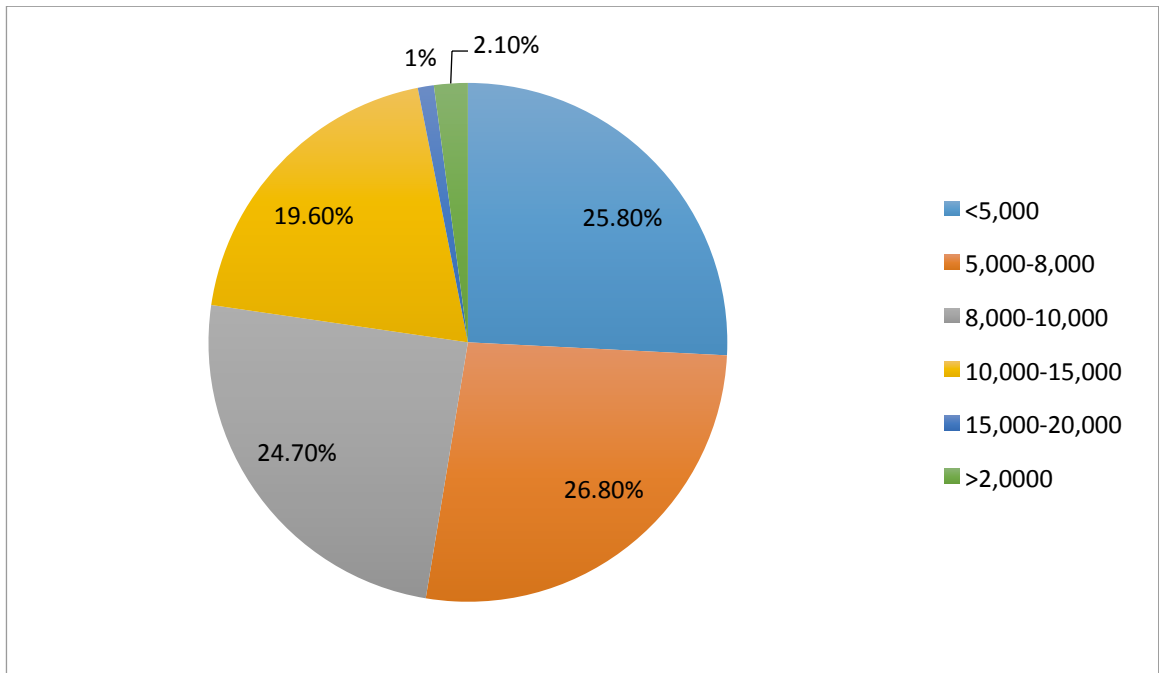


Figure 5. Monthly income (yuan) of the respondents. (equivalent to 97 respondents)

Due to the fact that I only wanted to research on the experienced Chinese outbound travellers, I only sent the online questionnaire to the ones who had travelled at least once outside China. I categorized the frequency of travel into four groups: the ones who have travelled abroad between once to three times, the ones with 3-5 times, the ones with 5-10 times and finally the most experienced travellers who have travelled internationally for more than 10 times. Surprising, as Figure 6 shows, half of the respondents has only traveled 1 to 3 times abroad in their lifetime. The travellers who have visited foreign countries for 3 to 5 times accounted for 25% of the totals. And the ones who traveled from 5 to 10 times and more than 10 times stood for 12% and 13% of the entirety respectively. I considered the times of outbound trips necessary to examine because I supposed the Chinese tourists who have more travel experiences would be more open to slow tourism products. So did the qualitative interviewees I conducted research with.

When I took a deeper glance to the relevancy of the professions and times of travel, I discovered that the respondents who travel the most frequent were the ones who work in business and service industry and the artists. These two groups stood for 60% of the respondents who have travelled for more than 5 times.

On the other hand, the result as well revealed that the respondents whose monthly salary is below 5,000yuan (689€) mostly had travelled only 1-3 times. As for the respondents who travelled most often had monthly salary from 5,000- 15,000yuan (689-2076€). It

might seem surprising for someone who gets 689€ a month to travel outside China. The truth is Chinese people are good at saving.

