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**Meeting the Hong Kong tourism market with Finnish products –
a Case Study of the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival**

Kajaani University of Applied Sciences

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis is aiming at discovering whether Finnish tourism products meet the demand from Hong Kong market. To successfully launch a marketing campaign in a new potential market, it is essential to conduct thorough market research well in advance. To Finland, Hong Kong can be a rather mysterious land far away in the middle of Asia. Cultural issues may stand in the way if marketing approach were not handled with care. In order to avoid marketing failure, this thesis provides a generic view of how Hong Kong people can be culturally different from Finns, and grants a chance for reviewing how Hong Kong people perceive Finland as a tourism destination may vary from how Finland tries to promote its image as. Customer behaviour research would be the ground structure for the thesis to look into Hong Kong with four major matters: Hong Kong people's perception held towards Finland; people's motivation to visit Finland; people's attitude towards Finnish tourism product (especially cultural tourism product as this thesis is facilitating the interest of Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival); and their knowledge and cognitive image of Finland.

The theoretical framework begins with an overview of Hong Kong, giving a nutshell of Hong Kong as an international city welcoming different cultural exchange. Following, the theoretical part splits into two parts: the supply side from Finland (i.e. the Finnish tourism product); and, the demand side from Hong Kong for the Finnish tourism product. With the assistance of the customer behaviour model, the research part is conducted based on the model with a clear structure for further exploration.

In-depth qualitative approach was selected for the research. Semi-structured interviews were conducted by seven respondents from Hong Kong, who ages are ranging from 21 to 59. Data obtained was well transcribed for further analysis.

Briefly summarizing the research results, Hong Kong people hold a positive image towards Finland as a tourism destination. Perceptions of Finland are mostly positive. Since the two places are very distinct from each other, with the adventurous personality of Hong Kong, people tend to have high motivation level to travel to Finland as they can expect an exotic experience which would be nature- and winter- oriented. However, accessibility to Finnish tourism information in Hong Kong appears to be insufficient. Without thorough knowledge to a destination, Hong Kong people may hold back onto such option as vacation in Hong Kong does not come easily. Therefore, the main challenge would be to raise Finland's profile exposure to Hong Kong people to get them more familiar with this exotic Scandinavian country where it is the homeland of the world's most famous elderly, the Santa Claus.

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

According to Geert Hofstede (1991), 'Culture' is defined as the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from another. The "category" can refer to nations, regions within or across nations, ethnicities, religions, occupations, organizations, or the genders. As Finland has its distinct culture, it is convincing that Finnish cultural tourism could be very marketable to the world. However, it has brought huge surprise when the news of the Finnish Tourist Board (MEK – Matkailun Edistämiskeskus in Finnish) office in Hong Kong was removed. Questions such as "Has Hong Kong no longer been the major marketing city in China for MEK?" and "Is Hong Kong worth being targeted as a potential market, still?" were then raised with this piece of news. The incident provoked an idea for this thesis topic that since Finland has the all-rounded cultural tourism product as a package to offer, would there be equivalent demand from Hong Kong for it.

This thesis will discover if Finnish tourism products are meeting the demand from Hong Kong market, aiming at providing the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival a nutshell to further develop and launch corresponding marketing plan in Hong Kong.

To begin with, as Hong Kong is a special administrative region of the People's Republic of China, an overview of Hong Kong SAR will be introduced. The first Chapter will explain why Hong Kong is a potential market for different types of tourism product, and to what extent Hong Kong is ready for Finnish tourism to gain popularity. Hong Kong's internationality has equipped itself to get prepared for foreign products and services; also it had provided prospects to its people the readiness to experience from different cultures around the world.

The thesis, then, will continue and split into two major theoretical parts: the supply side (i.e. Finnish tourism product); and the demand side (i.e. Hong Kong tourism demand). When explaining the supply of Finnish tourism product, the general concept of tourism product is introduced, followed by stating the existing tourism marketing plan and cultural tourism programme that MEK is developing and establishing. The case study – the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival is also introduced shortly in this chapter. Moving on to the second part of the theoretical part, the tourism demand situation from Hong Kong is illustrated with the customer behaviour model. The customer behaviour model is separated into four clusters:

the motivation, perception, attitude and learning cluster, respectively under the socio-economic influences, the cultural influences, the reference group influence, and the family influence.

A qualitative research was conducted for this thesis, exploring if the Finnish tourism product would meet the demand from Hong Kong. Research questions and objective can be found in Chapter 5, covering the essential topics, such as the progression of the research and the trustworthiness of it.

In Chapter 6, research results are demonstrated with follow-up discussion. Issues regarding the matching of demand and supply, the perception and reality, few suggestions were made and supplemented in the same chapter as reference.

Comprehensive Discussion and conclusion of the whole thesis can be found in Chapter 7. The importance of acknowledgement to cultural differences when it comes to marketing is studied with the help of Hofstede's cultural dimension model. Concluding this thesis, attention is drawn to the comparison between the ideal core value and image that MEK created for Finland as a tourism destination and the actual perception and perceived image of Finland from Hong Kong's perspective.

Hong Kong (as located in the world map in Figure 1), alternatively known by its initial H.K., is a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China situated on China's south coast and enclosed by the Pearl River Delta and South China Sea. (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department 2007)

With a land mass of 1,104 km² and a population of over seven million people (of which 6.4 percent of it is composed of foreigners) (Census Statistics Department 2012), Hong Kong is one of the most densely populated areas in the world. (Russell, 2006, 78) Hong Kong is a world city; it is one of the Alpha cities. An Alpha city is a city generally considered to be an important node in the global economic system. (The Global City: Strategic site/ New Frontier 1991)
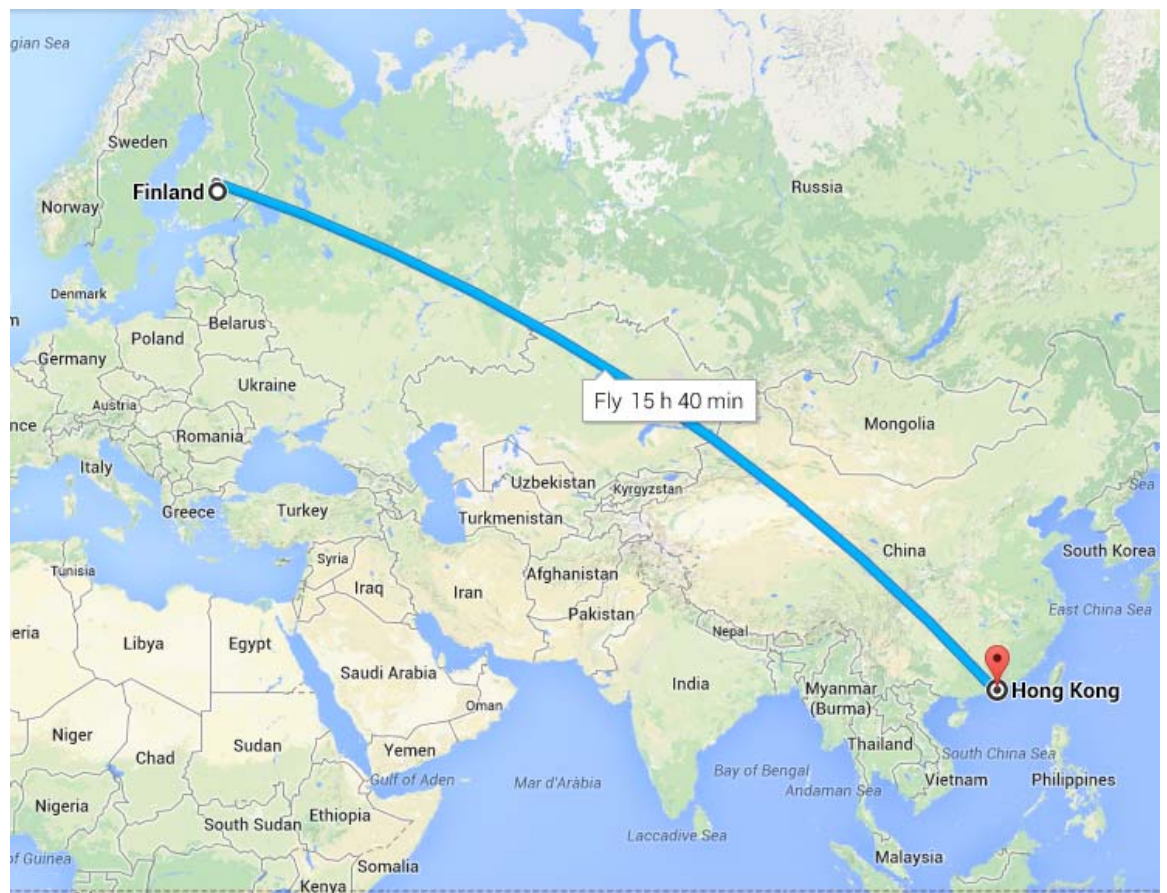

Figure 1: World map locating Hong Kong and Finland (Google World Map 2014)

Also, a Time Magazine article in 2008 coined the phrase "Nylongkong", which referred to New York City, London and Hong Kong, that these three cities form a global network that facilitate the global economy. As Hong Kong ranks the third most important leading international financial centre, after London and New York City, Hong Kong has a major capitalist service economy characterised by low taxation and free trade, and the currency, Hong Kong dollar, is the eight most traded currencies in the world. (Monetary and Economic Department (Bank for International Settlements) 2011) Hong Kong has one of the highest per capita incomes in the world. (International Monetary Fund 2013) The dense space also led to a highly developed transportation network with the public transport travelling rate exceeding 90 percent, (Hong Kong Transport Department 2008), the highest in the world. (Lam & Bell, 2003, 231) Hong Kong has numerous high international rankings in various aspects. For instance, its economic freedom, financial and economic competitiveness (Global Competitiveness Index 2012), quality of life, etc. are all ranked highly.

Historically, Hong Kong was once the colony of the British Empire after the First Opium War (1839-1842). The period of colonialism greatly influenced the current culture of Hong Kong, often described as "East meets West" (CNN, 2009).

With the unique culture of Hong Kong formed by its distinct history and diverse demography, competitive economy, and favourable trading environment, it is interesting to discover if such a city has equilibrium demand for tourism as Finland is offering qualitative tourism products.

