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Image of Finland as a Destination for the Mainland Chinese Tourist

Business Economics and Tourism

13.08.2014

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ABSTRACT

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Title	Image of Finland as a Destination for the Mainland Chinese Tourist
Year	2014
Language	English
Pages	46 + 3 Appendices
Name of Supervisor	Peter Smeds

China is one of the biggest countries in the world which has a population of nearly 1.4 billion people. With help of a steady growth economy, the outbound tourism of China has dramatically increased. Finland as gateway for Chinese tourists to Europe has become a unique destination for them. However, Finland is still relatively unknown and mysterious for most of the Chinese tourists.

The aims of this study were to examine how the destination image affects the decision making of mainland Chinese tourists and what the current image of Finland is when it comes to appealing to the mainland Chinese tourists.

A quantitative approach was conducted to collect data from Chinese tourists. The survey questionnaires were sent to three different Chinese travel agencies and 100 answers to the questionnaires were analyzed, in which Chinese tourists describe the current image of Finland and how it will appeal to their desire to visit Finland.

The image of Finland for most of outbound Chinese tourists is a nice, happy, trendy, and refreshing crisp country which has a beautiful landscape. To affect the destination making of mainland Chinese tourists, Finland can depend on the current image of Finland, as well as to offering shopping, Finnish design, fashion, high-tech products, souvenirs and a tax refund service and its beautiful landscape. In the end, some suggestions were offered based on the research results to support future studies.

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

China as one of biggest countries in the world and as a result of the rapid rise of economic power within a short time makes the country become a leading force in many sectors in the world's economy. China's GDP has grown exponentially fast and is expected to overtake Americas in about six years (*US-China Today*). Also, the economic growth for more than two decades has multiplied personal wealth and household income.

With the help of steady growth economics and the nearly 1.4 billion populations, outbound tourism of China has experienced tremendous development. The Chinese people are eager to go sightseeing overseas which creates a huge market opportunity for world tourism market. "Comparing with 2012, in 2013, the number of outbound tourists reaches 97,300,000 which are up 15% from last year. China has increased the number of permitted destinations which means the overseas destinations have been increased to 114 countries and regions for outbound Chinese tourists. A further and sustained growth of outbound tourism is expected." (*Travel China Guide*)

Finland as a gateway for the Chinese tourists to Europe, with its exotic location, enjoyable scenery and functioning infrastructure, has become a unique destination for them. In 2012, overnight stays by Chinese tourists increased heavily, by 25.7 per cent, and the Chinese tourists spend well 14,000 nights at Finnish accommodation establishments (*Statistic Finland*). However, Finland is still relatively unknown and mysterious for most of the Chinese people; and therefore, strengthening the image of Finland as tourism destination in China, promoting Finnish tourism market, and sharing the outbound Chinese tourist will bring remarkable benefit for Finland's tourism industry.

1.2 Aim of Thesis

The objective of this thesis is to analyze the image of Finland for the Chinese tourists to choose as a destination. The aim of thesis is to introduce and analyze the current country image of Finland as tourism destination and Chinese outbound tourist, as well as the strategy and implementation for Finnish tourism industry.

With the purpose of finding out how to appeal to the outbound Chinese tourist to choose Finland as destination, two research questions will be studied.

- How does the destination image affect the decision making of the mainland Chinese tourists?
- What is the current image of Finland as a destination when it comes to appealing to the mainland Chinese tourists?

1.3 Thesis Structure

The thesis structure is conducted as follows. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 are the theoretical framework, forming the analytical section. In chapter two, the international tourism demand is briefly introduced. The development of Chinese outbound tourism will give a clear impression about Chinese outbound tourism; in addition, the travel motivations of Chinese outbound tourists are introduced, this is the most important part of chapter 2 which focuses on pull and push factor about outbound Chinese tourists' motivation. In chapter 3, the key concepts of destination image are introduced; chapter 4 focuses on Finland as a destination, containing the concepts of tourism fact and strategy of Finland, as well as current image of Finland. Chapter 5, an overview of methodology is presented, which is the primary data analysis section. A questionnaire is designed to collect the information. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 make up the discussion section. Chapters 6 and 7 present the results of the research and analyze them. Chapter 8 ends in a conclusion by answering the two research questions.

2 TOURISM

Today, tourism has become a popular global leisure activity which can be domestic and international. In this chapter, secondary data about international tourism demand, the development of Chinese outbound tourism as well as travel motivation of outbound Chinese tourists are presented, in order to get a clear understanding of the three sections.

2.1 International tourism demand

It is said that “Tourism demand is usually regarded as a measure of visitors’ use of a good or service (Frechtling, 2001, p4). The concept of tourism demand originated from the classical definition of demand in economics, namely the desire to process a commodity or to make use of service, combine with the ability to purchase it.” (Haiyan Song, 2010, P63)

It is maintained that the Tourism 2020 Vision of UNWTO has made predictions that Europe will lose markets in the numbers of international tourist arrivals, with the East Asia the Pacific region growing in importance. The predictions for world’s top destinations by 2020 can be the countries such as China, Russia Federation which will move to top ten; and other countries that are predicted to grow in popularity include Asian destinations, such as Thailand, Singapore. (WTO, 2005b)

Swarbrooke also mentioned that inbound and outbound tourism are predicted to grow in importance over the next decade. Outbound tourism is predicted to grow rapidly from counter within the Asian region. The Asian, African and Middle Eastern outbound markets are in their introductory or growth stages and there will be greater potential for development from these region in the future. (Consumer behavior in Tourism, 2007, p109)

2.2 Development of Chinese outbound tourism

Boniface states that the tourism market in the People’s Republic of China (PRC) began to show significant growth from 1978 onwards, following the demise of Mao,

the ending of the Cultural Revolution, and the relaxation of the strict controls imposed by the totalitarian Communist regime. However this was mainly for domestic trips. International travel continued to be tightly regulated by the government and was largely confined to Hong Kong and Macau. Although China was now eager to learn from the West, foreign travel for the purpose of corporate business or study rather than leisure tourism was permitted. In 1987 travel to neighboring countries sympathetic to the Communist regime, such as North Korea, Russia, Mongolia, Burma, and Vietnam was allowed, and in 1988 ADS was extended to Thailand. Domestic travel continued to expand rapidly in the 1990s as the Chinese economy began to boom and as the five day working week and holidays were institutionalized. In the new millennium, China began to be integrated in the global economy with accession to the World Trade Organization, and with growing affluence, a strong currency, government support and an expanding travel trade, the latent demand for outbound travel began to be realized. In 2003 individual travel permits were introduced for Hong Kong and Macau as rules continued to be relaxed. By 2006, outbound international travel from China reached a total of 34 million trips representing 10 per cent year- on- year growth. Already China is the largest generator of international travel in Asia, and it is forecast to be the leading generator of international tourism in the world by 2020 with 100 million outbound trips. VFR (Visit friends and relatives) tourism will continue to play an important role, mainly to countries with large ethnic Chinese populations in South-east Asia and the America.

Boniface mentions that The WTO report on the Chinese outbound market (UN-WTO, 2006) identifies three distinct stages in the evolution of this market:

1. The trial stage (1983-1996) - in this stage, the VFR market, and tours of neighboring countries sympathetic to the PRC began to set the stage for outbound tourism.
2. The initial stage (1997-2003) - when outbound tourism was officially sanctioned and the number of approved destination increased.
3. Development (2002 onwards) – a stage characterized by a rapid increase in the number of ‘approved destinations’ and the volume of outbound trips, relaxation

of government policies and a diversification of travelers' needs. (Boniface& Cooper 2009. P266)

Thibault stated that if we look back to the history of Chinese outbound tourism, China's outbound tourism has gone through the process of travel to Hong Kong and Macao, travel to the border regions and travel to foreign countries, which officially started in 1900. Subsequently, travel to foreign countries by private Chinese citizens has been growing quickly. From 1998 to 2001, the number of outbound travelers has experienced an annual increase of one million. The number reached 12.13 million in 2001. (*Nicolas Thibault, 2003, p17-18*). According to the data from WTO, in 2013, the number of outbound travelers reached to 98, 19 million, the tourism consumption reached 129.3 billion U.S. dollars, and the annual consumption is 1000 euro per person.

According to the China Outbound Tourism Yearbook 2013-2014, there are four major trends of Chinese outbound tourism market in the future:

1. The number of outbound visits will continue to increase, especially for the tourist from the west and central parts of China will increase tremendously.
2. The differentiated structure of demand obviously exists and the need for customized products will keep growing.
3. The rapid development in FIT (Foreign independent Tour) market will prove an expansion from short-haul destinations to medium and long-haul destinations.
4. E-business and online booking will grow and the industry will become diversified.

Most outbound travel is from China's three leading cities and surrounding regions – Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou – but, thanks to rapid urbanization, second-tier cities are also emerging as sources of growing demand. (China outbound tourism yearbook 2013-2014, <http://www.ivyalliance.cn/en/cbkw.asp>)

The characteristics of Chinese outbound travel development are listed as follows: It is stated that in the next ten years, China's changing age structure will see an expansion in the 35-60 year age segment, which will be overrepresented among travelers to Europe. The main segment will be the young; these affluent middle class would reach to 500 million by 2025. Even though the "Golden Weeks"

which is most Chinese traditionally travel has been made shorter, China has started to institutionalize holiday pay for workers, which means it will result in more distributed holiday travel and longer travelling periods. Besides, there is a growing ability and desire among the Chinese to spend money on leisure and tourism – as well as a greater willingness to use credit cards. (Chinese outbound travel Market 2012, UNWTO)

2.3 Travel Motivation of Outbound Chinese Tourists

Travel motivation is defined by Pizam as “a set of needs and attitudes which predispose a person to act in a specific touristic goal-directed way” (Pizam ,1979 , p195). Swarbrooke mentioned that a wide range of factors motivate consumers to buy a tourism product, and he also pointed out that motivating factors in tourism can be split into two groups: a) those which motivate a person to take a holiday; b) those which motivate a person to take a particular holiday to a specific destination at a particular time.