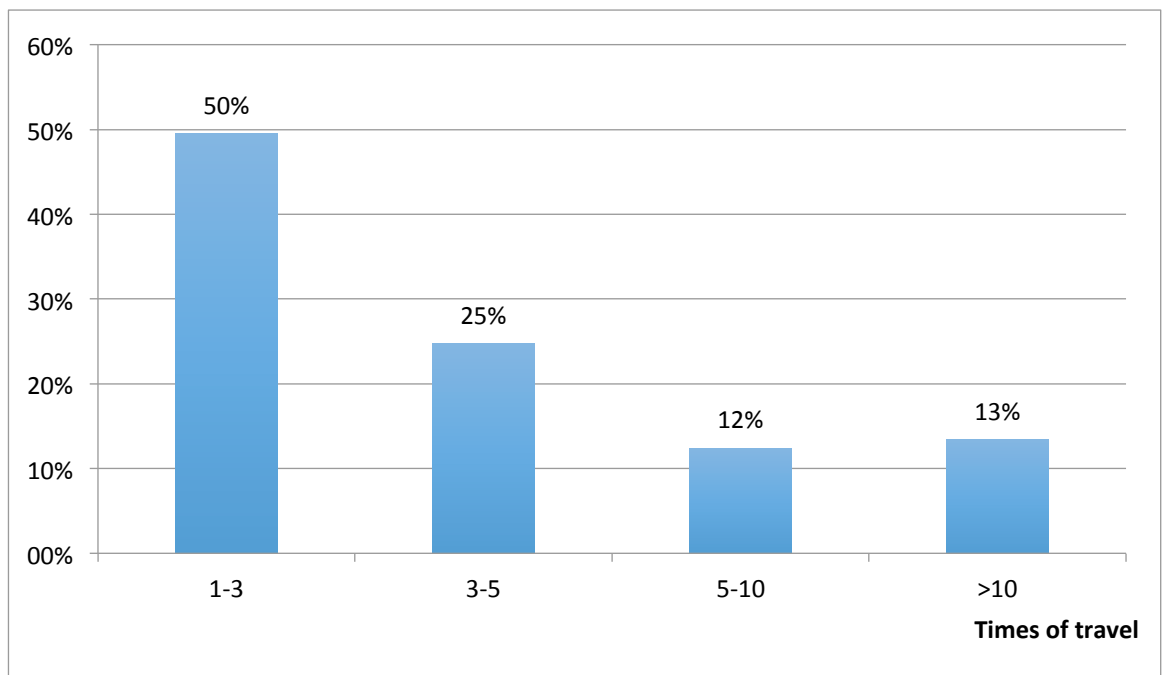


Figure 6. Times of outbound travels the respondents have done. (equivalent to 97 respondents)

As I illustrated in the chapter 2.1 “tourism in general”, the travel motivators are categorized into physical motivators, cultural motivators, interpersonal motivators, as well as status and prestige motivators. (McIntosh et al., 1995) Combining the theory and my personal knowledge about my country, I listed the purpose of travel in the questionnaire as follows: personal interest, relaxation from work and studies, desire to improve foreign languages and to learn other cultures, to visit friends and families, to show their purchase power, for business trips and for other purpose. This question was multiple choices taking into account that one might have more than one purpose of travel. It turned out 72 persons out of 97 said they travel for their personal interest and 42 travels for relaxation from their daily routine work. There were 35 respondents travel to learn new language and foreign culture and another 14 of them travel to visit their families and friends abroad. What surprised me the most was only 4 stated they travel for the prestige, which means to travel to be able to show the others that they are wealthy and they are living a good life. From my past working experiences, I felt like many Chinese tourists enjoy flaunting in front of their travel group, sometimes even me. Chinese tourists have had the reputation for purchasing luxury branded products while traveling and many of them don't even have the purchase power, they would rather eat badly during the trip to save money to buy a branded bag. How-

ever, 7 respondents expressed that they travel for business. In the end, 3 persons chose other purposes without leaving an answer to the open question.