According to one Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) survey (2014) on the world's most business-friendly locations, Hong Kong is firmly sitting on the third place just slightly underranking than Singapore and Switzerland among 82 locations across the world. (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2010)

Moreover, the Globalisation Index (2012), released by Ernst & Young in cooperation with EIU, shows that Hong Kong has the highest level of globalisation of the world's 60 largest economies for the third consecutive year. All businesses in Hong Kong can benefit from one of the world's most open and corruption-free economies with independent judiciary and the rule of law. (InvestHK 2013)

As for the general demand for foreign products from Hong Kong, focusing on the service trade performance, its imports growth of 2013 is by 2.5% with 59.8 billion US dollar, and

only within the first quarter of the year 2014, Hong Kong already had imports trading record of 14.7 billion US dollar. With such strong import performance, Hong Kong is at 10th place in world ranking of demand for imports of foreign products with the compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 9.9%. (ING 2011)
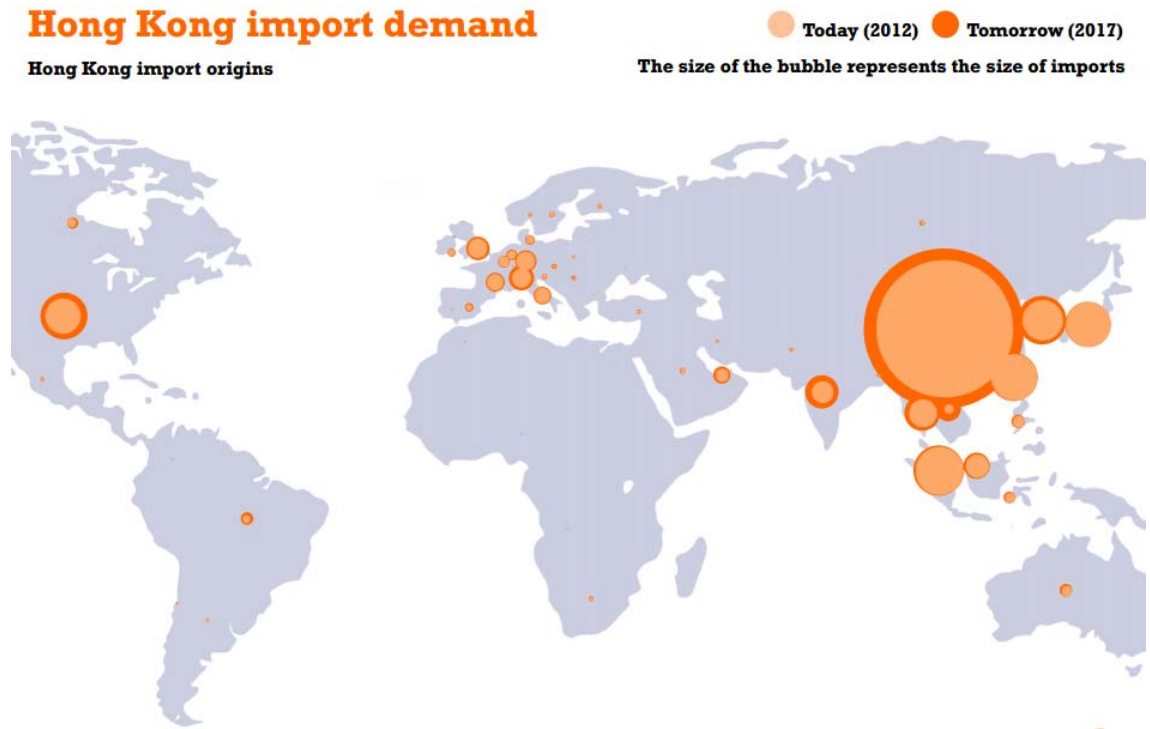
Figure 2: Hong Kong Import Demand Around the World (ING 2011)

In Figure 2 above, there is a brief draft of Hong Kong import demand on the world map. Europe is one of the important origins of import of Hong Kong and will be forecasted to continue in near future.

All in all, Hong Kong has all it takes and well-equipped with all the qualities of being an international city where foreign trades are welcomed with the utmost business-friendly atmosphere and cultural-friendly people.

3 FINNISH TOURISM SUPPLY AS COMPREHENSIVE TOURIST PRODUCT

To ground a solid base for this section, a premise should be put forward to distinguish the level of tourist products to be discussed below. There are two distinct levels of tourist products:

1. The total tourist product comprises the combination of all the elements, which a tourist consumes during his/her trip;

2. The specific products are components of the total tourist product and can be sold as individual offerings such as accommodation, transportation, attractions and other facilities for tourist. In other words, specific products are offerings of the individual tourist enterprises.

(Freyer, 1993; Middleton, 1989; Tietz, 1980)

In this thesis, the total tourist product will be focused for discussion, as this would greatly facilitate a broader perspective to discover whether the supply of tourist product from Finland match with the demand for tourist product from Hong Kong, since this level of tourist product can be understood as "bundles of tangible and intangible components based on an activity at a destination (Middleton, 1988).

3.1 Tourist Product Definition

According to Kotler (1999, 274- 275), he proposed with the categorization of tourist product with four levels, each identifying particular functions and attributes of the generic product. The four levels are:

- Core product: this represents the essential benefit designed to satisfy the identified needs of target customer segments.

- Facilitating product: the products which are necessary for the core product to be consumed.

- Supporting product: extra products offered to add value to the core product and which help to differentiate it from the competition.

- Augmented product: all the forms of the added value producers may build into their formal product offers to make them more attractive than competitors' offers to their intended customers. Elements of the augmented product concept might include the physical environment and service delivery systems (refer to Figure 5 for actual example).
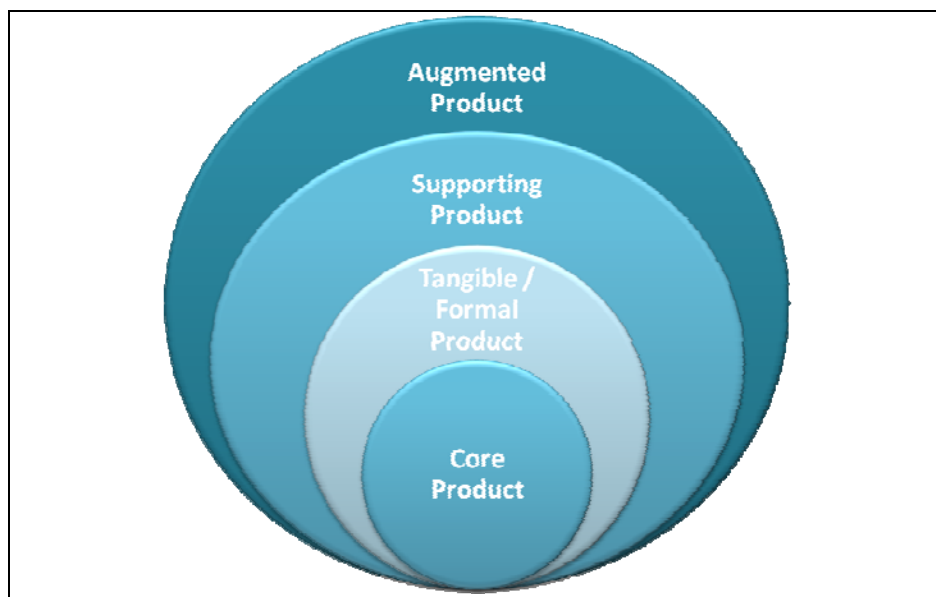
Figure 3: Composition of Tourism Product (Kotler, 2006, 304-308)

To simplify the complicate concept of tourist product, it can be downsized into the following 4 components, which can be characterized as the four As (from the perspective of destination tourism, they are known as the components of the destination amalgam):

- Attractions: are usually initial drivers of travelling, similar to the Core products from Kotler's theory. There are two definitions quoted by the Tourism Western Australia in 2006:

  1. It is a physical or cultural feature of a particular place that individual travellers or tourists perceive as capable of meeting one or more of their specific leisure-related needs. Such features may be ambient in nature (e.g. climate, culture, vegetation or scenery), or they may be specific to a location, such as a theatre performance, a museum or a waterfall. (Harris & Howard, 1996)

2. Positive or favourable attributes of an area for a given activity or set of activities as desired by a given customer or market, including climate, scenery, activities, culture.

    a.   Man made attractions are physical structures (e.g. Sydney Harbour Bridge) or events (e.g. the Olympics).

    b.   Natural attractions are physical phenomena deemed unusual and/ or beautiful (e.g. Bungle Bungles)

    c.   Secondary attractions have tourist appeal, but re not the primary reason for visiting a location.

    d.   A negative attraction is an attribute of an area that tends to make some customer or market choose not to visit as for example pollution or crime. (Metelka, 1990)

- Amenities: accommodation, food and beverage outlets, entertainment, retailing and other services, etc. They are comparable to the facilitating products from Kotler's theory.

- Access: local transport, transport terminals, etc. This part is also compatible to the supporting products from Kotler's theory.

- Ancillary Services: include marketing, development and coordination activities, or in some cases, may exist totally within the private sector. The main services normally provided by the local organization are as follows: the promotion of the destination; the coordination and control of development; the provision of an information/ reservation service to the trade and the public; the advice to and coordination of local businesses; the provision of certain facilities (catering, sports, etc.); and, the provision of destination leadership. (Cooper, Gilbert, Fletcher & Wanhill, 1998, 103 – 107)

This final component can be further explained with the prerequisites for the customer-oriented tourist product theory proposed by Komppula and Boxberg, 2002.

Tourism industry is originally highly customer-oriented. With all the above comprehensive tangibles, to approach more efficiently to the targeted customers, clever software compo-

nent can be vital. Ancillary Services are serving the tourist product system in a more experi-
ence-based and subjective approach to the target customers. As illustrated with Figure 4, the
prerequisites for the customer-oriented tourist product placed more attention to the intangi-
ble aspects, such as the image, hospitality and business mission, to touch up the tangible
products and services.
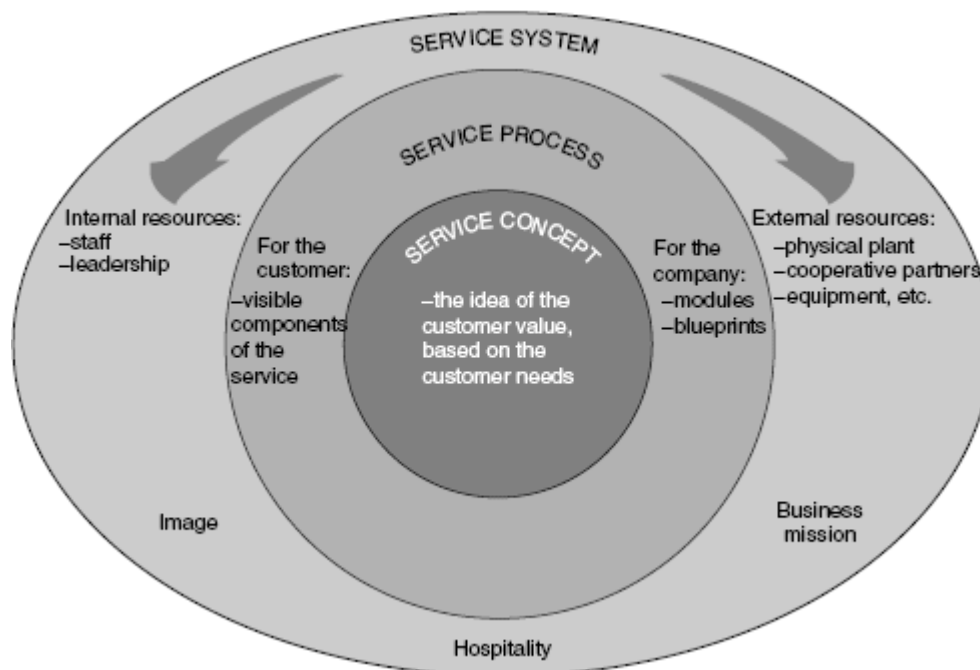
Figure 4: Prerequisites for Tourism Product (Komppula & Boxberg, 2002)

Above all of the tangible tourist products, with the ancillary services as a booster, when
marketing the tourist products as a package, the image projected and impressive ideology
supporting the products would be a critical success factor.