He stated that Beard and Raghob developed a model called the Leisure Motivation Scale, which sought to clarify motivators into four types, based on the work of Maslow. The four types are:

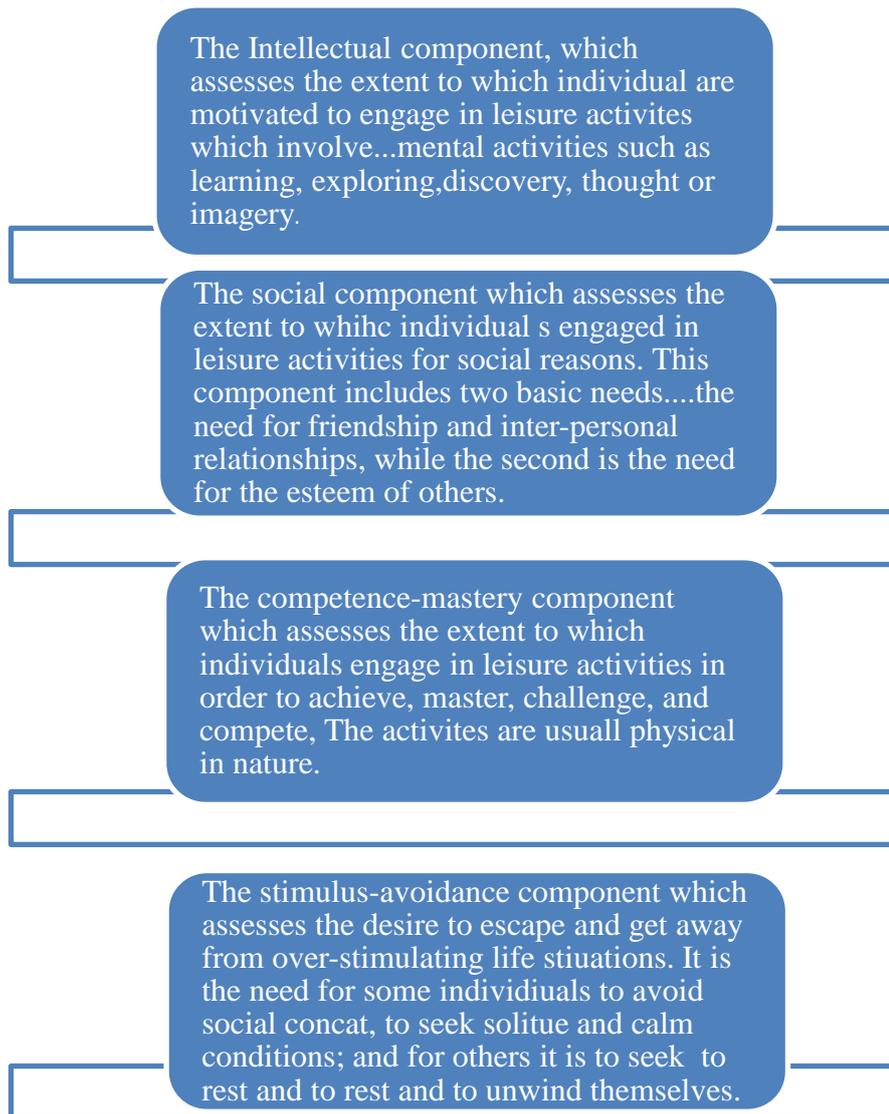


Figure 1: The Leisure Motivation Scale (Swarbrooke&Horner; 2007; p53-54)

Push and Pull Factors:

The push and pull framework of travel motivation has been most commonly used. People travel because they are pushed by internal forces and pulled by external forces such as interest in a destination's attributes. (Uysal & Jurowski; 1994; p 844-866). Usually, pull factors are those that emerge as a result of attractiveness of a destination, which include both tangible resources and travelers' perceptions and expectations. Meanwhile, the push factors will explain the desire to travel

while pull factors will explain the choice of destination. (Uysal & Jurowski, 1994, p 844-866)

It is said that the motivation for the short-haul outbound tourism is acquiring new knowledge, enhancing self-image and building stronger relationship. (Hanqin & Lam, 1999. P 587-594). The key driver of long-haul travel by the Chinese is the attraction of visiting a capitalist society. (Hsu&Lam, 2003. P 60-67). For both long and short-haul outbound travel, it will relate to the dominance of group travel, which means most of travelers prefer the safety and convenience of packaged tours.

Hanqin also reported that the Chinese traveling to short-haul destinations desire a modern of shopping paradise, where the services systems are of the highest standard. (Hanqin & Lam, 1999. P 587-594). Moreover, the local food and sightseeing are also important drivers for the outbound Chinese travelers. (Law et al., 2004, p 355-362)

Besides the pull-push framework, Swarbrooke mentioned that there are other factors that play a role to determining tourist motivation. They are individual characteristic and national cultural background. (Swarbrooke, 2007, p55-59). For the Chinese outbound tourists, there are different travel motivations for various groups to visit Europe. a) The intellectuals, who eager to the learn about the authentic European history, arts and humanities; b) the upstarts, who eager to show their richness through travelling to Europe; c) most of other travelers, who think it is a way of fulfill their dream through travelling; d) and some business tourists, they have been in Europe before as a member of government official delegation or a company representative , but now with the purpose of arranging their kids to study in Europe or visiting a family member, they will travel to Europe with relatives or friends. (Gequn Feng. Report of development and future mission of European Travel Organization)

3 IMAGE OF DESTINATION

Destination image is one of the most important factors in promoting and marketing a good tourism destination. It is also an important component affecting a tourist's decision making process and behavior. In this chapter, the definitions, formation, measurement as well as the importance of destination image are presented.

3.1 Definition of destination image

Kolter has defined the destination image as the impression, beliefs, ideas, and expression accumulated towards a place, and it is a personal perception of a place which can vary from one person to another. (Kolter, Haider & Rein, 1993, p42). Sirgy mentioned that the destination image is composed of various attributes that can be divided in controllable attributes which included destination product, price, place and promotion; and uncontrollable ones which refer to the personal characteristics. Sirgy pointed out that destination image will be influenced by the environmental attributes which means the landscapes, historical attractions, infrastructure, accommodation and facilities; and service attributes. (Sirgy & Su, 2000, p340). Another widely used definition of destination image has been given by Buhali (Dimitrios Buhalis, 2000, P97) as "a set of expression and perceptions a prospective travel has of a destination." Hence, it can be concluded that whether travelers visit a destination or not depends on the perceived destination image among other factors.

Since Chon mentioned that the importance of a tourist destination image lies on the influence it has on the decision attitude of prospective tourists, and on the degree of satisfaction in respect to the actual tourist experience. (Chon, 1992, p68), Kolter defined the destination image as: "the sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about place. Images represent a simplification of a larger number of associations and pieces of information connected to a place. They are a product of the mind trying to process and pick out essential information from huge amounts of data about a place". (Kotler, P & Gertner, 2004, p42).

3.2 Destination Image Formation

Reynolds (1965, p. 69) noted that the formation process of a destination image as a construction of mental picturing that relies on several impressions selected from the flood of information about a particular destination. In the circumstance of destination image, the flood of information which is stated by him that contains many sources which include promotional literature (travel brochures, posters), the public opinion (family/friends, travel agents) and the mass media (newspapers, magazines, television, books, movies). Echtner noted that through actually visiting the destination, its image will be affected and modified based upon first-hand information and experience. (Echtner & Ritchie 2003, p38).

Enchtet said that even though the formation of a destination image has been widely researched, yet the process is not well explained and understood. He listed out the improved vision given by Gunn (1988) in the model of the seven phases of the travel experience. The seven phases have been consisted by destination image in order that the travelers take into consideration which determines the travel destination. The seven phases theory consists of: a) Accumulation of mental image about vacation experience; b) Modification of those images by further information; c) Decision to take a vacation trip; d) Travel to destination; e) Participation at the destination; f) Return home; g) Modification of images based on the vacation experience. (Echtner & Ritchie 2003, p38). The first stage identified by Gunn as the “organic image” which deals with a tourist’s impression of a destination without physically having visited the area; the second stage identified as the “induced image” which deals with image formed due to exposure to promotional materials. Echtner noted that the distinction between organic and induced images is quite unique to the formation of destination images.

Gartner introduced the concept of cognitive, affective, and conative images as the three components of destination image. All three components are closely related to the destination selection process as suggested by Gartner (Gartner.1993. p191-215.).

The destination image framework provided by Baloglu and McCleary consists of both cognitive /perceptual and affective evaluations determinates that influence the destination image. Cognitive/perceptual evaluation means beliefs or

knowledge of destination attributes whereas the affective evaluation means feelings or attachments towards the destination attributes. The framework shows that factors influencing the destination image are personal and factors.

According to Balogu and McCleary's framework, the personal factors affecting destination image are psychological consisting of tourism values, motivations and personality, and social factors including age, education, and marital status. The stimulus factors affecting the destination image are the amount and type of information sources as well as the distribution of previous experiences.

3.3 The importance of destination image

It has been mentioned that researchers and marketers tend to be in consensus about the importance of image for a destination's viability and success in tourism (Tasci & Gartner, 2007). Since the destination image is one of the most important elements of a tourism destination, it plays an important role in destination marketing. The importance of the tourism destination's image is universally acknowledged, and it affects the tourist behavior in many ways (Baloglu, McCleary, 1999, p868-p897). A proper destination image with the creation, promotion, and incorporation becomes an essential segment of a destination marketing strategy. The reason is that destination image influences both the tourism decision-making process and the consumer. Meanwhile, Selby mentioned that understanding the different images that visitors and non- visitors have of a destination is invaluable, enabling the salient attributes of the naïve image and the reevaluated image to be incorporated into tourism marketing planning (Selby and Morgan, 1996, p287-294). For the prospected traveler, Echtner noted that destination image is widely recognized as an important factor in the decision-making process for prospective and first time travelers while still in the anticipation stage of destination selection (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003). As Um mentioned, prospective visitors frequently have limited knowledge about a destination from promotions by the destination, travel guides, travel journals, books, general media publicity, and word-of-mouth (Um & Crompton, 1992), "Images are of paramount importance because they transpose representation of an area into the potential tourist's mind and give him or her pre-taste of the destination." (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991, p10). Hence, it is the reason for why tourism marketing professionals focus so much on the issue of

creating and promoting a certain destination image. For the repeat and first time travelers, Chon holds the idea that destination image also influence the levels of satisfaction regarding the tourist experience (Chon, 1992, p2-7), and that will have future impact on the decision-making process for the second trip. Meanwhile, Bigne stated that the destination image is a key factor for destination managers, as it provides information on the perceived quality and satisfaction (evaluation of stay), the intention to return, and recommend the destination (future behavior). (Bigne & Sanchez 2001, p868-897)

3.4 Measurement of destination image

Having understood the importance of the destination image and its measurement arise the interest of many researchers. An accurate measurement will lead to efficient and successful marketing. Echtner noted that there are two major methodologies which are structured and unstructured. He still mentioned that using a structured methodology for measuring image different attributes are precisely intergraded in a standardized instrument usually a set of semantic differential or Likert type scales; Echtner noted that Mark stated that structured methodologies use standardized scales, they are easy to administer, simple to code and the results can be analyzed using sophisticated statistical techniques. However, there is no direct opportunity to describe the holistic impression, even though it may be referenced by the respondent when completing the scale item. (Echter & Ritchies 2003). For this reason, Hooley stated that where the attribute components are likely to be numerous and diverse, as is the case for destination image, it may be necessary to conduct extensive research to ensure that all have been uncovered (Hooley, Shipley, & Kriger, 1988, p67-76).