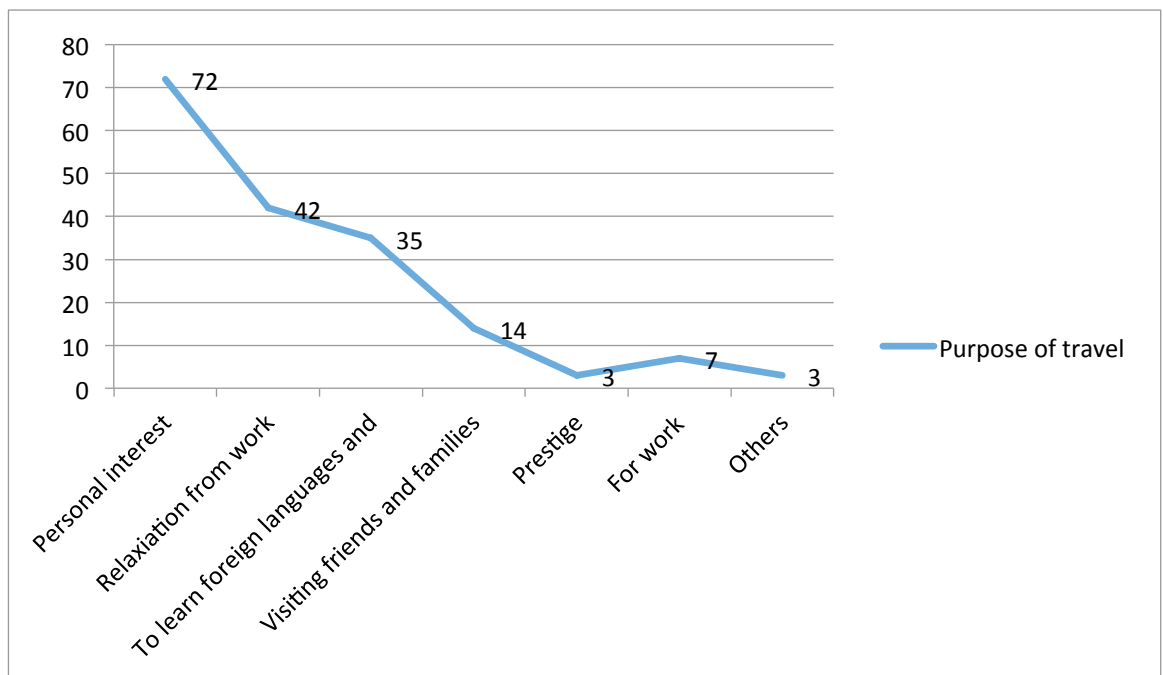


Figure 7. The travel purpose of the respondents. (equivalent to 97 respondents)

As I indicated earlier, the Chinese tourists tend to travel in a big group guided by one English speaking tour leader. Li (2016, 6) revealed that Chinese way of travel has shifted from traditional type of guided tours to different varieties of choices. Therefore, I included one question asking about the preferable way of traveling. The majority of the respondents expressed that they prefer to travel in a small group of family or friends, which stood for 56.7% of the entirety. Amazingly, only 27.8% would rather travel in a guided group. In the other hand, 14.5% expressed that they love travelling alone due to the freedom and flexibility.

However, I found out that there is a connection between the travel frequency and travel mode. As table 3 shows, the more a respondent travels, the more they tend to choose to travel with their families and friends, or to travel alone. On the contrary, the inexperienced travellers prefer to travel in groups, with an English-speaking guide, or to travel with their families and friends.

	1-3 times trav- ellers	3-5 times trav- ellers	5-10 times travellers	Over 10 times travellers
Prefer to travel with a guided group	37.5%	25%	17%	8%
Prefer to travel with family and friends	48%	67%	67%	62%
Prefer to travel individually	14.5%	8%	16%	23%
Prefer other mode of travel	0	0	0	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 3. The relevancy between travel frequency and travel mode.

The main purpose of this online questionnaire was to find out whether the Chinese tourists who have international travel experiences be interested in slow tourism and slow tourism products. However, the slow travel concept hasn't been ingrained in China. It is barely introduced. Therefore, I decided not to mention the term "slow tourism" in the question to confuse them or bore them. I extracted the main features of slow tourism and made relative questions, which are the ones from question 8 until question 13.

To know what kind of travel destination attract the Chinese travellers was also essential for my research. Thence, I asked them to choose their favorite destination from historical towns, cosmopolitan cities, shopping paradise, nature surrounding and sunny islands. Figure 8 shows that more than half of the respondents are into sunny island. The travellers who favor historical towns stood for 24% of all interviewees, while 17% of them prefer the nature. Furthermore, the tourists who are fond of cosmopolitan cities and shopping paradise account for 5.2% and 4.1% individually. I have to admit, this result was nothing like what I expected. According to my knowledge, Chinese tourists are passionate about cosmopolitan cities and shopping paradise. On the contrary, most of my respondents like sunny islands, historical towns and the nature, which shows they are tourists with more sophisticated demands. I also tried to look into whether the travel frequency has an influence on the preference of travel destination, however, no clear evidence was found from my result.