3.2 The Finnish Tourist Product

To begin this section, the example of a Finnish incentive tourism product composed by
Komppula and Boxberg, 2002, illustrated a fairly substantial concept of what a typical tourist
product can be obtaining in the real-life situation.

Figure 5: Example of Prerequistites for Tourism Product (Komppula & Boxberg, 2002)

In the example above, the core product (as well be called the core service as tourism industry is also known as one of the largest service-providing industry with the experience- and – service oriented nature) – the "exclusive adventure experience" with the given conceptual value of "mentally rewarding one with the feeling of exceeding one's limits and then indulges", is equipped with fellow tangible facilitating and supporting products, i.e. the Direct flight and limousine service from the airport for the transportation; Dinner in Lappish huts; accommodation in log cabins; and various adventure activities, such as climbing, cross-country bicycling, rapid shooting, and water rapid crossing with rope. All the tangible and intangible facilitating and supporting tourist products are then backed with augmented products and ancillary services, as seen above: Hospitality, professional guides, bicycles, and company image, etc.

Extend it to a national, or even international level of tourist product marketing and promotion, the emphasis can vary. The rest of this section would elaborate more on how the "Image" of Finland on an international-level tourist product as a destination can affect the buying decision process of tourists and customers from Hong Kong (continuing to Chapter 4).

According to MEK, the Visit Finland (the name used by the Finnish Tourist Board for promoting Finnish tourism internationally), 2014, conceptual identity (i.e. the "image") is

derived from four characteristics: credible, contrasting, creative and cool. Tourism themes are developed as the core values of Visit Finland:

"

- **"SILENCE, PLEASE**

   As a counterbalance to the hectic, ever-accelerating rhythm of daily life, Finland offers peace and quiet, and space to breathe, even in the heart of the city. Visitors can take things easy, stay at a cottage, enjoy a sauna, and explore an untouched natural environment.

- WILD & FREE

   Every traveller would like to experience at least one memorable adventure during their holiday, Finnish nature offers opportunities for spectacular nature activities, such as snowmobile and dog sled safaris, island hopping by boat, canoeing in the archipelago, or even a snowball fight in the city.

- CULTURAL BEAT

The uniqueness of Finnish culture is recognised around the world, from its classic design and Father Christmas to heavy metal music and tasty fresh produce.**"** (Visit Finland a. 2014)

"

The above core value from MEK will be the benchmark for the research later in Chapter 6, discovering how interviewees from Hong Kong perceive Finland's image as in the context of motivation when making tourist-product-purchasing decision.

3.3 Cultural Tourism Product Definition

Similar to the composition of tourist product, a cultural tourism product should also consist of not only the cultural attraction (i.e. the core product), but also the additional products.

On the basis of the elementary definition of the tourism product as an addition of attraction plus accommodation plus transportation, the cultural tourist product can be defined as consisting of:

- The core product: the cultural attraction (monuments, museum, cultural event, etc.) plus related specific cultural tourist service, such as interpretation, e.g. by museum guides

- The additional product: the general tourism product elements, either apart from or incorporated into the cultural attraction itself, consisting of :

  ■ General tourist facilities and services rendered by:

    ◆ Tourist organizations and travel intermediaries: tourist offices, national tourist organizations, tourist clubs, travel agencies, tour operators

    ◆ Primary tourism enterprises (companies that have their core business in the tourism sector and serve primarily tourists as customers): hotels, holiday parks, campsites

    ◆ Secondary tourism enterprises (companies that provide their products and services in the first place for the local population, but that are also frequented by tourists): catering industry (restaurants, cafes), retail (shops, banks)

  ■ Transportation infrastructure:

    ◆ Accessibility (on their own or public means of transport), signposting, parking facilities

◆ Private and public transportation facilities: car, coach, train, plane, boat, taxi, city bus, underground, etc. (Sigala & Leslie 2005, 29)
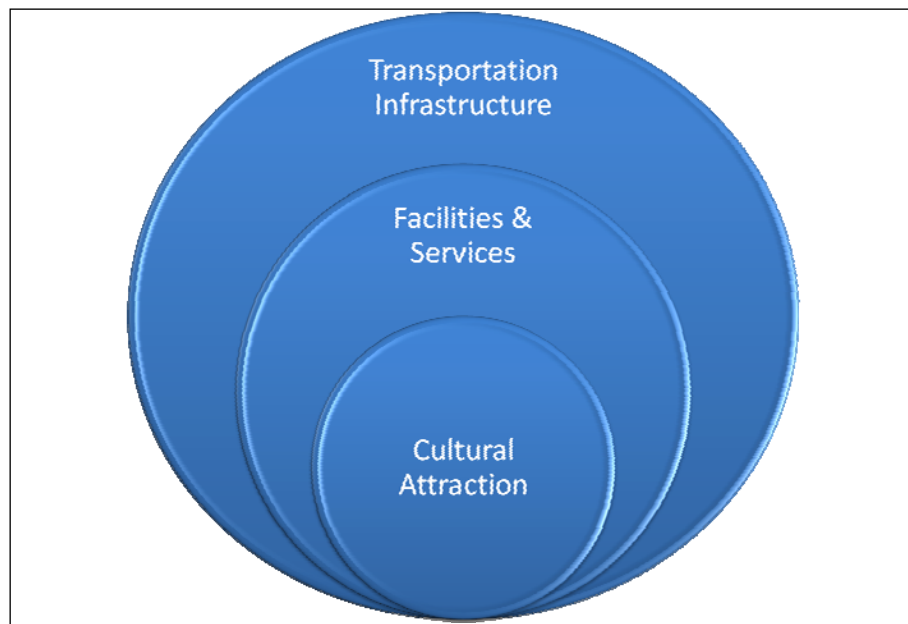
FIGURE 6: COMPONENT OF CULTURAL TOURISM PRODUCT (SIGALA & LESLIE 2005, 29)

3.4 The Finnish Cultural Tourism Product

In the previous sections, the concept of tourism product has been well-illustrated. In order to transfer the theories into valuable sources of reference for the case of the Kuhmo International Chamber Music Festival, this section will continue using the theory of tourist product, and adapt to the Finland cultural event – the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival.

To define cultural tourism product, it is necessary to first understand the term "cultural tourism". Richards (1997, 24) came up with a conceptual definition to cultural tourism, that, it is "the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs". He supplemented later with a more technical definition that "cultural tourism includes all movements of persons to specific cultural attractions, such as heritage sites, artistic and cultural manifestations, arts and drama outside their normal place of residence". UNWTO has

sum up the definition of cultural tourism in an organized way, and focusing on the tourists' motivation to travel – "Cultural tourism includes movements of persons for essentially cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and other cultural tours, travel to festivals and other cultural events, visit to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore or art or pilgrimages." (World Tourism Organization, 1985, 131)

According to MEK, the definition of Finnish cultural tourism drafted by the tourism Strategy Cultural Committee is as follow.
In cultural tourism, tourism products and services that utilize regional and local cultural resources are produced for residents and visitors and are offered on the basis of business principles. The objective is to create experiences and the chance to get to know these cultural resources, to learn from them and to participate in them. This helps strengthen the creation of human identity, as well as the understanding and appreciation of one's own and other cultures. (Visit Finland b. 2013)

"Clearly many Northern European destinations have relied on cultural tourism as a way of developing their tourism industries. In the absence of a warm climate and good beaches, many such destinations rely on their cultural and heritage tourism to draw in visitors." (Smith, 2009, 42)

With much of the efforts put in developing cultural tourism in Finland, in both 2000 and 2011, respectively, Helsinki and Turku has been selected to be one of the European Capital of Culture (Cultural Programme run by the European Commission starting 28 years ago).

3.5 MEK's Approach to Cultural Tourism in Finland

In January 2011, the umbrella programme – Culture Finland (CF) has been launched, aiming at develop a national-level theme-based tourism strategy. CF is funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture and directed by the association Finland Festival ry.

3.5.1 Cultural Finland (CF)

"The aim is to bring together players in various fields of culture and the travel industry in order to create new collaborative networks and develop products based on local cultural strengths." (Visit Finland b.2013)

Only after a short year of running the programme, in 2012, the committee already managed to recruit 56 national and regional projects to coordinate and develop cultural tourism in Finland.

In 2013, a new operating model has been introduced: one project manager was assigned and 10 regional coordinators were operating fellow regional projects across Finland. Centralization could be a more effective and efficient hierarchy for the sake of operation and management of the programme.

Main targets of the umbrella programme can be summarized into the table below:

Targets	Operations
Cooperation	Forming active networks, improving the flow of information, matching activities between tourism and cultural businesses
Revenue	Adding value and income to tourism and cultural businesses
Activate	Stimulating cultural tourism projects
Products	Creating new products and finding new distributing channels for them

Table 1: Main Target of the Umbrella Programme (Visit Finland b. 2013)

3.5.2 The Kuhmo International Chamber Music Festival

The Kuhmo International Chamber Music Festival is one of the most famous cultural events in Kainuu region during the summer. Since 1970, the festival has grown to become one of the largest music festivals in Finland as it is able to attract thousands of music lovers as well as talented musicians from all over the world to join the festival every summer. This event stress a lot of weight on quality in terms of the performance's standard. With the effort from all parties (the Kuhmo Arts Centre, performing musician, as well as audience), the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival was selected to become the winner of the Finnish Travel Quality Award which was announced at the press conference of the Nordic Travel Fair MATKA in 2011.

In 2013, The Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival has achieved its audience target, with over 36,000 attendances. In the year 2014, the event has been themed with "Seven Cities (from Vienna to New York) & Seven Arts (from cinema to gastronomy)". Whereas the seven cities are: Vienna, Budapest, Prague, Paris, London, New York and Berlin); and the seven arts are: cinema, theatre, dance, painting, literature, gastronomy and, of course, music.

When deciding whether to enter a market, the very first approach is to conduct market research. For the Finnish tourist product mentioned above, with the clear core value drafted, the research in Chapter 5 will discuss more of how the specific market – Hong Kong is reacting to the Finnish tourist product in terms of customer behaviour on decision-making when purchasing tourism product.