Bovin stated that unstructured methodologies are the alternate form of measurement used in product image research. Unstructured methodologies use free form of descriptions to measure image. (Bovin, 1986, p 11-17). However, the level of detail provided by unstructured methodologies is highly variable as it depends upon the verbal and/or writing skills of the individuals used in the study, their willingness to provide multiple responses and their knowledge base of the product (McDougall & Fry, 1974). Echter pointed out that most of destination image

measurement studies have focused on the common, attribute-based component of destination image and have not addressed the more holistic and unique components. For this reason, the researcher suggested that the qualitative research in the form of focus groups is very useful to uncover a more complete list of attributes that are relevant and salient to consumers. (Hooley, 1988).

However, Echtner and Ritchie (2003) focus on a combination of structured and unstructured methodology to measure destination image. They carefully examined the concept of destination image and gave a comprehensive, multidimensional, definitional measurement approach to destination image. This consisted of three elements which are attribute-holistic, functional-psychological, and common-unique. Echtner and Ritchie mentioned that the destination image is composed of perceptions of individual attributes which can be understood as climate, accommodation facilities, and friendliness of the people as well as more holistic impressions of the place. The third element is common-unique, addressed a destination's common and unique features. They suggested that to measure this image array of open-ended questions and scale items should be formulated and used in conjunction to confine all of the components of destination image (Echtner and Ritchie, 2003). Besides, Jenkins (1999, p7) has developed a model for carrying out the destination image research that integrates both the unstructured (qualitative) and the structured (quantitative) methodology.

Phase 1: Qualitative

- Aim: To investigate and develop the proper constructs that were used by study sample in their perception of destination image.
- Methods: Use the unstructured techniques such as focus group, interview, content analysis, triad as well as photographic elicitation

Phase 2: Quantitative

- Aim: Measure the tourist destination image by using the relevant constructs designed in the first stages
- Methods: two rating scales:
 - Evaluation of destination preference
 - Constructs preference

Figure 2. A model for conducting destination image research. (Source: Jenkins, 1999, p.7)

The combination of the two scales will play an important role for researchers. First of all, it will help a researcher to understand the image held of particular destinations by individual tourists; secondly, it enables the researcher to assign weights to those aspects of image that are considered important by a particular individual or group of individuals; at last, the construct preference ratings also allow the distillation of market segments according to travel preferences. Weiler mentioned that aggregate or 'stereotyped' image of one place can be compared with the image of another place within these market segments. The measurement of image in this way also allows the researcher to observe changes in image over time due to travel experiences (Weiler, 1989, p303-307).

4 FINLAND AS DESTINATION

With the exotic location, enjoyable scenery and functioning infrastructure, Finland is a unique destination for the tourists from all over the world. This chapter introduces the tourism in Finland, the Chinese tourists in Finland as well as the tourism strategy of Finland.

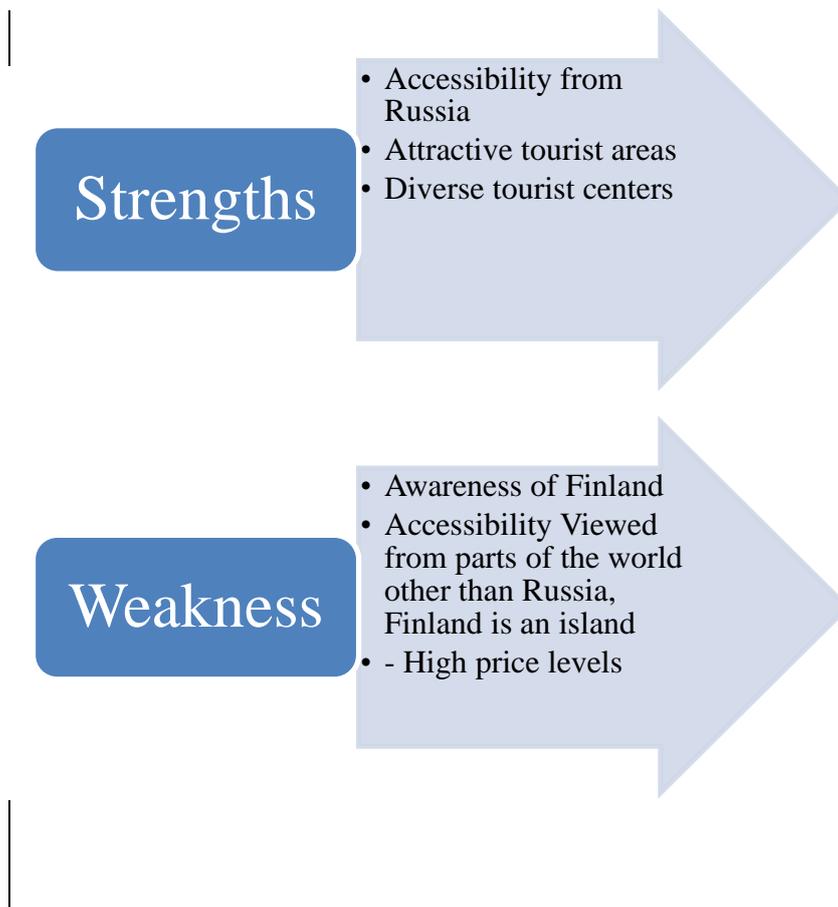
4.1 Tourism in Finland

It is said that in Finland the economic and political significance of tourism for regional development has increased considerably in recent years, to the extent that in some regions it has become a crucial economic policy factor. (Jarkko, 2011). Jarkko stated that tourism is having a favorable economic and social impact, as new, external sources of monetary income and opportunities to work are introduced in the regional economy and its operational cycle. Large amounts of public money are being spent nowadays on the development of tourism in the various regions of Finland. (Jarkko, Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality, 2011)

Finland attracted over 6, 1 million tourists in 2010, with most coming from Russia. The value added by tourism is about 2.4% of the Finnish GDP, and tourism provides around 60,000 jobs. (*Wikipedia*). According to the data collecting from visitfinland website, in 2013, the number of nights spent at accommodation establishments in Finland totaled 20.2 million, which was 0.5% down from the year before. In addition, overnight stays by resident tourists decreased by 1.1% and accommodation establishments recorded nearly 14.4 million of them. Overnight stays by foreign tourists numbered almost 5.9 million, which was 1.1% more than in 2012. The biggest growth came from Asian countries, 17.3%. Among the most important Asian countries of inbound tourism to Finland, overnight stays by visitors from China and Japan increased the most. Overnight stays by Chinese tourists increased by 26.4%. (www.visitfinland.com).

Strengths and Weaknesses

Finland as a tourist country has the strengths and weakness when competing with competitors in the international tourism market.



According to Finland tourism strategy 2020, it is stated that the Russians already form the largest foreign customer group in Finland. The reason is that Finland enjoys a unique location next to St. Petersburg and the adjacent areas. Besides, Finland has a number of attractive tourist areas, including Helsinki, the Turku Archipelago, Finnish Lakeland and Lapland, including Kuusamo. What is more, Finland's tourist centers, which have had a particular focus on the development of leisure travel, offer a diverse range of high-quality services. Thus, these factors constitute a singular competitive advantage for Finnish tourist centers.

However, it is also mentioned that Finland is a small, unknown country. Finland cannot become better known without active efforts to improve the image of the country in general and as a travel destination. Indeed, distances from other, non-Russian parts of the world are longer than in the case of a competing country, which raises travel costs. What is worse, the prices of Finnish tourism services are high on a European scale. Furthermore; international travelers have the notion that

Finland is a high cost country. Price levels will certainly play a key role in Finland's success as a travel destination. (Finland's tourism strategy 2020, p15-17)

4.2 Finland as destination for Chinese tourists

Finland is a destination that tends to mainly attract the more experienced Chinese travelers. In addition to good direct flight connections, the assets of clean nature and the exotic experiences the Finnish nature are offered. The statistic number from European Economic 2012 shows that Chinese tourist arrivals to Europe in 2011 totaled 4.7 million, representing 32.7% of the Chinese long haul outbound market, Chinese tourist arrivals to Northern Europe in 2011 totaled 291,000, representing 6.3% of Chinese arrivals to Europe. Northern Europe's share of the Chinese market was 2.0% in 2011, a 0.5 percentage point decrease from 2001. Long haul outbound travelers travelling from China is forecast to grow 8.3% per year on average through 2016. Arrivals to Northern Europe are expected to increase 60.3% through 2016, to 466,000. Northern Europe's share of the Chinese market is forecast to rise to 2.2% in 2016.