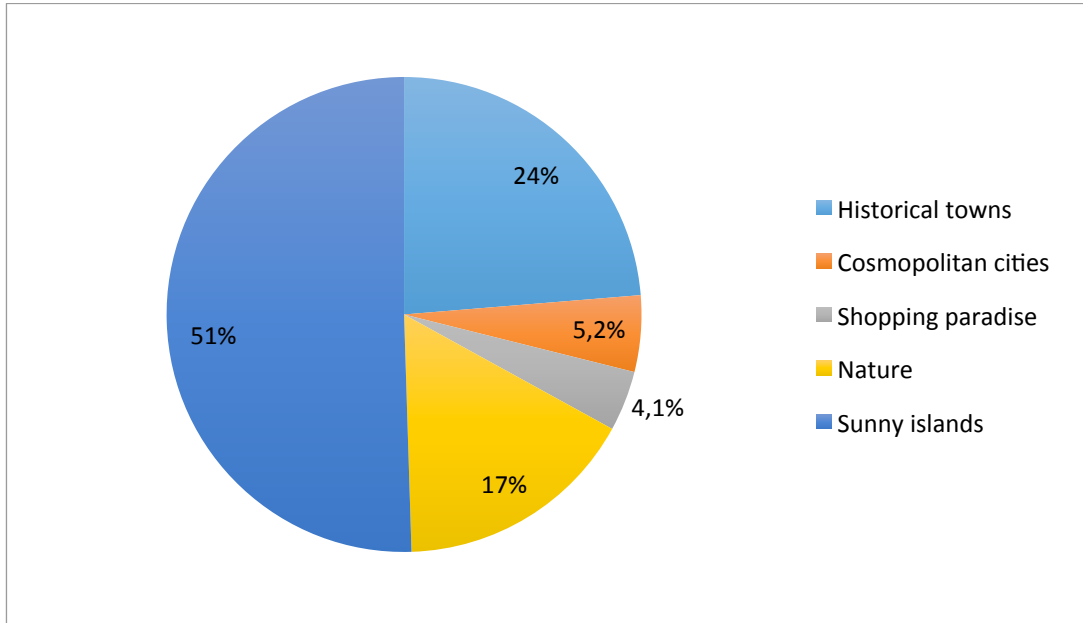


Figure 8. Preferred travel destination. (equivalent to 97 respondents)

As for time arrangement during a trip, 46.4% of the respondents expressed that they would rather spend their vacation in a city or a small town to get to know the local culture better. Furthermore, 40.2% of them would choose to travel within one country and its main cities. Contrarily, the tourists who consider time is limited and precious would try to visit as many countries as possible during one trip constituted 13.4% of whole respondents.

The result showed that the respondents who have more travel experiences prefer to stay in one city or a small town on their trips. Besides, no one from the respondents who have travelled abroad for more than 5 times want to travel to many countries during one trip. While 23% of the 1-3 times travellers and 8% of the 3-5 times travellers enjoy traveling to many different countries during one trip.

	1-3 times travellers	3-5 times travellers	5-10 times travellers	Over 10 times travellers
Travel to many countries	23%	8%	0	0
Travel to one country	42%	42%	42%	31%
Travel to one city/town	35%	50%	58%	69%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

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Table 4. The relevancy of travel frequency and travel preference.

Getting to the local culture is one of the most important features of slow tourism. Most of the respondents (65%) have the desire to get to know the foreign culture while travelling, yet 29.9% out of those respondents couldn't communicate with the locals due to the language barrier or their introverted personality. In addition, around one third of the respondents (33%) sometimes feel like to learn the local culture and the local people, yet they will not try to make an effort to reach that goal. Only 2.1% of the entirety doesn't have any interest for this at all. Besides, the data also indicated that the respondents who have travelled for less than 5 times have bigger language barrier than the experienced travellers.

Tasting local gastronomy is a crucial part of the whole "slow" concept. I mentioned in chapter 2.2 slow tourism, that the objective of slow motion was to defend regional traditions, good food and a slow pace of life. (Slow Food) I inquired the interviewees whether they would taste local gastronomy when they traveling, the majority (80.4%) gave positive answer. On the other hand, 12.4% of the respondents only savor the local cuisine occasionally, depending on how they feel or how do the food look like. Nonetheless, 2.1% of the respondents only taste the local gastronomy because they don't have any other choice, while the other 5.2% just don't enjoy the western cuisine. I did not detect clear connection between the travel frequency and the willingness to taste local gastronomy.

In order to understand whether the experienced Chinese tourists are interested in the Finnish nature and Finnish slow tourism products, I listed one question asking about their expectations before coming to Finland. Half of the respondents (55.7%) considered the northern lights, Santa Clause and other winter activities in the north of Finland the biggest attraction. One third of the respondents (36.1%) have high expectation on the pure Finnish nature, which also indicated potential of slow tourism products among the experienced Chinese tourists. Only 4.1% of the respondents are most attracted by the Finnish design and they would travel to Finland for shopping purpose, meanwhile 3.1% of the respondents are fascinated by Finnish architecture. One respondent had other expectations but he didn't fill in the open blank. In addition, 69% of the respondents who have more than 10 times of international travel experiences are highly interested in the Finnish nature. The respondents who have less travel experiences are more into northern lights and other winter attractions of Lapland.