Generally speaking, human beings are usually quite rational and make systematic use of the information available to them. We do not subscribe to the view that human social behaviour is controlled by unconscious motives overpowering desires, rather people consider the implications of their actions before they decide to engage or not engage in a given behaviour. (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975, 1980)

As consumer behaviour tend to be purposeful and goal-oriented in a rational and systematic way, the decision making process of purchasing tourist product, hence, would be based on various criteria through different stages during the process. The figure below demonstrates the process of consumer behaviour and decision making process. The stages can be thought of as the beginning stage of need arousal; second stage of recognition of the need (the prerequisite stage); third stage of assessment on level of involvement (i.e. the amount of time and effort invested in the decision process, e.g. degree of search for information); followed by stage four, the identification of alternatives, which refers to brands that initially come to mind when considering a purchase (the evoked set); the fifth stage of evaluation of alternatives; sixth stage of decision-making; and, the final stage (which had been often missed out) of the post- purchase behaviour (i.e. the feelings an individual experiences after the purchase). (Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert & Wanhill, 1998)

Below is the Model of consumer decision-making behaviour. It shows the possible factors that would affect a customer purchase decision and behaviour. With the assistance of the model below, it provides the framework to identify the tourism demand for the Finnish tourist product in Hong Kong.
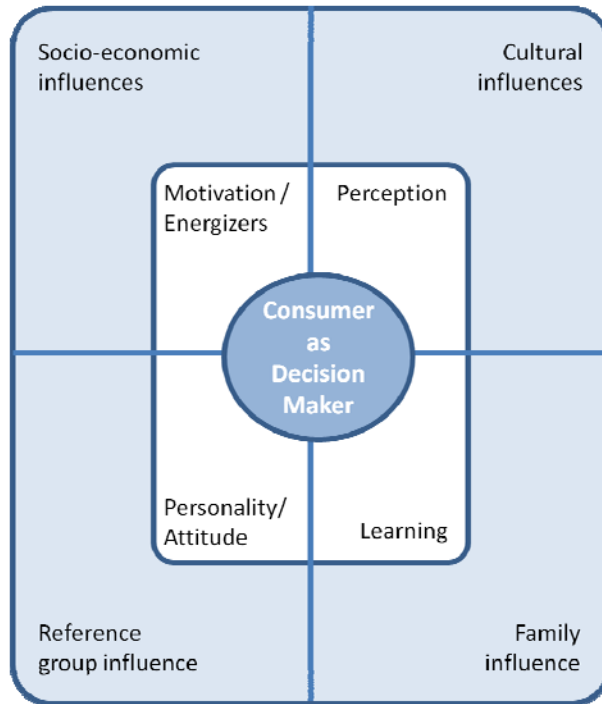
Figure 7: Model of Consumer Behaviour (Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, & Wanhill, 1998, 52)

4.1 Motivation / Energizers

The most well-known theory of motivation would be Abraham Maslow's the hierarchy of needs (Figure 8). Maslow identified two motivational types: the deficiency or tension-reducing motives; and, the inductive or arousal-seeking motives. It tends to explain human needs with rank and hierarchy of the arrangement of individual needs. From the most fundamental stage starting at the bottom of the pyramid – the physiological needs (i.e. the basic needs to sustain life, e.g. air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep, etc.). If the biological needs are fulfilled, Maslow suggested that human will, then, seek for a slightly higher level of needs – Safety needs (i.e. protection, security, order, law, limits, stability, etc.). When the basic and physical-level of needs are satisfied, Maslow found that human will begin to search for conceptual needs. The next level would be the needs of belonging and love (e.g. the need of having a family, different kinds of affection, relationships, work group, etc.). The level of belongingness and love needs is then followed by the level of esteem needs, which in other words, personal achievement, status, responsibility fulfilment and reputation urge. The ulti-

mate need according to Maslow is the need of self- actualization. Maslow proposed that self-actualization should be valued as the level human should aspire to. (Maslow 1943) He argued that if none of the needs in the hierarchy was satisfied, then the lowest level of need - he physiological needs would actually dominate human behaviour. (Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, Wanhill, 1998)

Self-actualisation
personal growth and fulfilment

Esteem needs
achievement, status, responsibility, reputation

Belongingness and Love needs
family, affection, relationships, work group, etc

Safety needs
protection, security, order, law, limits, stability, etc

Biological and Physiological needs
basic life needs - air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep, etc.
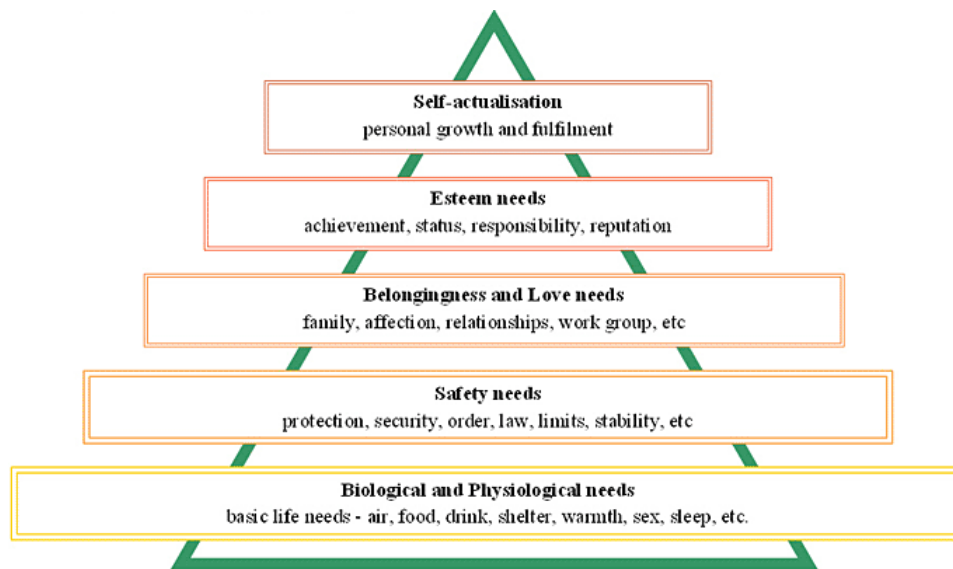
FIGURE 8: MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS (MASLOW, 1943)

Although Maslow's hierarchy of needs signified a very important leap in developmental psychology explaining human behaviour, it faced some challenges and critics. In this thesis, in order to shed the light onto the inter-relationship between supply (i.e. the Finnish tourist product, especially the Finnish cultural tourist product) and demand (i.e. the Hong Kong customer behaviour and buying decision-making process), the research part of the study in Chapter 5 will be able to provide the general motivation of Hong Kong people to travel, especially in accordance with travelling to Finland.

4.2 Perception

"Perception is critical to tourism behaviour before, during and after the tourism experience." (Seaton & Bennett, 2000, 72) Perception starts with sensation – messages come to us via our

senses. Perception is dyadic, an interaction between two things: the observer and what is observed. In more formal terms we can define the two interacting factors as the object stimulus and perceiver. (Seaton & Bennett, 2000, 73-75)

The object stimulus can be referred to as "in tourism terms stimuli might include skylines, a beach, colour, the texture of a wall, the sound of an accent or a song on a foreign radio station, the look of a meal, the setting of a house, the height of a cliff. In promotional terms they might include packaging, brand names, brochures, commercials, as well as a whole range of representational features such as adverts, travel books, films, etc." (Seaton & Bennett, 2000, 74) In another word, object stimuli are all tangible features from a tourism destination.

As said earlier, perception cannot be aroused simply with the existence of stimulus, it is formed with "interaction" "Both the perceiver's physiological and psychological make-up (i.e. his or her physical condition and mental state) play a big part in what is perceived. … In short, the characteristics of the individual perceiver – the motives, attitudes, past experiences, mental traits, etc. – influence what is perceived." (Seaton & Bennett, 2000, 75)

Perception is not a passive, automatic response, but involves an active effort of decoding in which some parts of a stimulus are attended to and emphasized while others are not. (Seaton & Bennett, 2000, 75)

4.3 Personality / Attitude

Solomon outlined four main functions of attitudes, which will influence their behaviour and motivation toward travelling: the utilitarian, the value-expressive, the ego-defensive, and the knowledge function. Utilitarian function is related to basic principles of pleasure and pain; for example, positive attitudes are formed towards products which provide a pleasurable experience. Value-expressive function refers to the attitudes which are related to identity and an individual's values. These attitudes form an important strand of research on lifestyles which look at how consumers' activities, interests and opinions express their values/ identities as people. Ego-defensive function refers to the attitudes that are formed to protect a

person against external threats or internal feelings. Finally, the knowledge function refers to the attitudes which are formed in response to the need for structure and meaning. (Solomon, 2002, 197-198)

By knowing the functions of attitudes, the nature of the tourism products can be marketed with the corresponding functions, accelerating marketing success. Attitudes are recognised as having three components, as known as the "ABC model of attitude": "affect", "behaviour", and "cognition". "Affect" refers to the ways in which consumers feel about an attitude object. "Behaviour" refers to a person's intentions towards the attitude object (i.e. if they are likely to purchase). "Cognition" refers to a person's beliefs about the attitude object. (Solomon, 2002, 200) (McCabe, 2009, 100)

Tourist behaviour is also influenced by the groups to which tourists belong. Reference group are groups which people may not actually belong to but aspire to be like and, as a result, may base some of their behaviour on. (Seaton and Bennett, 2000, 64, 65)

4.4 Learning

As a fundamental social unit of group formation in society, the influence of a family on tourism demand is extremely important. (Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert & Wanhill, 1998, 38) An individual's awareness of the world is made up of experiences, learning, emotions and perceptions, or more accurately, the cognitive evaluation of such experiences, learning, emotions, and perceptions. Such awareness can be described as knowledge producing a specific image of the world. (Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert & Wanhill, 1998, 38, 39) With the family influence, cognitive awareness and knowledge towards certain tourism destination or its image can vary, which affect one's decision-making.

5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To assess if Hong Kong would be a potential market for the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival to launch marketing campaign, the most ideal research methodology would be the combination of quantitative and qualitative research endorsed by abundant primary and secondary data. In that sense, results and findings from the research would be both statistical and exhaustive to provide valid, reliable and informative outline for further usage. However, the initial objective in this research is to find out the socio-cultural characteristics of Hong Kong travelers and their perception held towards Finland's image as a tourism destination, it is rather difficult to conduct a holistic research with both quantitative and quality research method as according to Veal (2011, 46), "Leisure and tourism research is fraught with difficulties in this (validity) area, mainly because empirical research is largely concerned with people's behavior and with their attitudes, and for information on these the researchers are, in the main, reliant on people's own reports in the form of responses to questionnaire-based interviews and other forms of interview." Quantitative research method could, in fact, greatly benefit this research with the quantified way of presenting complex information in a succinct, easily understandable way, usually with the assistance of graphics and charts. The numerical and statistical data collected from quantitative survey would also allow results to be presented in more structured terms.

Nevertheless, again, with the introductory objective of this research, when it comes to human behavioral- and psychological-related topics, numbers and statistics may not be able to fully reflect profound thoughts and more personal opinion of travelers in the most competent and efficient manner. Moreover, potentially superficial results can be obtained with certain survey design limitations. Therefore, with the consideration of various constraints in this research, such as geographic immobility, time and resources insufficiency, qualitative research method was selected backed by plentiful and in-depth primary and secondary data in this research. It is adequate that with qualitative method applied, accurate and personal findings in regard to travelers' behavior and Finnish tourism image from Hong Kong people's perspective can be revealed.