(European tourism, <http://www.slideshare.net/MarinetLtd/european-tourism-2013>)

According to the Border Survey Interview of 2009, the total number of foreign visitors in Finland in 2008 was 6 072 000 constituting an increase of 6 % compared to 2007. Of this amount, 66 000 were Chinese tourists, which is 1.09 % of the total number of tourists that have spent their vacation in Finland. (Border Interview Survey 2009.) The Chinese tourist visiting Finland has an average age of 39 years. The elderly generation of China represented only 3 % of the total number of Chinese tourists, with no traveler being older than 74 years. (Border Interview Survey 2009.) The main purpose for the Chinese traveler to visit Finland is business journeys with a proportion of 40 %. Leisure trips based on packaged tours represented less than business purposes, namely 35 %. This is due to the fact that 60 % are male travelers and more likely to visit the country for business reasons. (Border Interview Survey 2009.) The average length of stay for Chinese visitors in Finland was 8.9 nights in 2008. The total average length of stay of all inbound tourism to Finland in 2008 was 4.2 %. In 2008, 41 % of Chinese tourists

stayed in Finland between one to three nights. Less than one third, namely 27 %, visited Finland for an extended holiday of 4-14 nights. In Eastern Finland and the Kainuu region, only 1 % of the Chinese visitors stated to have stayed overnight. Furthermore, only 1 % visited Lapland. Moreover, 20 % visited the country for daytrips only. The number of Chinese tourists who stayed in Helsinki only during their visit accounted to 59 % in 2008. Those Chinese visitors who stayed overnight in Finland have chosen hotels and motels as their preferred type of accommodation, namely a majority of 60 %. The total expenditure of Chinese tourists in 2008 in Finland amounted to € 37 million, with an average spending of € 57 per day and € 557 per visit. This amount constitutes a decrease compared to the precedent year. In 2007, the total expenditure amounted to € 39.7 million and an average € 101.4 per day (MEK 2009, Border Interview Survey 2009). Finland as destination for the European, it is mentioned by Vuoristo that foreign tourists choose Finland as their destination for different reasons, which vary somewhat according to nationality and several motives are connected to the natural environment. For the Russian tourists, they have a strong motivation of shopping; for the Japanese, they are particularly interested in cultural attractions and events; but the foreign tourists as a whole, however, prefer urban attractions to natural environments in spite of the growing pull force of Lapland. For that reason, Helsinki is by far the most popular tourist center where both domestic and foreign visitors meet. Most of the foreign tourists came from Sweden, Germany, Russia, and the United Kingdom. Vuoristo stated that the share of Europe is considerable, approximately 80 percent of all foreign visitors to Finland. Neighboring Sweden and Russia as the world's most significant single country of origin; Germany, dominate the incoming tourism, but Finland attracts an increasing number of tourists from Southern Europe as well. (Vuoristo & Kai-Veikko 2002)

For the Chinese, similar to the other Nordic countries, Finland is now beginning to attract them. According to the report GB-Times, from 2012 for the first time, the number of overnight stays by Chinese travelers in Finland topped 100,000. The Chinese middle class is growing and becoming richer, which has resulted in a surge in outbound travel. For this reason, Finnish tourism companies are beginning to shift focus to the opportunities China has to offer in terms of potential

tourists. And a group of Finnish entrepreneurs met with Chinese travel organizers in Shanghai at an event organized by Finpro, along with a group of Finnish companies, and they will bring representatives from Chinese travel agencies to Finland in 2014. (<http://gbtimes.com/world/finland-gains-popularity-among-chinese-tourists>)

4.3 Tourism Strategy of Finland

Tourism has major employment impacts and the industry has a balancing effect on regional development in Finland. With the purpose of promoting the tourism trade, Finland's Tourism Strategy to 2020 outlines policies for public sectors. It is mentioned by *Finland's Tourism Strategy to 2020* that there are four reasons to promoting the development of tourism industry.

- 1) Tourism is an industry with remarkable multiplicative effects on the national economy
- 2) Tourism is an industry with an intense employment effect
- 3) Tourism brings prosperity and wellbeing to regions
- 4) Tourism has growth potential

Finland's strategy 2020 set the quantitative goals by 2020 are as follows:

- 1) The tourism industry was shared 3.8 per cent of GDP in 2007; it will increase to 5.1 per cent by 2020
- 2) The Government tax revenues were at 4 billion euro in 2008, and they will increase to 7.5 billion euro by 2020.
- 3) The number of jobs in tourism industries grew to 130,500 in 2007, and they will increase to 171,000 by 2020.
- 4) Tourism receipts were 11 billion euro in 2007, and they will increase to 20.7 billion euro by 2020.
- 5) The number of international arrivals staying at least overnight in Finland will grow from 3.4 million in 2009 to 5.1 million by 2020.

It is stated that due to the increasing significance of tourism businesses, the strategy proposes that the Ministry of Employment and the Economy of Finland will launch a strategic program for the tourism industry for the period 2011–2015. The objective of strategic program for tourism, based on a partnership between the tourism trade and the public sector, would be to forecast and monitor the tourism industry's development, to coordinate the operational preconditions of the tourism trade and tourism business, and to propose new opportunities to further the development of the tourism trade in Finland. The program would also coordinate the preparation and implementation of the measures proposed in Finland's National Tourism Strategy. (Finland's Tourism Strategy, P19)

The tourism strategy of Finland includes three sets of mutually complementary measures. They are: a. the development of the tourism sector, b. enhancing Finland's images as a tourist destination, c. the general industrial policy base underlying industry development.

Among the three measures, enhancing Finland's images as a tourist destination will increase Finland's brand and make Finland an increasingly attractive and popular venue for tourists.

Goals and measures for reinforcing the image of Finland as a tourist destination are as follows.

2.1. Strengthening tourism marketing

As a consequence of the change in Finnish Tourist Board's operating methods, allocations from public funds decreased from 16.2 million euros in 2008 to 9.8 million in 2010.

An increase in the Finnish Tourist Board's budget would have benefits such as enabling a presence in key market areas. An active presence and marketing in our main markets abroad are the prerequisites for increasing Finland's volumes of inbound tourism. Competition over international travelers is intense.

2.2. Enhancing Finland's international visibility

Alongside visibility in international media and exploitability as a travel destination, large international events are a key method of increasing Finland's attrac-

tiveness, and general awareness of the country. The influence of major projects lasts substantially longer than the events themselves. Participants in major events, and smaller congresses, meetings, incentive trips and events also increase leisure travel flows. (Finland's Tourism Strategy, P26-27)

5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to study the destination image of Finland, research is conducted among Mainland Chinese tourists about the image of Finland. The research is conducted within a system of knowledge and that research should be probing or testing that system with the aim of increasing knowledge. Finn stated that there are two types of research which are pure and applied research. Pure research is concerned with development, examination, verification and refinement of research methods, procedures, techniques and tools that form the body of research methodology. Applied research is conducted to find and a solution to a problem that has direct relevance to the recreation and travel industry. (Finn ect. 2000, P2-3)

It is said that there are three main styles of research in the social sciences that researchers in leisure and tourism can use. They are: survey method, experimental method, and ethnographic method. Finn mentioned that the experimental method is less common in leisure and tourism research, and the ethnographic research involves a method of investigation where a culture is observed in its naturel setting which is time-consuming. Survey requires a sample of respondents to reply to a number of questions that have been previously determined as relevant to the research. Its aim is to carry out a causal analysis by collecting data on a range of respondents, and attempt to control for extraneous sources of variance by statistical techniques. (Finn etc. 2000, P5).

5.1 Quantitative and Qualitative research

It is mentioned that there are two approaches of research methods: qualitative and quantitative. Quantitative data collection usually involves numbers, graphs and charts, whereas, qualitative data collection methods deals with feelings and other non-quantifiable elements. For the quantitative research method, the concept of it is expressed in the forms of variables, the measures of it are universal and it appears in the form of numbers and specific measurement, besides, the quantitative research can be illustrated in the forms of tables, graphs and pie-carts; for the qualitative research method, the concept of it

expressed in motives and generalizations, the measures of it are developed to interpret the primary data taking into account the research, and it appears in the forms of words, images, transcripts.(<http://research-methodology.net/research-methods/>)

Creswell (1994) determined quantitative method as “a type of research that is explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics).” Quantitative research method is the most scientific way of analyzing data. Usually, it characterized by systematic collection of data, in order to gather clear and unbiased picture of a phenomenon. The main target of this method is to describe an aspect with the help of numbers; therefore the data will be numerical (Tolmie A, Muijs D & McArteer 2011, 1-2). Qualitative research is designed to reveal a target audience’s range of behavior and the perceptions that drive it with reference to specific topics or issues. It uses in-depth studies of small groups of people to guide and support the construction of hypotheses. The results of qualitative research are descriptive rather than predictive. Qualitative research methods originated in the social and behavioral sciences: sociology, anthropology and psychology

The differences between the two approaches mentioned by Finn (2000:9) are a few:

- A. Either quantitative research helps facilitate qualitative research, or qualitative research helps facilitate quantitative research.
- B. Quantitative research can explore large-scale macro structures whereas qualitative research can focus on small- scale micro aspects of the project.
- C. At different points in the study quantitative methods might be more appropriate than qualitative methods, or vice versa.

The study will apply the quantitative research since this method will offer a deep insight of a certain phenomenon with the help of numbers. The main target of the research is to collect opinions of people from mainland China about their image of Finland and what kind of decision –making factors affect choosing Finland as a destination. Therefore, the quantitative research meth-

od is most suitable for collecting information about a phenomenon among a large number of people.

5.2 Questionnaire Design

Questionnaires are most important tool for gathering data for leisure and tourism research. It is defined as gathering information from individual using a formally designed schedule of questions. Clark stated that there are two processes of questionnaire, which are a creative process of writing questions and a design process of devising a structure which is rational in terms of the questionnaires' objectives and intended subjects. (Mona Clark, 1998, p91).

It is also said that survey questions are a means of measuring or obtaining information on the key concept within the research. And the design of questionnaire can be staged in the process:

- A. Define the concept (what kind of information the research need to collect for my thesis)
- B. Break this concept down for each dimension
- C. Develop indicators for each dimension
- D. Select one indicators for each dimension
- E. Design questions to collect information for each indicator
- F. Pre- test the questions in order to ensure that they are valid and reliable.
- G. The resultant questions form the variables in your data analysis (Finn.2000.p94)

For the tourism sector, Seaton mentioned that questionnaires are most commonly directed at the consumer as it is an ideal way for an industry to amass a considerable amount of data about the consumers of their products. He point out that tour operators would give out questionnaires to holidaymakers on the flight home; airlines may adopt this approach capitalizing on having a captive audience whose views on the product/service is at the forefront of their minds. (A.V.Seaton&M.M.Bennett.1996.p105)

According to Smith, there are two basic formats of questions: closed-ended and open-ended. Closed-ended questions present the respondent with a fixed set of

options, which as simple as 'yes' or 'no'. Since they ensure a consistent set of answers from respondents and they are relatively easy to complete, which make them popular with researchers. Open-ended questions invite respondents to compose their own answers to a question. But this format of question will permit more spontaneous responses and promote a rapport between researcher and his subject.