Finally, I gave a link from “visitfinland” that explained Finnish summer cottage lifestyle and I also gave a short description in my own words to help the respondents understand it better. I asked them whether they are interested in a cottage holiday by the lake, which is a typical slow tourism product in Finland. The majority of the respondents (63.9%) showed their huge interest in the Finnish summer cottage holiday. The other 32% of the respondents said they may spend their holiday in a Finnish summer cottage. While 4.1% of the people believed that it sounded boring at that moment and they might get interested in few years. What’s more, no one thought it was absolutely boring and would never take such holidays.

Additionally, 92% of the respondents who have travelled abroad more than 10 times are very interested in the Finnish summer cottage holiday and 8% of them think it is not appealing to them at the moment. Even though the rest of the respondents are also attracted by this type of holiday, half of them are extremely willing to try it out and the other half said they may do it. In this respect, the travellers with a lot of travelling experiences are more likely to accept slow tourism product.

4 Conclusion

Slow travel is about making conscious choices. It is about deceleration rather than speed. The journey becomes the moment to relax, rather than a stressful interlude imposed between home and destination (Gardner 2009, 11). It is important to travel to and within a destination engaged with the local transportation, slow food and beverages, local culture and local life at a slower pace (Dickinson et al 2010).

The aim of this thesis was to find out whether slow tourism products are suitable for the experienced Chinese tourists. Qualitative method and quantitative method were both used for the research and the data was collected by means of interviews and an online questionnaire. I interviewed three persons from the travel industry who have sufficient contact with the experienced Chinese tourists. As for the online questionnaire, I got 97 replies from the active Chinese travellers, and the response rate was 45%. Based on responses of the interview and the questionnaire, I come to the following conclusions.

The qualitative interviews revealed that the main Chinese tourists who travel to Finland are mostly middle aged and old aged. The amount of family travellers and individual travellers has been increasing rapidly during the recent years. The majority of the Chinese tourists are attracted by Finnish winter activities, Santa Claus and Aurora lights. However, there is also certain amount of tourists that consider the unspoiled Finnish nature quite appealing. The needs of the Chinese tourists have been getting more and more diversified. Therefore, all of their companies have made adjustments to their products based on the newest trend and customers' demands. Nevertheless, the main stream for the next coming 5 years will remain the same, which is the guided group travel. At the same time, the number of family travellers and individual travellers will increase swiftly. Slow tourism products will not attract numerous Chinese tourists in the near future considering the fact that most of the Chinese visitors to Finland are not open-minded enough. They consider slow tourism attractive for the young generation, who are looking for distinct experiences, as well as the Chinese tourists who have more than sufficient travel experiences.

On the other hand, the questionnaire result indicated that the majority of the respondents travel for their personal interest, and around half of all respondents also travel for relaxation and for their wellbeing. One third of all travel to learn new language and foreign culture and some of them travel to visit their families and friends abroad. Only a minority indicated that they travel for prestige satisfaction. More than half of the respondents expressed that they prefer to travel in a small group of family or friends. However, 27.8% of the entity would rather travel in a guided group. Besides, 14.5% prefers individual travels.

It shows that the more a respondent travels, the more he tends to choose to travel with his families and friends, or to travel alone. On the contrary, the inexperienced travellers prefer to travel in groups, with an English-speaking guide, or to travel with their families and friends.

Slow travel engages tourists with local way of living, including taking local transportation such as local buses and trains, tasting local gastronomies, contacting with the locals and doing the local activities, for instance, visiting the local markets. Slow travel is also nature-based tourism, which requires people to integrate with the nature.

The sunny island destination was the most preferred among all the respondents, followed by historical towns and nature. Small number of respondents is fond of cosmopolitan cities and shopping paradise. Regarding to Finland as a destination, more than half of the respondents are more attracted by the northern lights, Santa Clause and other winter activities in the north of Finland. One third of the respondents (36.1%) have high expectation on the pure Finnish nature. The data revealed that the respondents who have less travel experiences are more into northern lights and other winter attractions of Lapland. In the questionnaire, many of the respondents showed their interests toward the nature-based tourism.

Slow travellers travel to destinations more slowly overland, stay longer and travel less (Dickinson et al 2010,1). Almost half of the respondents expressed that they would rather spend their vacation in a city or a small town to get to know the local culture better. Furthermore, a large number of whole would choose to travel within one country and its main cities. A minority of all respondents would try to visit as many countries as possible during one trip. The result showed that the respondents who have more travel experiences prefer to stay in one city or a small town on their trips. This result showed that most of the respondents prefer to slow down and enjoy one destination on their holidays, which correspond to the slow feature of slow travel.