In this chapter, to begin with, the objective, aims and research questions of the study will be defined; followed by progression of the research and the trustworthiness of the research for the study.

5.1 Objective, Aims and Research Questions

Customers' demand research is one of the most crucial and foremost steps when developing tourism marketing plans and exploring new market. According to the model of consumer behavior mentioned in the previous chapter (Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert & Wanhill, 1998), travellers' consuming behaviour and decision making can be influence by perception, motivation, personality and knowledge to it. The research allows in-depth interviews, or sometime referred to as the semi-structured interview, to acquire instinctive information on research questions- what image do Hong Kong people perceive Finland as a tourism destination and would there be differences when comparing to the image Finland is trying to project. Further research questions as the following would also be derived:

- What would be a major booster and drawback when considering a tourist destination

- From what sources or channels do Hong Kong people learn about Finland

- Is there any certain perceptions Hong Kong travellers' hold towards Finnish tourism cultural product

Qualitative studies aim to describe and explain a pattern of relationships and interactions (Miles and Huberman, 1994).This research followed the aim to discover the differences and/or similarity between Finland and Hong Kong tourism supply and if demand relationship would positively or negatively affect the future tourism planning.

5.2 Progression of the Research

Preliminarily, the research topic was handled by collecting primary data with the qualitative interviews and by analyzing secondary data collected from various sources.

By studying the secondary data gathered, the first half of the research, i.e. the supply of tourism information of Finland, is able to be drafted. In the previous chapter, wide range of Finnish tourism products, especially cultural tourism product, as well as MEK's marketing approach and its core value was mentioned in detail.

As for the other half of the research, i.e. the tourism demand of Hong Kong, both primary and secondary data is collected. For secondary data compiled, cross-cultural communication research from Hofstede (2002), i.e. his famous dimensions of national cultures study (please see previous chapter), had briefly pointed out the major cultural differences specifically between Finland and Hong Kong indicated with numerical indexes and listed in cross-referenced table. With the five major dimensions, Hong Kong national culture was drawn in a nutshell, calling the attention to the importance in understanding cultural differences in order to avoid conflicts, or in another sense, marketing failure.

To further explore the tourism demand of Hong Kong, primary data is obtained by the qualitative research done with this thesis. Semi-structured in-depth interview was conducted and answered by seven interviewees out of ten which had been approached. All of the interviewees are Hong Kong citizens, in order to make this research valid. Although plenty of qualitative research techniques can be adopted, the interview of this study was bound to majorly in-depth interviews supported by little amount of participation observation.

As described by Veal (2011, 239), in-depth interview is characterized by its length, depth and structure. Length-wise, in-depth interviews tend to be much longer than questionnaire-based interview, typically taking at least half an hour and sometimes several hours. For its depth, as the name implies, the in-depth interview seeks to probe more deeply than is possible with a questionnaire-based interview. Rather than just asking a question, recording a simple, answer, and moving on, the in-depth interviewer typically encourages respondents to talk, asks supplementary questions and asks respondents to explain their answers. For its structure, the in-depth interview is therefore less structured than a questionnaire-based interview. While questionnaire-based interviews may be seen as structured, in-depth interviews are seen as semi-structured or unstructured. As a result, every interview in a qualitative study, although dealing with the same issues, will be different. (Veal, 2011, 239-240)

Participant observation was rather useful for this research. In participant observation the researcher becomes a participant in the social process being studied. Traditionally the process has involved considerable interaction of the researcher with the people being researched. In many cases some sort of participant observation is the only way of researching particular phenomena. Becoming part of the group and immersion in its activities is the obvious way of studying the group. (Veal, 2011, 246)

"In human intercourse the tragedy begins, not when there is misunderstanding about words, but when silence is not understood." (Thoreau, 1849, 179) Non-verbal language can sometime be stronger and more revealing than words. To take that into consideration, some of the interviews were conducted via video calls where subjects were having conversations with researcher face-to-face. Others, due to technical constraints, interviews were conducted via phone calls only.

When structuring the in-depth interview, rather than a fully-structured questionnaire-based survey, a semi-structured "checklist" has to be generated. (Veal, 2011, 241) For this research's interview, a checklist consisting of in total 26 questions/items was constructed, mainly categorized based on the consumers' behavior matrix (Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert & Wanhill, 1998). The checklist started off with cultural-influencing issues (i.e. perception); followed by socio-economic-influencing and reference-group-influencing issues (i.e. motivation and personality); ended with the learning category questions, aiming at channels of information acquirement. Interviews fundamentally went smoothly as the same pattern as the checklist stated, with minority of the subjects following slightly different order from the list due to their enthusiasm in answering further issues beforehand. Regardless, it did not bring any negative impact to the validity of data collected.

Miles and Huberman (1994, 28) had listed some methods for qualitative research sampling as followed: Convenience; criterion; homogeneous; opportunistic; maximum variation; purposeful; snowball; stratified purposeful, etc. For this research, sampling was done base on the combination of method convenience, criterion, opportunistic, and, snowball method. Since insufficient outbound tourism figures of Hong Kong published by Hong Kong government can be obtained, the foundation of the sampling process has taken a tourism report generated by Tourism Australia (Tourism Australia, 2013) as one of the references. With years of tourism history between the two countries, it is a constructive and profitable act to find Australia a reliable source of references.

As shown from one of the statistic – Visitor from Hong Kong by age and purpose of Visit from 2012 (as shown in 9 below), the age groups of 15to 29, 30 to 44; and, 45- 59 were the most active travelers. Therefore, with this piece of information, sample subjects were chosen all among these three age groups. To accelerate diversity to increase the reliability of the research, education level was also taken into consideration as one of the criteria for sampling. Five out of ten chosen subjects belong to the age group of 15 to 29; another five belong to

the age group of 30 to 59. Out of the seven successful interviews conducted, four of the subjects belonged to the former age group (i.e. 15 to 29) while the remaining three naturally fell onto the later group (i.e. 30 to 59). In the younger group of interviewees, one of the four subjects had already acquired a Bachelor degree while the rest of the subjects were still under-graduates; as for the senior group of interviewees, one of the three subjects carried no university degree while the other two carried one or more university degrees.
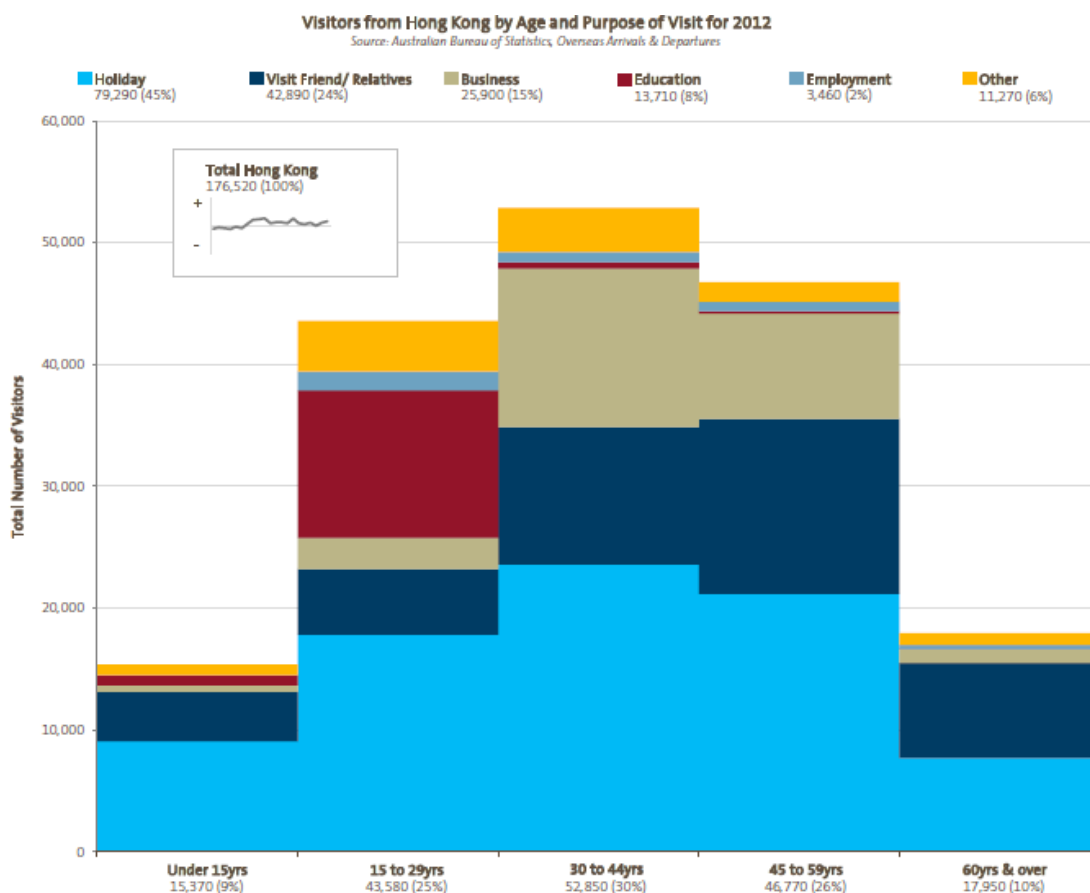
Figure 9: Visitors from Hong Kong by Age and Purpose of Visit for 2012 (Tourism Australia, 2013, 2)

Interviews duration varied from 20 to 30 minutes. With the semi-structured interview, subjects' answers were transcribed in to text simultaneously along with the interview. At the same time, for all the phone calls, interviews were audio recorded down for cross-checking, with the permission from subjects for the recording. The languages used in the interview were English and Cantonese as language skill varied with subjects of different age group. Interviews were transcribed and translated (when necessary) into English. All interviews went smoothly without any interruption, and were perfectly transcribed.

Transcripts were then ready for primary data analysis. A typical approach to qualitative analysis is to search for emergent themes – the equivalent of variables in quantitative research. (Veal, 2011, 397) The best way suggested by Veal (2011, 397), was to adopt a quasi-quantitative approach to the analysis process, identifying as themes only those which arise from the transcripts of a number of subjects. The primary data collected in this research was analyzed with this approach, too. The information gathered should be sorted through and evaluated in relation to the concepts identified in the conceptual framework, the research questions posed or the hypotheses put forward. With this premise, data were sorted and evaluated solely relied on the framework provided by the consumers' behavior matrix as a solid foundation for further assessment.