The five parts consist of Questionnaire which Smith mentioned.

- 1) An introduction that explains the purpose and provides information about the researcher.
- 2) Opening questions which are designed to get the respondent in the mood to complete the questionnaire.
- 3) Crux questions, (Brout, 1997, p 87) which represent the essential issues the researcher need to explore through the questionnaire.
- 4) Demographic questions which are common to be asked in questionnaire.
- 5) A brief thank-you and reminder about the purpose of the questionnaire. (Smith, 2010, p65-66).

5.3 Sampling

A sample is a sub-set of population selected for inclusion in the research. Therefore the sample is smaller than the population from which it is drawn. The principle objective in sampling is to obtain a representative selection of the sampling units within the population. There are two key questions which have to be addressed in any sample survey:

- A. How should the sample be obtained?
- B. How large should the sample be?

Two types of sampling techniques are mentioned by Clark, the probability sampling and non- probability sampling. Byrman defined the probability sample as a sample that has been selected using random selection so that each unit in the population has a known chance of being selected, which generally assumed that a representative sample is more likely to be the outcome when this method of selection from the population is employed. The aim of probability sampling is to keep sampling error to a minimum. He also defined non-probability sample as a sam-

ple that has not been selected using a random selection method, which implies that some units in the population are more likely to be selected than others. (Byrman, 2001, p 85)

Ghauri listed the types of probability samples. They are simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling and the cluster sampling. He mentioned that the simple random sampling is the best known one and its key characteristic is that all units in the population have the same probability of being include. A systematic sample will select every nth unit after a random start, and applying for systematic sampling require the units in the population can be ordered in some way. A stratified sample is a probability sample where the parent population is divided into a mutually exclusive an exhaustive subset and a simple random sample of units is chosen independently from each subset. Finally, the cluster sampling will divide the population into mutually exhaustive subsets. (Pervez Ghauri. 2010. P144)

Sample Size

According to Veal, the absolute size of the sample is important, not its size relative to the population. He said that this applies to all cases, except if the population is small. Finn pointed out that the sample size will be determined by:

- 1) The degree of precision and level of confidence required;
- 2) The purpose of data collection;
- 3) The nature of data analysis to be performed
- 4) The likely response rate
- 5) The level of available resources (Finn.2000.p 127)

Based on 300 questionnaires are sent to three travel agencies and 100 answers are gained from them, this belongs to simple random sampling. Besides, defined sample size was followed the theoretical framework of sample size.

5.4 Implementing the research

The quantitative method and the questionnaire aim to collecting data for the main question about what kind of an image of Finland is given to the mainland Chinese tourists. The questionnaire (appendix 2 &3) is designed to both open-ended and close-ended questions in order to get the opinions from the respondents both more freely and objectively. The respondents will be targeted as the Chinese tourists who are from four different big cities in order to avoid wage differences. The internet will be used to get large amount of responses and the data will be analyzed with SPSS for Windows. The questionnaire is written in both Chinese and English in order to prevent misunderstandings from the respondents' side; it means that the respondents clearly understood the content and the meaning of each question. The first part of the questionnaire is the demographic/ basic information in order to collect data for comparison. The second part of questionnaire is open-ended questions in order to understand the travel motivations and destination image of the Chinese tourists.

5.5 Research reliability and validity

Veal defined that validity is the extent to which the information collected by the researcher truly reflects the phenomenon being studied. He defined the reliability as 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 subject. (Veal.2006.p41). Burns mentioned that "When data are obtained from a data gathering instrument or technique, it should be known what faith it can be put in the data as truly indicating the person's performance or behavior. With all data there are question needs to be asked always:

- A. Was the assessment instrument /technique reliable and valid?
- B. Were the conditions under which the data were obtained such that, as far as possible, only the subject's ability is reflected in the data and that other extraneous factors had as minimal an effect as possible?" (Burns, 2000, 336)

The reliability of the research can be determined by repeating the research or by conducting a parallel research. The validity of the research can be ensured by comparing the choices done throughout the research to the theoretical framework. Three different travel agencies in China were chosen to ensure the reliability of research. In order to reach the validity of data, the questionnaires are sent to three different travel agencies and each question is explained to the staff member who helps in collecting the answers. The results of the survey were conducted in SPSS's system several times to get accurate data. Through comparing with the theoretical framework which mentioned about the Chinese tourists in Finland, it reached the validity aimed.

Veal stated that in the tourism sector, the researcher is fraught with difficulties in this area because empirical research is largely concerned with people's behavior, attitudes. Validity of leisure and tourism data can rarely be as certain as in the natural sciences. So Finn suggested that there are ways of improving validity of the operationalized concept. They include: a) approaching people who are employed in leisure and tourism industries for their professional advice; b) consulting with previous published research; c) using more than one method of data collection to triangulate the results; d) sound understanding of the theory underpinning the research. (Finn, 2000, p29 & Veal, 2006, p41)

There are some factors will lead to reliability and validity errors:

- a) Poor definition of research problem
- b) Wrong target group/badly conducted sampling
- c) Poor questionnaire/interviews etc.
- d) Poor analyzing skills
- e) The information is used for other purposes than intended

6 RESULTS

The survey was conducted in mainland China and the samples were collected from three travel agencies. The findings of study are presented in this chapter. The questionnaires were answered through filling the forms in different three travel agencies. The four main questions of the research are as follow: the first one is basic information of tourists which can provide the characteristics of them; the second one is about Finland as a destination for the mainland Chinese tourists; the third one is about the tourists if they were travel to Finland; the last one is why not choose Finland as a destination in order to conduct further analysis. The scope of tourist was identified as mainland Chinese tourists who are customers of the studied travel agencies.

The first main question provides the general description of the sample which includes gender, education level, age, and income of the respondents. The second main questions provide the impression and image about Finland from Chinese tourists' point of view. The last one provides the information why the Chinese tourists do not choose Finland as a destination, which can offer further analysis about tourism market of Finland.

6.1 Basic information of respondents

From the hundred respondents 47 were female and 53 were male as shown in figure 3.

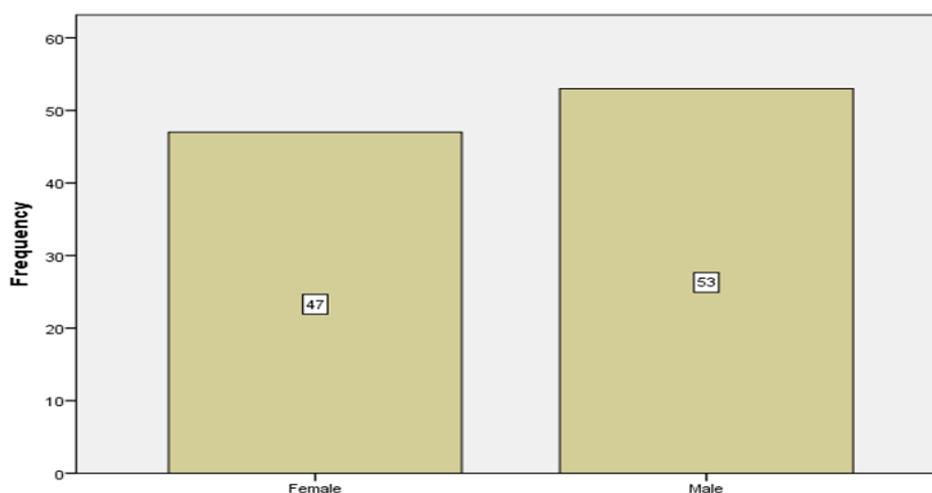


Figure 3: Gender component of respondent

The age groups are divided as figure 4: under 18 (adolescence), study or just start to work (18-24; 25-34), engaged in working life in different steps from (35-44; 45-54), and retired (55-64 ; Above 56).

- Age below 18: 3 person, or 3.0%;
- Age from 18-24: 4 person, or 4.0%;
- Age from 25-34: 33 person, or 33.0%;
- Age from 35-44: 10 person, or 10.0%;
- Age from 45-54: 39 person, or 39.0%
- Age from 55-64: 9 person, or 9.0%;
- Age Above 65: 2 person, or 2.0%

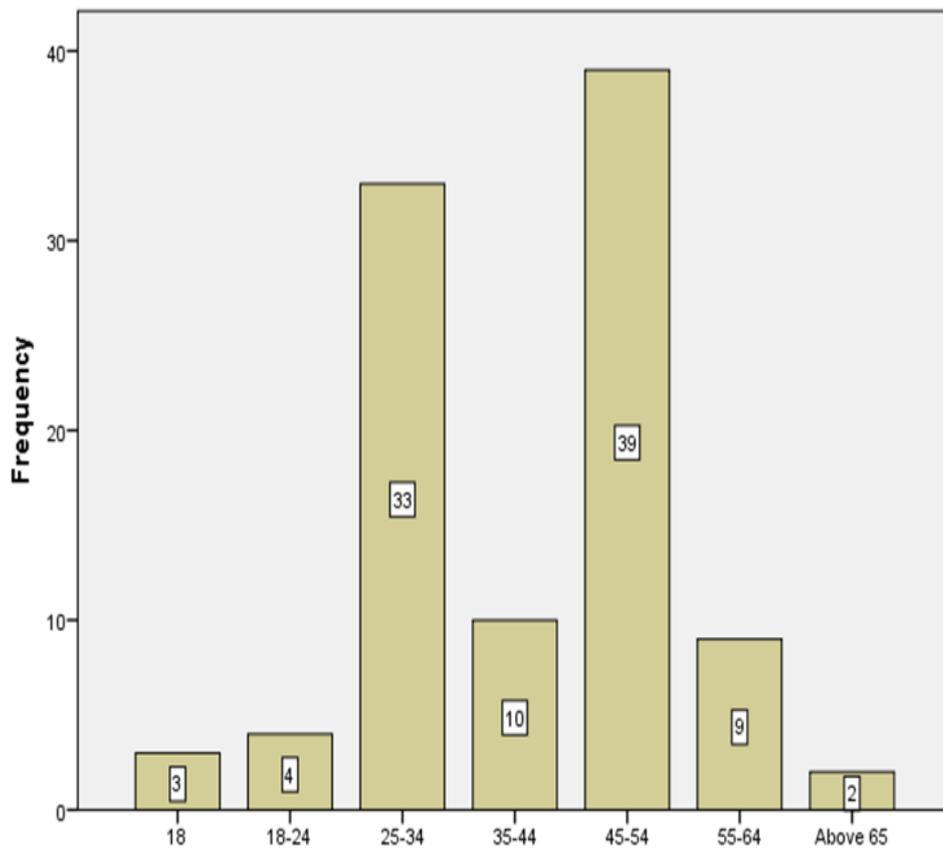


Figure 4 Age of respondents

• The education level of the respondents is divided into five groups according to the respondent's education background. The five groups are listed from under high school level, high school level, bachelor level, master level, and above master level. As shown in the figure 5, most of respondents have a bachelor level degree, which is 49%; 30% of them have a master level degree, 9 % of them are educated under high school level or above master level, and just 3 % of them are high school level educated.