It is important to travel to and within a destination engaged with the local transportation, slow food and beverages, local culture and local life at a slower pace (Dickinson et a 2010,1). Most of the respondents (65%) have the desire to get to know the foreign culture while travelling, yet one third of them can't communicate with the locals due to the language barrier or their introverted personality. In addition, around one third of the respondents feel like to learn the local culture and the local people, however, they will are not willing to make an effort. Only a small number of the respondents are not interested in foreign culture at all. The majority also fancies trying local gastronomy when they travel, while

12.4% of the respondents only taste the local cuisine occasionally, depending on how they feel or how do the food look like. Minority doesn't enjoy foreign cuisines. Therefore, the majorities revealed their interest in more of the slow tourism activities.

The majority of the respondents (63.9%) showed their huge interest in the Finnish summer cottage holiday. The other 32% of the respondents said that they might spend their holiday in a Finnish summer cottage. While 4.1% of the people are not very interested at the moment but they might change their mind in few years. What's more, no one gave an absolutely negative answer for this question. The respondents who travel frequently showed their huge interest in Finnish summer cottage, which indicated slow tourism products attract the mature Chinese tourists.

Therefore, I summed up the findings and got the following answers for the 3 research problems:

1. What are the needs and expectations of the Chinese tourists who travel to Finland?
2. What is the trend of Chinese outbound tourism in 5 years?
3. Will slow tourism products of Lakeland region be appealing to the experienced Chinese tourists?

The majority of the Chinese tourists are fascinated by Finnish winter activities, Santa Claus and Aurora lights. However, there is also certain amount of tourists that consider the unspoiled Finnish nature quite appealing. On the other hand, the main stream for the next coming 5 years will remain the same, which is the guided group travel. At the same time, the number of family travellers and individual travellers will increase swiftly. Finally, Finnish summer cottage holiday is suitable for the mature Chinese tourists who have sufficient international travel experiences and open-minded enough to embrace and learn a new culture. Considering the fact that the increasing amount of mature Chinese travellers coming to Finland, it is a good idea to start developing and marketing this type of holidays to the Chinese tourists who are looking for fresh experiences in the future market.

5 Discussion

The discussion looks into the results of the study. In a research-oriented thesis, the trustworthiness and the ethical viewpoints of the study are examined. In the discussion, it is important to form conclusions on the basis of the results and to present development ideas and suggestions for further research. To end the discussion, evaluate your thesis process and your own learning.

5.1 Validity and reliability of the research

Validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are (Jopee M 2000, 1). The aim of this thesis was to research on slow tourism in Finland and Chinese outbound tourism, as well as the Chinese tourists, in order to find out are Finnish slow tourism products suitable for the experienced Chinese tourists. Therefore, I formulated 7 questions to conduct qualitative interviews and 13 questions to conduct an online questionnaire. The qualitative interviews were meant to discover the general information about the Finland tourism industry in the aspect of attracting Chinese tourists, and the experts' opinions about slow tourism and Chinese outbound tourism trend in the near future. The online questionnaire was used for acquiring direct information from the experienced Chinese tourists themselves, for instance, their demand, their way of travel and their preferences regarding to travel.

I considered the research valid since I reached my objectives, even though the response rate and the age range of the respondents were not as ideal as I expected. This is a matter of reliability of the research, which will be evaluated in the following part.

Jopee (2000, 1) indicated that "Reliability is the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable."

On the one hand, the result was reliable considering the fact that all the candidates selected had international traveling experiences. On the other hand, the result was not reliable enough due to the insufficient sample of respondents and the uneven age distribution. A better method to evaluate the experienced Chinese travellers in a greater scale should be developed.

5.2 Limitations of the study

I consider the sample size as the biggest limitation of my study, both the qualitative and quantitative research. It was a challenging job for me to find the interviewees of the qualitative interviews, as well as the experienced Chinese travellers.

First of all, most of the travel agencies who are targeting on the Chinese market are focusing on the groups. I needed to research on the people who have insights and foresights of the industry to give me more reliable responses. It was rather challenging to find appropriate interviewees for my research. Besides, the interviews could have been more interactive if I managed to book the time for face-to-face interviews with two of the respondents earlier.

Secondly, not only I desired to acquire responses from the business' side, but also from the consumers' side. I came up with the idea of sending the online questionnaire my acquaintances who travel frequently and internationally and to some tour leaders that I knew from work to ask them to spread it among their customers. I received 97 replies in total after 3 weeks. Meanwhile, I also posted the survey on some travel forum but unfortunately it didn't work out. The result would be more reliable if I have bigger amount of responses.