5.3 Trustworthiness of the Research

The quality of research and the trust which can be placed in it depends on the methods used and the care with which they have been deployed. Two dimensions are generally considered in this context: validity and reliability. (Veal, 2011, 46)

By definition, validity is the extent to which the information presented in the research truly reflects the phenomena which the researcher claims it reflects. While, Reliability is the extent to which research findings would be the same if the research were to be repeated at a later date or with a different sample of subjects." (Veal, 2011, 46, 47)

However, Veal also pointed out that "it has been noted that the use of validity and reliability as criteria for assessing the quality of research arose from the positivist tradition and that they are therefore not always fully appropriate for non-positivist research approaches. In qualitative research in particular, the concepts of trustworthiness and authenticity have been introduced by Guba and Lincoln (1998) to replace validity and reliability. (Veal, 2011, 47)

Trustworthiness has four components: credibility (paralleling internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability), and, conformability (objectivity). Authenticity includes: fairness and ontological, educative, analytic and tactical authenticity. Because qualitative studies do not follow a regimented process, a detailed explanation of the research process is advisable as Karla Henderson (2006, 231) has put it: 'A thorough reporting of the

process and the results of qualitative data collection and analysis is the key to justifying and assuring that trustworthiness exist in the study.' (Veal, 2011, 47)

With these criteria for measuring the quality of research, the credibility of this research was high as the in-depth interview checklist had followed tightly with the theory of consumer behavior matrix and drafted with semi-structured provided more capacity for variables. With the aid of Hofstede's cross-cultural communication dimensions of nation culture, transferability of the research was fundamentally taken care of, by the generalization of cultural differences downsized to five dimensions in nutshell; hence, to assist the construction of the interview checklist. The dependability level of this research was, in fact, hard to measure as there could be hardly any official tourism statistics and data found from Hong Kong, formal reports regarding history of outbound tourism data for cross-checking and future prospect with concrete data were rather hard to be obtained for free.

6 RESEARCH RESULT – THE PERCEIVED IMAGE OF FINLAND FROM HONG KONG'S PERSPECTIVE

6.1 Background of Interviewees

Originally, 10 people were approached and invited to participate in this research in March, 2014. It turned out that the total number of successful interviews were seven, the remaining three did not respond to the invitation. Gender ratio was four females to three males, age ranged between 21 to 58 years old. Only one (a male interviewee) out of the seven respondents had visited Finland before; while another one respondent (a female interviewee) had been to one of the Scandinavian countries but not Finland. In the remaining five respondents, four of them had visited Europe before, and one of them had never been to Europe before. To keep the presentation simple and clear, the only respondent who has been to Finland with first-hand experience will be referred to as visitor and the remaining respondents with no experience in visiting Finland as non-visitors.

For the only actual visitor, the purposes of traveling was studying and visiting friends and relatives (VFR). He visited Finland in total three times with two of them for studying purpose and one of them for VFR purpose. They all took place within the time scope of 2010 to 2013. In one of his trip to Finland, he also travelled to Sweden, Central and Southern Europe during the same trip in Finland. Major cities in Finland, such as Helsinki, Rovaniemi, Jyväskylä, Oulu, and nearby cities of his institute in Kainuu region had been visited by him. The only female non-visitor, who had been to one of the Scandinavian countries but not Finland, had visited Norway in autumn 2013 for leisure. The rest of the non-visitors who had been to Europe mainly travelled to Central- and South-western European countries with duration of trip varying from four days to two weeks.

Educational backgrounds of all the respondents were coincidently with at least bachelor degrees or above. Five out of the seven respondents had experience all/ or part of their studies outside Hong Kong while two of them received local education. Five of them hold the business-related degree, one respondent holds a degree in hospitality management from a local university and, one of the interviewees holds a degree in education from an overseas university.

6.2 Perception: First Impression on Finland

When attempt to acquire first impression of Finland from interviewees, they were asked to name the first three things that come up in their mind when hearing the word Finland. The initial thoughts aroused would be the prototypical images that Finland delivered and will be examined more deeply throughout the interviews.

The most frequently heard word associated with Finland from all the interviews was *cold*, followed by *Santa Claus,* and *Snow*. Other initial associations with Finland were technically winter-related, e.g. Christmas and skiing. One of the respondent mentioned Finland is a *country of thousands lakes*. *Northern lights* (also known as the aurora borealis) were also remembered by two respondents. Despite all of the neutral impressions above, one of the interviewees revealed his personal feeling of Finland and described Finland as *boring*.

Generally speaking, there were no significant differences in the first impression or initial association with Finland between the visitors and non-visitors. The winter-related impression of Finland was firmly rooted as this question was answered almost without any hesitation by all the interviewees.

6.3 Learning: Cognitive Evaluations

Moving on, interviewees were being asked if they carry any certain cognitive image of Finland. They were given some scopes/ categories for simple brain-storming, such as cities in Finland, what Finland is famous for, or any big events held in Finland. This question took a bit more time for interviewees to come up with actual examples.

6.3.1 Familiarity with Finland

Most of the respondents were able to name Helsinki as for the cities they know of in Finland. Three of them named Santa Claus village. Nokia and Angry Bird were also mentioned as some of the most significant achievements or successful international brands from Fin-

land. It turned out respondents were quite unfamiliar with Finland, especially as a travel destination. Cognitive images of Finland were, to certain extent, blurry and unexplored to the Hong Kong interviewees, not to mention with MEK's core values (please refer to Chapter3) it tried to promote Finland as, Hong Kong people appeared to know only the tip of the iceberg about what Finland can offer in a tourism sense. It may take more time to nurture Hong Kong people the true values of Finnish tourism products. Even for the only visitor in our research found it rather hard to come up with a certain cognitive image of Finland, in spite of the long time he had spent in Finland.

6.3.2 Knowledge to Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism was rather an uncommon form of tourism to the Hong Kong interviewees. Only one of the interviewee who holds a degree in hospitality can fully understand and accurately recall the definition of cultural tourism. The rest of the group were appeared lost and obscured with this topic.

6.3.3 Knowledge to the Kumho Chamber Music Festival

Knowing little of culture and cultural tourism, none of the respondents had ever heard of the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival nor interested in chamber music when asked if they have ever access to any form of classical music, especially one of the biggest events for chamber music – the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival. A follow-up question was asked to discover if chamber music would be widely liked in Hong Kong even if the respondents themselves did not know chamber music. They were asked if they have any acquaintances who are interested in chamber music. Answers were all, regrettably, negative.

6.4 : Motivation: Expectations from Finnish Tourism

According to the only visitor's response, matching the initial association of most interviewees, it was expected that Finland will be very cold and corresponding outfits were always abundantly prepared for every visit. An uncommonly heard expectation was also mentioned by him, that Finland did not give an impression of internationality, which he explained that he had not expected to meet much Asians or other nationalities in Finland. However, his actual experience surprised him. The only non-visitor who has been to other Scandinavian country but not Finland, she expected a relatively in-depth experience which can provide an opportunity for her to explore the cultural differences among Scandinavian countries. She was expecting Finnish people will have slightly different habit and lifestyle from Norwegian people, despite that fact that her surroundings hold perceptions that all Scandinavian countries share the same values and lifestyle, she added. More tangibly, she was expecting exciting connection with wildlife and nature in Finland, activities such as husky sledging and skiing were expected to be experience if she would have a chance to visit Finland, like most of the non-visitors opinion. For the non-visitors who are aged over 30, they tend to expect activities which are more layback and relaxing, yet, they crave for more in-depth and authentic experience which direct-connection with locals would be highly appreciated. One of the older non-visitors visualized his expectation with an example of the ideal trip to Finland as the following.

"A 10-day trip would be the ideal length of visit to Finland. The trip I wanted would not be something only sticking to the tourist spots. Instead, going into the forest, having a nice sauna by the lake with local Finnish friends made inside the naked steam room, picking fresh wild berries, fishing/ ice-fishing in the middle of ocean-sized lakes, barbequing sausages in the middle of a hiking trip, being treated and hosted by local Finnish households with nice authentic Finnish meals, going up to the North to see aurora in self-built igloo, etc., …, that is how you get the real authentic experience out of a destination."

With such description of an ideal trip, close-to-nature lifestyle and friendliness were expected from Finland. The rest of the non-visitors expected something what Finland is famous for, i.e. Santa Claus and Sauna.

6.5 Motivation: What Is Attractive and What Is Not? What Is the General Image of Finland
     from various aspects?

"The harmony between people and wildlife (or the nature), especially the non-interfering way of living, can hardly be found elsewhere."

Tangibly, spectacular sceneries, unpolluted environment and well-reserved nature are the most attractive elements from Finland. Landscape-wise, people find the amount of lakes in Finland attractive. Winter seasons would be more preferable for Hong Kong people as Hong Kong is in the sub-tropical region, where winters are snowless. Any activities which are wildlife- and/ or nature-oriented are appreciated (i.e. husky/ reindeer-sledging, skiing, ice-fishing, etc.)

Intangibly, the very different climate of Finland is one of the attractive elements for Hong Kong with its sub-tropical climate.

In general, Hong Kong people hold a positive image towards Finnish people and its culture. To most of the interviewees' knowledge, Finns project an image of being friendly, relaxing and helpful; however, at the same, not very expressive. It gave an impression that Finns are mysterious. Finns are also perceived as loyal, smart and humble. Compare to Hong Kong, people in Finland are perceived as always at a much slower pace while Hong Kong people are always rushing.

Interviewees were asked in one question that what they find the most important concern or criteria when making a decision regarding travel destination, and they were given example options such as the cost of the trip, variety of attractions, accessibility, etc. It showed that the most concerned issue for all interviewees was safety concern. A follow-up question was, then, proposed: "Do you find Finland a safe place to visit?" All responses were positive. All of the interviewees found Finland a very promising countries with its security and educated citizens, despite its neighboring country – Russia was relatively politically unstable at the time of the interview. Interviewees showed faith in Finland's national defense ability and none of them were concerned with the possibility of Russian-Finnish border instability.

Apart from the positive image of Finland that Hong Kong people had perceived, the respondents of this research pointed out some minor unattractive elements.

Cultural-wise, as the image of Finns projected was non-expressive, some of the interviewees suggested that Finnish people are in favor of routine and simplicity; therefore, they associate it with bore. She explained *"As a Hongkongese, we are living in a very vibrant city with lots of different forms of entertainments, and we are always craving for more. As my personal motto is – the only thing which can remain unchanged is 'changing' itself, things like routine and boundaries are not in favor of my motto."*

Another less attractiveness is the high cost of living in Finland. Products and services are usually with heavy taxations. Interviewees understood that quality comes with price, but still, with the cost of transportation from Asia to Scandinavia is originally high, most of the young interviewees cannot afford to spend a long and in-depth visit in Finland. Most of the interviewees made the wild guess that they were only able to squeeze in one day maximum for excursion in Finland within their European trip if they the chance, due to their limited budget.

6.6 Motivation: Access to Tourism-related Information & Sources

Interviewees were asked through what source and channel do that access tourism information. Most commonly, Hong Kong people tend to search for second-hand sharing from actual visitors. Travelling blogs and travelling forum which allows personal travelling experience sharing are preferred. Hong Kong young people tend to take advice from people with actual experience as this would save them plenty of time doing their own thorough research. Moreover, exclusive information could be acquired through other tourists' virtual visit. Tourism information generated by official tourism boards would be one reliable source as well. However, interviewees suggested that these official website or official tourism information will only be consulted when insufficient information was obtained from second-hand information, official information was perceived as supplements to the second-hand information they found. Interviewees suggested that magazine would also be a good channel to acquire travelling information. Publications, such as specific travel guide book, were not as preferable as the mentioned. Travel guide with maps and detailed information would be useful but will not be needed or purchased until the trip is confirmed. In another word, travel guides will only be handy during the trip but not before the trip and during the researching phase.