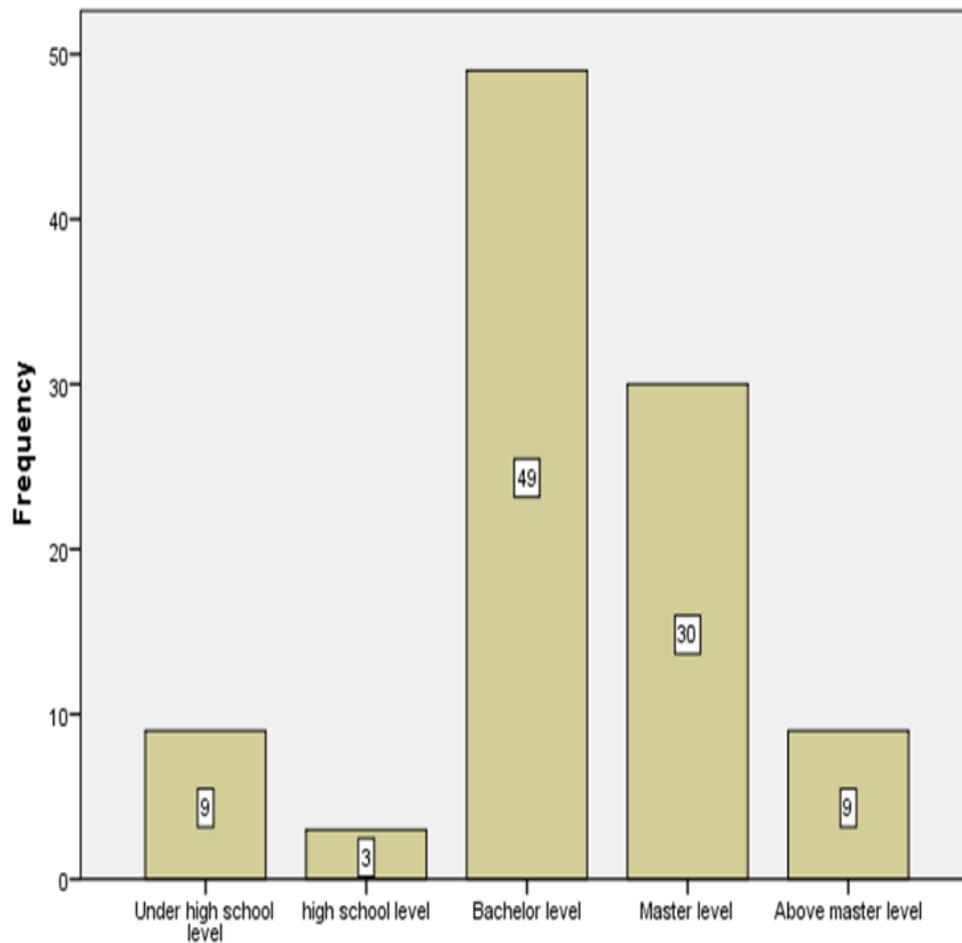


Figure 5 Education Level

- The wages of respondents are divided into four groups, which are lower income (under 60.000 RMB); medium income (60.000 to 100.000RMB and 100.000 to 150.000RMB); well-off income (150.000 to 200.000 RMB; 200.000 to 250.000 RMB); and high income (above 250.000 RMB). Among the respondents, 38% of them belong to high income groups (250.000 RMB/ YEAR), 49% is well-off income, and 13% is medium income.

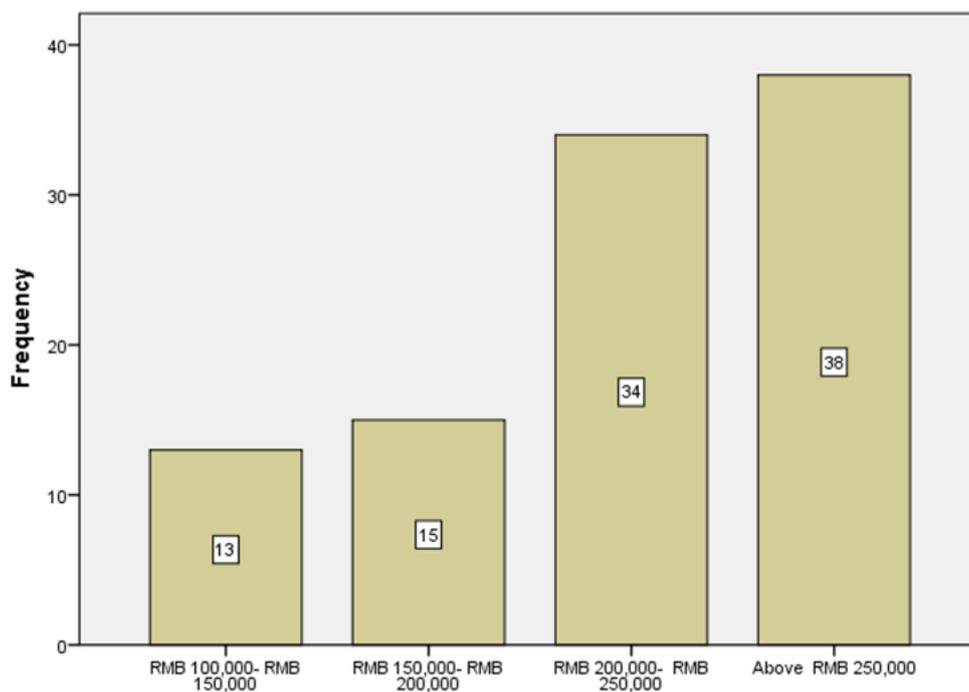


Figure 6 Wage/ year

The wage is one of most important factors which affects the destination choice of Chinese tourists. Figure 6 shows that there is no respondent under 60.000 RMB and most of the respondents are above 250.000 RMB.

According to the data which is collected for the basic information of the respondents, there are more male than female Chinese tourists, and most of them belong to the middle aged group with a bachelor level education; besides, the most of the respondents are in the high income groups.

6.2 Finland as destination

Question 5 and 6 are designed to collect the respondents' opinions about Finland. Question 5 requires to choosing one Nordic country that the respondents would like to travel to the Nordic countries. Figure 7 shows that a minority of respondents (only 14%) will choose Finland as their destination. From the four Nordic countries those being mentioned were: Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland. The majority of respondents (34%) show great interest in Denmark and Sweden (35%).

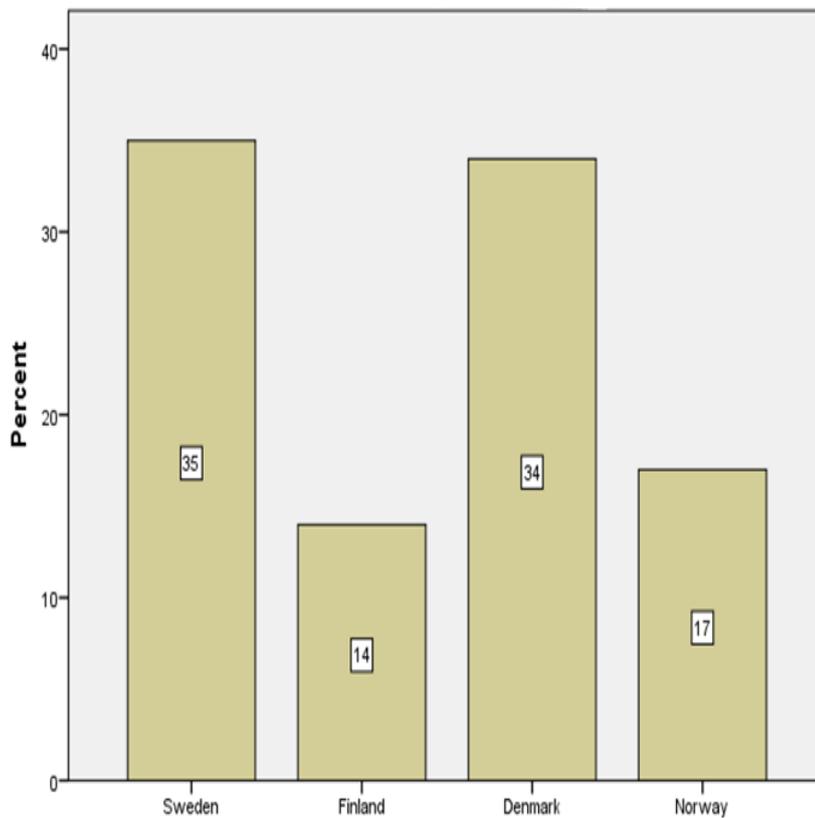


Figure 7 Mostly chosen Nordic countries

The questions 6 is about how respondents' level of knowledgement of the Finland. Based on the different level of understanding, options were classified in to five levels which are not at all; a little; fairly; quite a lot; know very much.