Besides, the age range of my questionnaire respondents is not equally distributed. Most of the respondents are under 35 years old, who stood for 73% of the entity. That is due to the ability of using the internet, most of the middle-aged and elderly people in China are not familiar with the computers. However, according to the qualitative interviewees, the elderly Chinese are the main travellers in Finland at the moment.

Finally, insufficient sources were also limitation of my study. It was difficult to find valuable sources and articles on the topic of slow tourism and updated information of Chinese outbound tourism. Most of the information that I obtained regarding to the trend of Chinese outbound tourism were repetitive.

5.3 Suggestions for further research

Like I suggested in chapter 5.2, insufficient respondents, uneven distributed age range and inadequate sources are the limitations of the study. For the further research, I would suggest to conduct a survey in a bigger scale. To get respondents at different age range, multiple research methods might be needed. For instance, online questionnaire to reach the young respondents, street survey for the elderly respondents and so on.

Since slow tourism initiated in Italy, there should be more available resources in Italian language. If further research will be conducted, sources in other languages should also be referenced.

I was mostly research on summer cottage holiday as a slow tourism product. The slow tourism has a wide variety of different forms. The other types of slow tourism products can also be researched for satisfying the sophisticated demands of Chinese outbound tourists in the future.

5.4 Thesis process and personal learning

I started to plan the thesis in spring 2016 and handed in the thesis outline in May. I had my first thesis meeting with my two supervisors, Leena Grönroos and Dong Bo in June, right before the summer holiday started. They gave me general suggestions on the research methods and my thesis scope. During the summer, I finished the theoretical part. My original plan is to finish the thesis during the summer holiday. However, I was occupied with two summer jobs. From October to November, I conducted the qualitative interviews, face to face and through social media. Initially, I only planned to do a qualitative research. I discovered that knowing the opinions of the suppliers was not sufficient enough to get the final conclusion. Then I decided to make an online interview to support my research. On November 21st, I had second thesis meeting with my thesis supervisors through Skype and discussed about the updated information. I began to send out the online questionnaire at the end of November and kept the survey active online for 2 weeks. Afterwards, I spent two weeks on analyzing the results of the survey. The final conclusion and discussion took roughly 1 month.

I have to admit that the thesis process is more challenging than I expected. I got confused and lost several times while writing. Fortunately, I was motivated from the beginning to the end despite of the fact I worked a lot during the summer and couldn't follow my original plan. I conducted an online survey and analyzed the result for the first time. I learned how to commit myself to a hard work and keep myself motivated. I felt satisfaction the moment I finished this work and now I am prepared for more challenges in my future career!

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6 Appendices

Appendix 1. Qualitative interview

1. What type of Chinese tourists travel to Finland?
2. What expectations do Chinese tourists have before coming to Finland?
3. When you promote Finland to your clients, which aspects do you emphasize?
4. Do you see a change in the diversifications of the customer demands during recent years?
5. How do you see the trend of Chinese outbound tourism in 5 years?
6. What is your opinion towards slow tourism?
7. Do you think slow tourism products will interest experienced Chinese tourists? What kind of tourists will be interested in those products?

Appendix 2. Quantitative questionnaire

1.您的年龄段 *

- 15-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- >55

2.您的居住城市及省份 *

3.您的职业属于以下哪类? *

- [国家机关](#)、党群组织、企业、事业单位负责人
- 专业技术人员
- 办事人员和有关人员
- 商业、服务业人员
- 农、林、牧、渔、水利业生产人员
- 生产、运输设备操作人员及有关人员
- 其他

4.您的月收入水平 *

- <5,000
- 5000-8000
- 8000-10,000
- 10,000-15,000
- 15,000-20,000
- >20,000

5.到目前为止，您一共出国旅游过几次 *

- 1-3次
- 3-5次
- 5-10次
- 大于十次

6.您出国旅游的目的是什么? [多选题] *

- 个人兴趣爱好
- 缓解学习工作压力, 放松身心
- 学习并了解他国语言和文化, 开阔视野
- 拜访亲友
- 向他人证明自己的经济实力和社会地位
- 工作需要
- 其他 _____

7.您更偏向于哪种旅行方式 *

- 选择一个旅行社, 跟团游, 不需要操心机票、签证以及行程事项
- 跟家人或朋友小规模出行, 大家一起设计旅行方案
- 独自出行, 热爱自由
- 其他 _____

8.以下几种旅行目的地您更倾向于那种 *





- A. 历史古城
- B. 国际现代化大都市
- C. 购物天堂
- D. 宁静自然
- E. 阳光海岛

9.对于安排旅游时间和行程,您更倾向于做出下列哪种选择? *

- 时间宝贵,争取在越短的时间内跑完越多不国家
- 选择一个国家在其首都以及主要城市游玩
- 更愿意在一个城市或小镇待更长的时间,这样才可能更充分了解当地文化和历史背景