A more specific question dedicated for Finnish tourist information was asked afterwards. Interviewees were asked "Have you ever been actively searching for any tourist information of Finland? Are you able to recall the source if yes?" All interviewees had at least actively searched for tourism-related information of Finland for once. However, purposes and contents of the search varied. The only visitor from the interview had searched actively for information regarding studying in Finland majorly. The information he looked for was more practical as his purpose of travel to Finland is basically studying. Without any doubts, he had searched for activities and events happening in Finland as well during his stay for his study. He could name official websites like VisitFinland's and StudyingFinland's website as some of his sources. One of the respondents had searched for in-direct tourist information - flight tickets to Finland once for VRF purpose. For the rest of the respondents, some of them were not able to recall the source of their search and some were visiting LonelyPlanet website for second-hand tourism information of Finland.

Besides, interviewees were also asked if they have seen any Finnish tourism-related information in Hong Kong communication channel, e.g. advertisement, commercials, magazines, etc. Most of the interviewees replied that they did not see Finnish tourism-related marketing that often, usually from travel agencies, only. Not much TV commercials or magazine coverage were found regarding Finnish tourism. One of the interviewees could recall that she had seen one big commercial banner on a building back in few years time. With the address she provided of that banner, it was located near the former MEK Hong Kong office, which was removed few years ago. Other than that specific commercial banner promoting Santa Claus village, no other significant commercials were seen these years.

6.7 Attitude: Interest in visiting Finland

With the impression of civilized, safe, relaxed, and contrasting, Finland is positively perceived from Hong Kong people's perspective. With this premise, all the response obtained from our interviewees showed that they have interests in visiting / re-visiting Finland. From Finland's landscape, climate, to its culture, Hong Kong people's interests were aroused by its differences from Hong Kong. However, Finland is, still, rather mysterious to Hong Kong. All that Hong Kong people know remain superficial. With insufficient promotion and mar-

keting campaign introducing Finland to Hong Kong, people's awareness of Finland as a tourism destination will remain low, despite the good reputation of Finland. With the initial positive feeling Hong Kong people hold towards Finland, it would be sensible to further these feelings into motivation. In most of the interviews, respondents lacked the knowledge of Finland; Finland was easily forgotten in their list of must-go destinations. When asked "Are you aware of any Finnish cultural beats, brands, or, simply, what it is famous for?" Only two of the respondents were able to name Nokia, and Moomin. Most of them hesitated and not able to name any until hints were given.

7 DISCUSSION

7.1 Cultural differences between Finland and Hong Kong

According to Spradley (1979), culture is "the acquired knowledge that people use to interpret their world and generate social behavior. Culture is not behavior itself."

And quoted as Halls (1987) described "culture", it is "the medium we live in"; "living, interlocking system(s)"; "shared, it is created and maintained through relationship"; and, "used to differentiate one group from another. (In other words, division into groups comes first; deliberate differentiation via cultural symbols comes second)".

With the above definitions of culture, it is clearly without doubts that; the existence of culture in different geographic context appears to be varying. When it comes to tourism, to avoid unpleasant experience, or even to a more extreme extent, say, cultural shock, the acknowledgement of cultural differences is crucial. By understanding cultural difference, from a business and marketing perspective, it helps avoiding unnecessary conflicts; and hence, increases the probability of developing and launching successful marketing strategy without being held back with cultural issues.

To understand if the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival as a part of Finnish tourism product is fitting the demand of the Hong Kong market, first it is vital to get in-depth into the differences between this two distinguish cultures from the completely varying continents.

In this thesis, Hofstede's Dimensions of National Culture and Schmoll's model of travel decision-making process are applied to explain the cultural difference. And hence, to suggest some possible insights for future use when it comes to international marketing of a cultural tourism product.

7.1.1 Hofstede's Dimensions of National Cultures

Geert Hofstede is a Dutch social psychologist and Professor Emeritus of Organizational Anthropology and International Management at the University of Maastricht in the Netherlands, well known for his pioneering research of cross-cultural groups and organizations. He

developed a framework for cross-cultural communication to facilitate the explanation of values and behavioral differences between society's cultures. As mentioned, acknowledgement of cultural differences is crucial when it comes to tourism, especially for launching cultural tourism product in a new market. Hofstede's model of cultural dimension manages to look into cultural differences through categorizing six aspects of measurements and presenting the result with scoring system.

The 6 basic problem areas correspond to dimensions which Hofstede named as:

- Power Distance Index(PDI)

- Individualism versus collectivism (IDV)

- Masculinity versus femininity (MAS)

- Uncertainty avoidance (UAI)

- Long-term versus short term orientation (LTO)

- Indulgence versus Restraint (IVR)

(Hofstede, 2010)

According to Hofstede (2010), herewith the brief definition of each of the dimension suggested.

- **Power Distance Index (PDI)**
  Power distance is defined **as** the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. This dimension expresses the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. The fundamental issue here is how a society handles inequalities among people. People in societies exhibiting a large degree of power distance accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification. In society with low power distance, people strive to equalize the distribution of power and demand justification for inequalities of power.

- **Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)**
  The fundamental issue addressed by this dimension is the degree of interdependence a

society maintains among its members. The high side of this dimension, called individualism, can be defined as a preference for a loosely-knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate families only. Its opposite, Collectivism, represents a preference for a tightly-knit framework in society in which individuals can expect their relatives or member of a particular in-group to look after them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. A society's position on this dimension is reflected in whether people's self-image is defined in terms of "I" or "we".

- **Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)**

    The fundamental issue here is what motivates people, wanting to be the best (masculine) or liking what you do (feminine). The masculinity side of this dimension represents a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material reward for success. Society at large is more competitive. Its opposite, femininity, stands for a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life. Society at large is more consensus-oriented.

- **Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)**

    The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these is reflected in the UAI score. The uncertainty avoidance dimension expresses the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity. The fundamental issue here is how a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known, should we try to control the future or just let it happen? Countries exhibiting strong UAI maintain rigid codes of belief and behavior and are intolerant of unorthodox behavior and ideas. Weak UAI societies maintain a more relaxed attitude in which practice counts more than principles.

- **Long-Term versus Short-Term Orientation (LTO)**

    The long term orientation dimension is closely related to the teachings of Confucius and can be interpreted as dealing with society's search for virtue, the extent to which a society shows a pragmatic future-oriented perspective rather than a conventional historical short-term point of view. The long-term orientation dimension can be interpreted as dealing with society's search for virtue. Societies with a short-term orientation generally have a strong concern with establishing the absolute Truth. They are normative in their thinking. They exhibit great respect for traditions, a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and a focus on achieving quick results. In societies with a long-term orientation, people believe that truth depends very much on situation, con-

text and time. They show an ability to adapt traditions to changed conditions, a strong propensity to save and invest thriftiness, and perseverance in achieving results.

- **Indulgence versus Restraint (IVR)**

    Indulgence stands for a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun. Restraint stands for a society that suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms.

(Hofstede, 2005)

7.1.2 Cultural Comparison between Finland and Hong Kong

To assess the cultural differences between Finland and Hong Kong in a simple way, according to five given dimensions, scores are shown in the following bar chart.
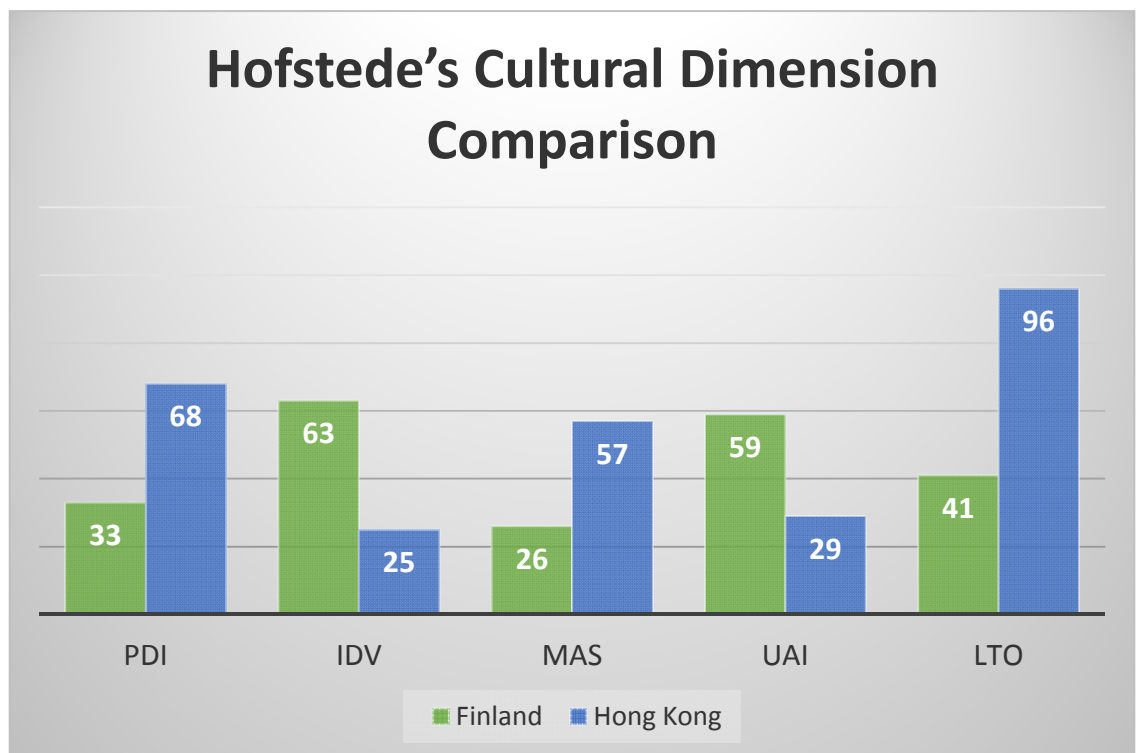

Figure 10: Hofstede's Cultural Dimension Comparison between Finland and Hong Kong (Hofstede, 2010)

It is fairly straightforward from the above figures that Finnish culture and Hong Kong culture is quite different by numbers. Hofstede's research has drawn some significant com-

ments to each of the country's culture base on the 5 dimensions: Power distance, individualism vs. collectivism; Masculinity vs. femininity; Uncertainty avoidance; and. Long-term vs. short-term orientation.

In power distance, Finland is having a relatively independent culture while in Hong Kong inequalities tend to be more acceptable amongst people. Hierarchy in Finland could be applicable occasionally for convenience purpose, equal rights are fundamental quality of life. Compare to Hong Kong, polarized subordinate-superior relationships are found quite common; defense actions against power abuse by superior are not very likely to be found. Direct and participative communications are found comparatively more often in Finland than in Hong Kong.

In the dimension of individualism versus collectivism, Finland can be classified as an individualistic society with high preference for a loosely-knit society framework; Hong Kong is quite the opposite of Finland, can be described as a collectivistic society, where people act in the interests of the group and not necessarily of themselves. Indirect communications are considered as more common then direct confrontation when comes to discussion as Hong Kong people focus on group harmony over personal interests.