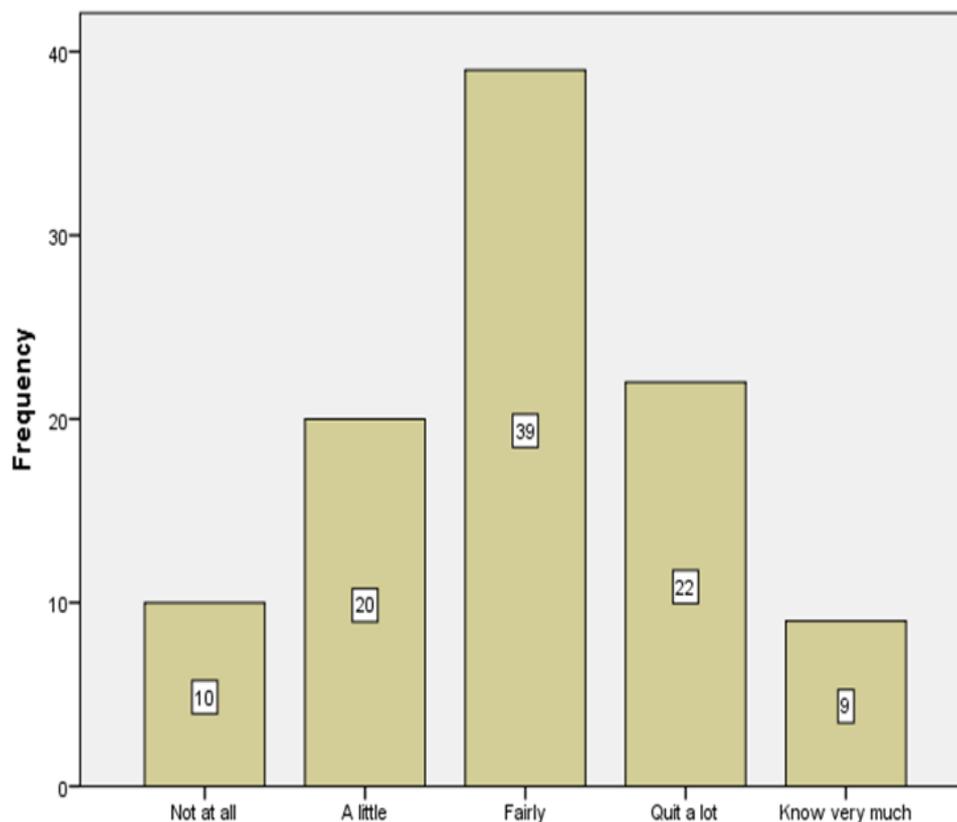


Figure 8 Understanding level of Finland

According to figure 8 showed above, 39% of the respondents fairly well know about Finland, and 10% of them know nothing about Finland, but 9% of respondents know very much.

Questions 5 and 6 indicate that the majority of respondent (39%) fairly well know about Finland, but the strange phenomenon is that most of them choose other Nordic country to travel (Denmark, 34% & Sweden, 35%).

Questions 7 and 8 are aimed to collect the respondent's impression about Finland. Question 7 requires to choosing one of four options that lists the respondent's first impression about Finland. The four words mentioned as Finland's tourism country brand:

1. Cool,
2. Contrast,
3. Creativity,
4. Credible

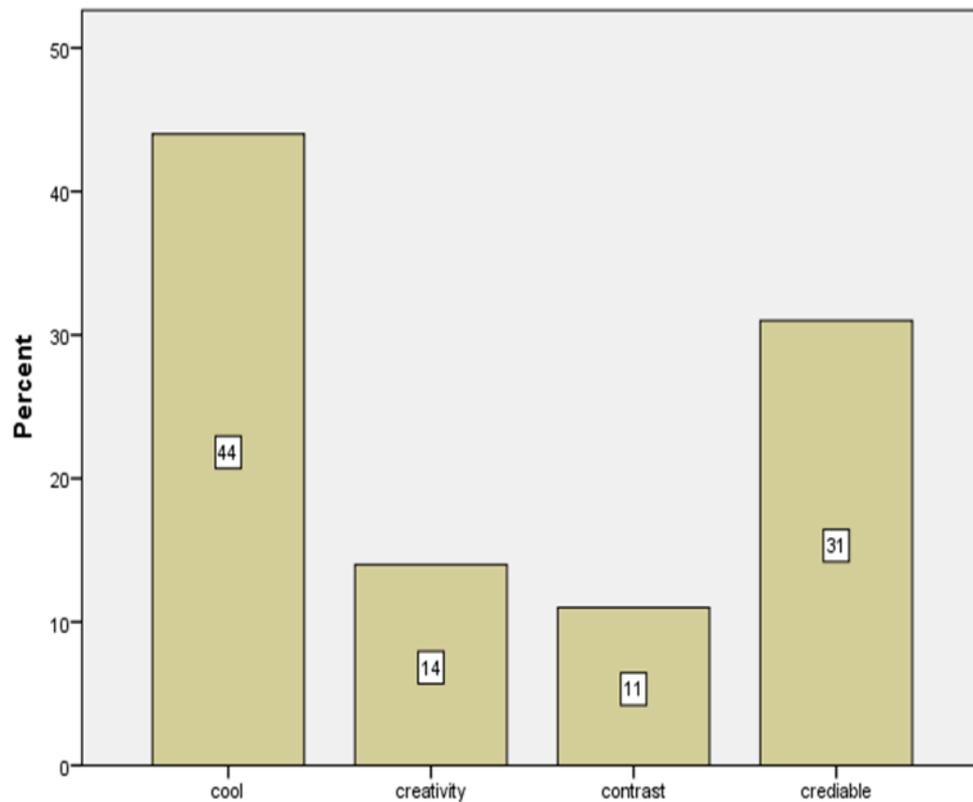


Figure 9 Impressions about Finland

Figure 9 show that 44% of the respondents think that “cool” is the first impression Finland gives to them, 31% think Finland is credible, 14% think it is creativity, and 11 % think Finland is contrast.

Question 8 aims to discover the most reasons that attract the Chinese tourists to visit the Finland. The question was designed to be a multiple choice question with at least three choices.

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
attract to Finland	Convenient transportation	21	6,8%	21,0%
	Beautiful natural landscape	46	14,9%	46,0%
	Splendid cultural resources.	24	7,8%	24,0%
	Shopping, Finnish design, fashion, high-tech products, souvenir and tax refund service.	85	27,5%	85,0%
	Just to visit, take the chance to visit as many countries as I can.	52	16,8%	52,0%
	Visit relatives and friends in Finland	46	14,9%	46,0%
	To participate events or sports	18	5,8%	18,0%
	Others	17	5,5%	17,0%
Total		309	100,0%	309,0%

Table 1 Most attracting reasons to Finland

According to table 1, the most attracting reasons for visiting Finland are shopping, Finnish design, fashion, high-tech products, souvenirs and the tax refund service in Finland. 27.5% of the respondents choose it; 16.8% of respondents choose the reason “Just to visit, take the chance to visit as many countries as I can”; and 14.9%

of respondents choose both beautiful nature landscape and VFR (Visit Friend and Relatives) as their choice.

6.3 If Travel in Finland

Question 9 and 10 are designed to collect the respondents' travel behavior in Finland which may contribute some ideas to tourism barriers from both countries.

Question 9 is a multiple choice question, and there should be at least three choices which will choose as the most common three things done when travelling. Table 2 shows most common three things that respondents will do during travel to Finland which are visiting tour attractions (23.6%), tasting food (20.1%), and shopping (20.4%).

	Responses		Percent of Cases	
	N	Percent		
travel in Finland	Visit tour attraction	67	23,6%	67,0%
	Taste food	57	20,1%	57,0%
	Shopping	58	20,4%	58,0%
	Go to the theater, concert,	32	11,3%	32,0%
	Attending the business meeting, conference	31	10,9%	31,0%
	Attending sports events	39	13,7%	39,0%
Total	284	100,0%	284,0%	

Table 2 What will do if travel in Finland

Question 10 is designed to collect the days the respondents spend in Finland. The options are classified to four groups which are less than one week; 1-2 weeks; 2-4 weeks; more than four weeks.

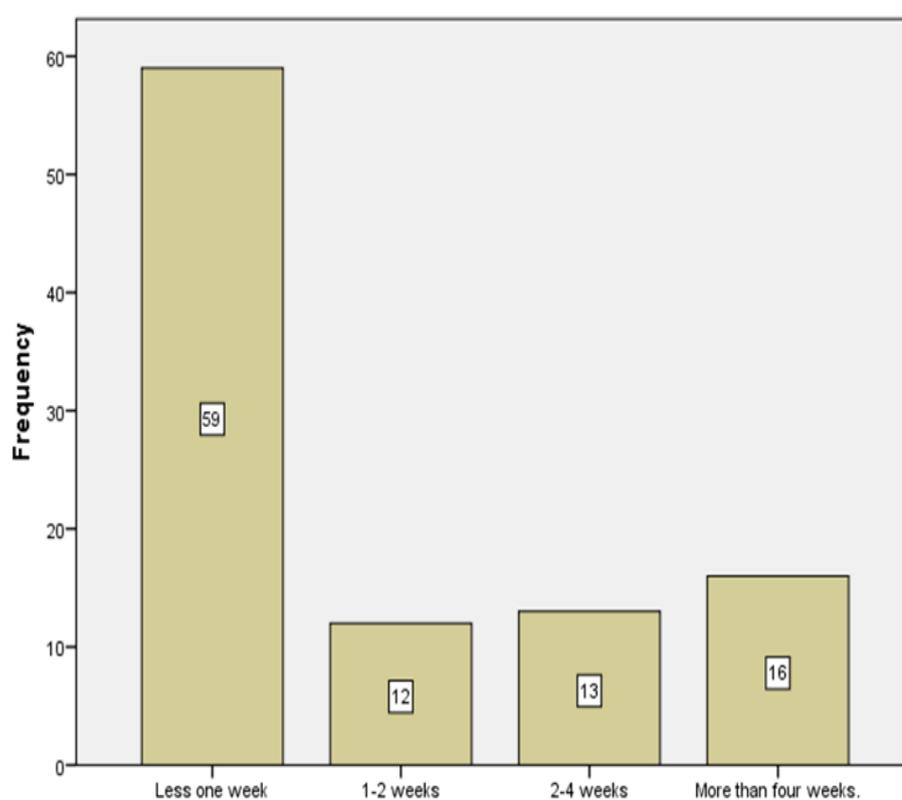


Figure10. Spending days

Figure 10 shows that the majority of respondents spend just less than one week (59%) even though 14.9% of respondents choose VFR as their choice for most attracting reason to Finland. In addition, 16% stay more than four weeks, 13% stay more than 2 to 4 weeks, and 12% of the respondents stay for 1 to 2 weeks.