10.当您在旅行时,您会有想跟当地人接触,感受当地文化的想法吗? *

- 经常有。对不同文化十分感兴趣,渴望开拓视野
- 时有时无,不会刻意去接触当地人。
- 想跟他们接触,但由于语言不通,或者性格内敛而无法畅谈。
- 完全不敢兴趣

11.旅行时,您会选择尝试当地特色美食吗? *

- 经常尝试,品尝各地美食就是旅行的一部分
- 被迫尝试,因为没的选择
- 偶尔尝试,看心情
- 吃不惯西餐,什么也比不上中华美食

12.如果您有机会去芬兰旅游，最吸引您的会是什么？ *

- 芬兰冬季的北极光，圣诞老人，驯鹿和其他冬季运动，例如滑雪和狗拉雪橇
- 芬兰大自然的静谧，千湖之国，呼吸新鲜空气，在森林里漫步，采摘野生浆果和蘑菇，品尝来自大自然的美味。在湖边小屋里享受芬兰传统桑拿，在清澈的湖里游泳。
- 特有的北欧设计品牌，购物新选择
- 芬兰的建筑物，简单却独特的建筑风格
- 其他 _____

13.请打开链接并仔细阅读，您会选择在芬兰的湖区度假吗？请解释原因

<http://www.visitfinland.com/zh/wen-zhang...> *

在芬兰湖区度假，您可以在湖边租一个与世隔绝的木制小屋，每天享受传统的芬兰烟熏桑拿，桑拿后直接跃入清澈的湖水里游泳。您可以在自己的厨房里烹饪或在庭院里烧烤。徒步远足、划船、钓鱼、骑自行车、采摘野莓浆果等都是湖区度假的典型活动。

- 非常乐意
- 可以尝试
- 现在听上去有点无聊，过个十年说不定会感兴趣
- 完全不感兴趣

下一页

English version:

1. Age
 - 15-25
 - 26-35
 - 36-45
 - 46-55
 - >55
2. Residence city and province
3. Profession category
 - Governmental, head of enterprises
 - Technicians
 - Office clerks
 - Business, service industry
 - Agriculture
 - Transportation
 - Others
4. Average monthly income (yuan)
 - <5,000
 - 5,000-8,000
 - 8,000-10,000
 - 10,000-15,000
 - 15,000-20,000
 - >20,000
5. How many times have you travelled abroad?
 - 1-3 times
 - 3-5 times
 - 5-10 times
 - More than 10 times
6. What are your purposes to travel? (multiple choices)
 - Personal interest

- To relax from daily routine
 - Get to know the other cultures
 - To visit family and friends
 - To gain status and recognition from others
 - For work
 - Others
7. Which way of travelling do you prefer?
- Travelling with a big group
 - Travelling with a small group with family or friends
 - Travelling individually
8. Which of following destinations do you prefer? (with pictures)
- Historical towns
 - Cosmopolitan city
 - Shopping paradise
 - Peaceful nature
 - Sunny islands
9. What choice will you make regarding to the schedule of travel?
- Try to be in as many countries as possible within limited amount of time.
 - Spend time in different cities within the same country.
 - Stay in one city/town for the whole time to get a full impression of the place.
10. Are you interested in having contacts with the locals and getting to know the local culture while travelling?
- Always. Very curious about getting to know different cultures and meeting people from different countries
 - Sometimes, would make an effort to approach the others
 - Would like to, but not possible due to the language barrier
 - Not interested at all
11. Are you interested in trying the local gastronomies while travelling?
- All the time, tasting local gastronomies is part of travel
 - Sometimes, depends on my mood
 - Forced to try because there're no other options
 - No, Chinese food is the best
12. If you have the chance to travel to Finland, which of the following features attracts you the most?
- Northern lights, Santa Clause, reindeers and winter sports
 - Unspoiled Finnish nature
 - Nordic design. Unique shopping experience
 - Finnish architecture
 - Others
13. Please open the link in your browser and read it through, would you choose this type of cottage holiday for your vacation?
[\(http://www.visitfinland.com/zh/wen-zhang/xia_ji_xiao_wu_sheng_huo_de_jing_sui/\)](http://www.visitfinland.com/zh/wen-zhang/xia_ji_xiao_wu_sheng_huo_de_jing_sui/)
- Would love to
 - Could be an option
 - Sounds boring right now, might be interested in 10 years or so
 - Doesn't sound fun at all