In the dimension of masculinity versus femininity, Finland is found to be more of a feminine society while Hong Kong is found to be relatively masculine society. Finland focuses on well-being, consensus, equality, solidarity and quality of life. Hong Kong, in comparison, is more success oriented and driven.

Keywords	Finland	Hong Kong
UAI	Medium high preference for avoiding uncertainty	Low score: people tend to be comfortable with ambiguity; adaptable and entrepreneurial
LTO	Short-term orientation culture: exhibits great respect for traditions, relatively small propensity to save, strong social pressure to "keep up with the Joneses"; impatience for achieving quick results; strong con-	Highly Long-term oriented society: persistence and perseverance are normal; traditions can be adapted to suit new conditions; people are thrifty and sparing with resources and investment tends to be in long term

| | cern with establishing the Truth, i.e. normative. | projects. such as real estate, etc. |

Table 2: Hofstede's Comparison between Finland and Hong Kong (Hofstede, 2010)

7.1.3 Differences Suggested From Research

From the research this thesis generated, and concluded in the previous chapter, interviewees from Hong Kong were able to drawn some significant differences between Finland and Hong Kong.

Geographically, it is beyond comparison as Hong Kong is a city which cannot be compared to Finland as a whole country. However, the density of land and population size affect the way how Hong Kong people react when a tourism destination is of utterly opposite situation. The spaciousness of Finland, especially area of greeneries found in Finland is overwhelming Hong Kong people who are living in a concrete jungle. The wind blowing through the hair, the fresh smell of the grass, the illusion of being able to touch the sky with your bare hand, etc., things that can easily be seen and sensed in Finland, is, actually, rare and scarce in Hong Kong. These differences in landscapes create the most innate opportunities for both Finland and Hong Kong to experience something different.

Culturally, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the paces Finns have are very different from Hong Kong people. Hong Kong is a financial-driven city, where not a second should be wasted as it may already cost significant loss in the stock market. Therefore, Hong Kong people are very used to the fast pace of life, things are usually demanded in almost an instant. In comparison, Finland has a slower pace of life; Finns' patience is relatively higher as well. With such bipolar difference in lifestyle, marketing approaches has to be adjusted. As a result, it would be suggested to take into consideration the difference in pace of life and patience of the target group.

Apart from lifestyle, languages used in Finland and Hong Kong are different. Finland's official languages include Finnish and Swedish; while Hong Kong's official languages include Chinese and English. Presence of language barrier should be well-handled to avoid communication failure.

7.2 MEK's Core Value and Hong Kong's perception

As according to MEK's conceptual identity for Finland's tourism image mentioned in Chapter 3 as "credible", "unconventional", "creative", and "contrasting", interviewees of the research were asked if they agree with all the images MEK tried to project to the public. On top of the four characters injected by MEK, we also asked interviewees if "silence" would be an attractive element they find in a tourist destination.

7.2.1 Is Finland "Credible"?

Seven out of seven respondents agreed that Finland is a credible country in many ways. They believed that Finns are very open, simple and candid which make the place promising. Furthermore, Finland social welfare system is very comprehensive, which encourage education. Well-educated society tends to be credible. They had the impression that products and services from Finland are at high quality. Business-wise, as Nokia had build up a concrete and reputable foundation, they believed that Finnish companies can make credible partner without language barrier. Tourism-wise, as the lifestyle and education-level of the majority is promising, and with the first impression of Finns being nice and friendly, it makes Finland a credible destination to visit.

7.2.2 Is Finland "Unconventional"?

Four respondents found Finland conventional while two of them found Finland unconventional. The last respondent remained neutral. Reasons supporting Finland is conventional suggested Finland still get hold of its traditions, such as festivals and cuisine. Business-wise, interviewees came to realize that Finland's effort in marketing itself internationally was not noticeable, and hence, gave a feeling that Finland was trying to keep distance from the world. Nowadays, the world trend is focusing on globalization; such feeling would project the impression of being conventional instead of unconventional.

7.2.3 Is Finland "Creative"?

Five out of seven agreed that Finland is a creative country while the remaining two stayed neutral due to lack of knowledge to Finland. Supporters in this saying found that Finland's technology is of high quality and advanced-level. Finland nurtured one of the most creative and successful pioneer in the technology and gaming industry. Architect in Finland was renowned for its simplicity yet edgy style which can be hardly found elsewhere.

7.2.4 Is Finland "Contrasting"?

Six out of seven respondents agreed that Finland can be contrasting. Very obviously, when comparing its climate to Hong Kong's, it is undoubtedly of big contrast. Winter in Finland can go as low as minus 30 degree Celsius while winter in Hong Kong is usually at around plus 15 degree Celsius. Finnish summer and winter can be, as well, contrasting where summer can reach almost plus 30 degree Celsius. Finland is also contrasting in a way that metropolitans and the wild nature can go well together without conflict. Urbanized cities along the coastline of Finland are very different from rural area in Lapland. Sceneries found are totally different, too.

7.2.5 Do Hong Kong people find "silence" an attractive element in a tourist destination, especially for Finland?

Four out of seven respondents said "silence" can be an attractive element while three of them disagreed.

Interviewees who were for this idea tend to base the reason on the differences between Hong Kong and Finland. Due to the fact that Hong Kong is a bustling city where vehicles and people are everywhere, a destination with "silence" can actually be exotic in all the good ways for a city-break holiday. Interviewees illustrated that when given "silence", they expected they would be surrounded by breath-taking sceneries and the utmost relaxation but physically and mentally. Nothing can compare to a place where you can simply chilling and

experiencing the beauty of nature in a slow pace when your head is always occupied when Hong Kong.

However, three of the interviewees found "silence" sounded not interesting and discouraging as a tourist destination. It generated a feeling of stillness and emptiness. When travelling in a "silent" city, one of the interviewees actually felt threatened with the silence. Tourists may appear to be helpless when assistance is needed in a silent destination. Some of the young respondents added that "silence" is usually associated with boredom and vagueness, which make the trip sounds meaningless.

8 CONCLUSION

In the year 2012 to 2013, Hong Kong has been ranked the ninth place out of 144 countries while Finland has been ranked the third in the Global Competitiveness Index. With such a remark, Finland is granted with favourable condition to find Hong Kong a highly potential partner.

To provide the fundamentals for entering this new market, this thesis has researched the customer behaviour pattern of Hong Kong with what Finland is offering as in its tourism product. Cultural differences were the highlighted issue in this research as the better understanding in the topic, the less likely marketing failure occurs.

The result of the research showed that Hong Kong people, in general, have strong incentive to travel to Finland base on the extreme-level of climate and geographic differences. The bipolar climate between Hong Kong and Finland raise the interest of Hong Kong people to experience a "real winter" with snow and all types of winter sceneries and activities. Exclusive Northern light experience and Santa Claus are some of the most common expected attractions from Finland. The pureness and harmony between Finnish nature and human activities are much appreciated and respected. Safety issue is the most concerned matter when it comes to travelling to Hong Kong people. Finland appears to be a very good destination in regard to security and safety terms. Finnish people are perceived as well-educated, friendly, mild, and simple which leave a rather good impression that tourists are welcome in such a destination.

However, channels of communication and exposure of Finland tourism is extremely insufficient. Without the suitable channels and sufficient amount of exposure, to people in Hong Kong where information is flooded and craved, it is not likely that Finland would come up to tourists top lists of destination. Depending on age group, young travellers appear to not understand the concept of "silence" being the core attractiveness of Finland while the older age group appreciate the concept and would like to give a try to a destination with pure silences. It gives the impression that a silent destination is close to the nature, authentic Finnish culture can be expected with utmost relaxation among the older age group. Younger Hong Kong people tend to associate "silence" with boredom and lack of excitement.

All in all, Finland has the perfect tourism products to offer and Hong Kong is one the strongest and welcoming partner. With the premise of adopting the right marketing campaign via the right and most accepted channels in the most efficient manners, Hong Kong has much potential in becoming one of the biggest outbound tourism destinations of Finland. A minor remark can be provided that Hong Kong is a city with "fast-food" culture where everything is expected to come fast and easy, tourism information is of no exception. Hong Kong people are looking for eye-catching, "easy-to-digest" information in a nutshell at first glimpse than lengthy but detailed tourism information.

With the tourism marketing campaign launched by MEK recently, for example the Umbrella programme and the existing international marketing campaign to Asian countries like China, it is prospective that if marketing campaign is modified into a way Hong Kong people can easily accept, Hong Kong will successfully open more doors for Finland tourism in Asia in near future.

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LIST OF APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Interview Checklist

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1. What is the first three things that come to your mind when you hear the word "Finland"?

2. Is there any certain cognitive image of Finland you can think of?

   E.g. can you name any city in Finland? / Do you know what Finland is famous for? /

   Do you know any event and/or festival which is held in Finland?

3. Have you ever been to any of the Scandinavian countries?

4. Have you ever been to Finland? If yes, jump to Q 5/ if no, jump to Q 9.

5. What was your purpose of visiting Finland? Duration of your visit?

6. What do you like the most (find most attractive) during your visit in Finland? And what do you dislike the most (find least attractive) during your visit in Finland?

7. What was your expectation before your trip to Finland? E.g. what did you expect to see/ do/ visit, etc.?

8. Did your actual travel experience in Finland fulfil your expectations?

9. Would you like to visit Finland?

   If yes, why?

   -What would you like to see/ do/ experience in Finland? Any specific expectation?

   If no, why not?

   -Would there be anything that's holding you back?

10. In general, what image does Finland give you as tourist destination?

    - Nature and landscape-wise; culture-wise; climate-wise, etc.

11. How did these images formed? Would you be able to identify the source?

12. What is the most important criteria to take into consideration, in general, when it comes to destination selection?

    e.g. cost; variety of attractions; accessibility; safety, etc.?

13. Please name some major differences between Hong Kong and Finland.

    e.g. Cultural-wise or lifestyle-wise?

14. When a place is described with the word "Silence", what image does it give you?

15. Does a place being described as "silence" interests you to visit there?

16. Do you know what cultural tourism is?

17. Do you find this form of tourism interesting/ suitable for you?

18. Is the Finnish culture a strong drive for you to consider Finland as an upcoming travel destination?

19. Are you aware of any Finnish Cultural beats?

    -perhaps any Finnish design, brand, architecture, music, etc?

20. Do you find the following four adjectives suitable for describing Finland?

    1. Unconventional; 2. Creative; 3. Credible; 4. Contrasting

    Why?

21. Have you ever actively search for any information of Finland? From where?

22. How would you like to gain tourism information of Finland in Hong Kong?

    e.g. social network; internet; tourist offices; magazine, etc.

23. What do you prefer when it comes to gathering tourism information?

    Would you search from different sources for in-depth specific information or tend to

    look for all information under one source in brief?

24. Have you ever seen any form of advertisement regarding Finland tourism in Hong

    Kong?

25. Are you or any of your acquaintances interested in Chamber Music?

26. Have you ever heard of the International Chamber Music Festival?