The last question aims to discover the top reasons why mainland Chinese tourist do not visit the Finland, the results are shown in figure 11.

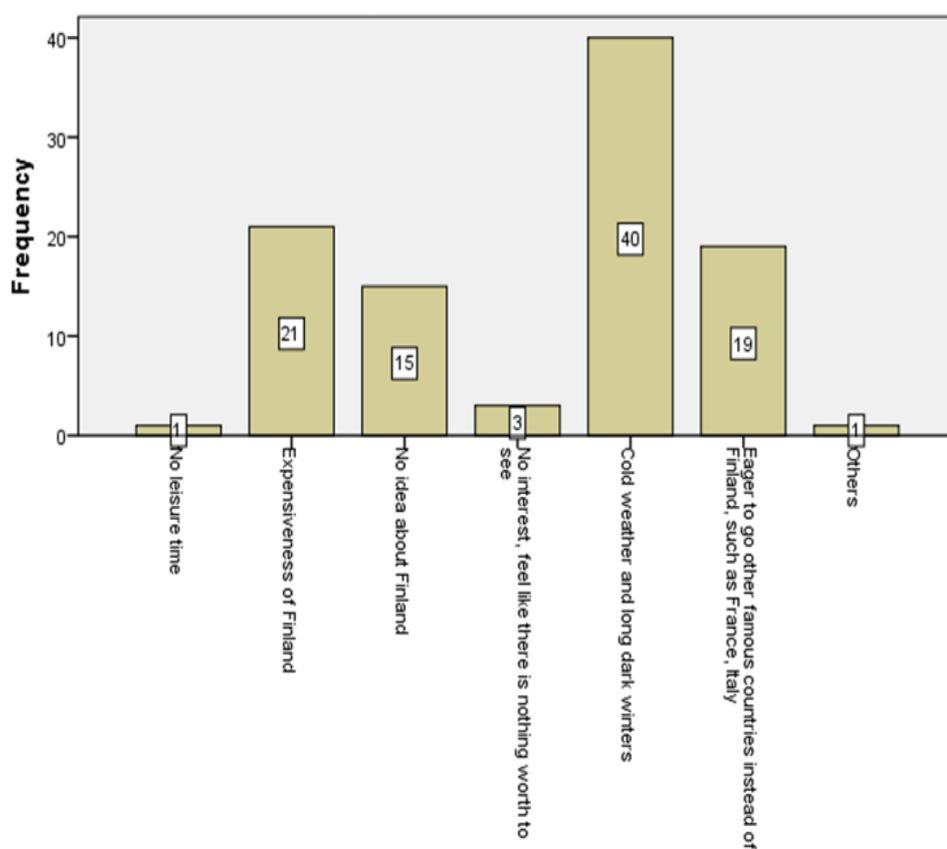


Figure11. Why not choose Finland

Figure 11 shows that the cold weather and long dark winter, expensiveness of Finland as well as they want to go other famous countries instead of Finland (such as France, Italy) are the top three reasons that why the respondents do not choose Finland as destination. Economic reasons are the two top reasons to stop the mainland Chinese tourists from visiting the Nordic countries.

7 ANALYSIS

In order to gain better understanding of image of Finland for the Chinese tourists and how the image of Finland affects the decision making of them, in this section, all the main statistical results from the questionnaire data will be analyzed deeply.

First of all, from the basic information of respondents, it appears that gender does not play many roles since there are no big differences among the male and females Chinese tourists. The level of educational background shows that most of respondents are bachelor level; and in China, this level has become an essential requirement of being well-off. The age group shows the majority of Chinese tourists to be middle aged; meaning around 45-54 years. This age group of people in China have stable income, flexible leisure time, and they do not have such pressures as other younger age groups have; they also have better physical conditions than older age groups which suits travelling abroad; the wage/year of the majority of respondents is above 250,000 RMB (=30,382 euro) indicating that most of the outbound Chinese have a good financial situation..

Secondly, questions 5 and 6 show that the Chinese tourists have fairly good knowledge about Finland. However, they choose Denmark as the top destination from the Nordic countries. The reason for this phenomenon is that Denmark emerges as a beautiful fairy tale country when the Chinese are young, as well as the commercials about Denmark existing in various mass media to build a great country image, which offers more opportunities to the Chinese people to have a better understanding of the country comparing with others. Questions 7 and 8 are mostly related to the research questions which can be answered through statistical data. In question 7, the majority of respondents choose “cool” from one of 4C which represents the tourism brand of Finland, and the cool which means nice, happy, trendy, and refreshing crisp. This is the current image that Finland gives to most Mainland Chinese tourists.

Question 8 show that the most attracting factors are shopping, Finnish design, fashion, high-tech products, souvenirs and the tax refund service as well as beautiful landscape for the mainland Chinese tourists visit Finland, which indi-

cate that how destination image of Finland affects the decision making of mainland Chinese tourists. All in all, the mainland Chinese tourists fairly well know about Finland and nice, happy, trendy, and refreshing crisp country is the current image of Finland for them. In addition, shopping, Finnish design, fashion, high-tech products, souvenirs and a tax refund service as well as beautiful landscape offered by Finland affects Chinese decision making in choosing Finland as a destination.

Third, questions 9 and 10 show the travel behavior of respondents which may contribute to the barriers of tourism in both countries. Question 11 shows that cold weather and long dark winters is the biggest reason stop the mainland Chinese from visiting Finland. Therefore, how to handle di-seasonalization and find appropriate solutions to appealing to tourists should be considered by Finnish Tourism organizations.

At last, the results of 100 questionnaires have shown that Finland as a destination was huge potential market for tourism from mainland China, with people of different genders and age groups. Income is an important element to influence in order for the respondents to plan time and economic budget, even influence the level of knowing about Finland. The image of Finland is not competitive when competing with the other Nordic countries. In addition, the reason stopping some respondents from visiting Finland is the bad image of the destination in some points, so the barriers should be taken into consideration in order to find appropriate solutions.

8 CONCLUSIONS & DISCUSSION

The aim of research of the thesis was to find out how to appeal to the outbound Chinese tourists to choose Finland as a destination by answering two research questions.

- How does the destination image affect the decision making of the mainland Chinese tourists?
- What is current image of Finland as a destination when it comes to appealing the mainland Chinese tourists?

With the help of sources presented and assessed in this thesis, the answers are as follows:

- To affect the destination making of mainland Chinese tourists, Finland can depend on the current image of Finland, as well as offer shopping, Finnish design, fashion, high-tech products, souvenirs and a tax refund service and the country's beautiful landscape.
- For the mainland Chinese tourists, the current image of the Finland is a nice, happy, trendy, and refreshing crisp country which has a beautiful landscape.

Discussion

The survey is conducted in Chinese and collected from customers who plan to travel abroad. According to the feedback from staff of travel agencies, they need to explain some tourism information about Finland even the customers quite much know about Finland. In addition, the travel agencies do not have much promotional market about Finland, what they have is some information collected from the internet.

Based on the research as well as the feedback from staff of travel agencies, the questions that need to be considered are how to promote the tourism market of Finland for the Chinese under the condition of giving a good impression about Finland. Here are some suggestions.

- The country image of Finland should have more effective distribution channels to promote it in the Chinese market since there are potential customers willing to buy the product.
- Build a competitive strength of tourism which could compete with the other Nordic countries, and which may appeal more to the Chinese tourists.
- Enhance the cooperation with tourism market organization, offering good opportunities to both the Finnish and Chinese market.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1: The Leisure Motivation Scale

Figure 2: A model for conducting destination image research.

Figure 3: Gender component of respondents

Figure 4: Age of respondents

Figure 5: Education Level

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Figure 7: Mostly chosen Nordic countries

Figure 8: Understanding level of Finland

Figure 9: Impressions about Finland

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Figure 11: Why not choose Finland

Table 1: Most attracting reasons to Finland

Appendix 2: Questionnaires

Survey Questionnaire

Basic Information

Please answer the following questions

1. Gender:

- Female
- Male

2. Education level.

- Under high school level
- High school level
- Bachelor level
- Master level.
- Above master level.

3. Age:

- Below 18
- 18–24
- 25–34
- 35–44
- 45–54
- 55–64
- Above 65

4. Wage/ Year

- Under RMB 60,000

- RMB60,000- RMB 100,000
- RMB 100,000- RMB 150,000
- RMB 150,000- RMB 200,000
- RMB 200,000- RMB 250,000
- Above RMB 250,000

Finland as destination

5. Please choose which Nordic country you want to travel?

- Denmark
- Sweden
- Norway
- Finland

6. Do you know about the Finland?

- Not at all
- A little
- Fairly
- Quite a lot
- Know very much

7. What is your impression about Finland among these words?

- Cool
- Creativity
- Contrast
- Credible

8. Which items would attract you most to choose Finland as your destination.
(Choose at least three options)

- A. Convenient transportation

- B. Beautiful natural landscape
- C. Splendid cultural resources
- D. Shopping, Finnish design, fashion, high-tech products, souvenir and tax refund service
- E. Just to visit, take the chance to visit as many countries as I can
- F. Visit relatives and friends in Finland
- G. To anticipate event or sport
- H. Others

If travel in Finland

9. What you will do if you were traveled in Finland

- A. Visit tour attraction
- B. Taste food
- C. Shopping
- D. Go to theater, concert, and others
- E. Attending business meeting, conference
- F. Attending sports event ,such as cycling, jogging/casino

10. How many days you will stay if you were traveled to Finland

- Less one week
- 1-2 weeks
- 2-4 weeks
- More than four weeks.

11. Why not choose Finland

- A. No leisure time
- B. Expensiveness of Finland
- C. Inconvenient to getting visa
- D. No idea about Finland

- E. No interest, feel like there is nothing worth to see
- F. Cold weather and long dark winters.
- G. Eager to go other famous countries instead of Finland, such as France, Italy.
- H. Other

Appendix 3

尊敬的游客：

您好！

我是一名在芬兰就读的留学生，为了真实可靠的获得中国游客对芬兰的了解，建议，特此进行此次问卷调查。您的真实回答有助于我认识和理解芬兰旅游的实际情况，以及中国游客赴芬兰旅游的市场潜力及发展状况。

感谢您在包忙之中对我的帮助。不甚感激！

调查员：麦尔哈巴 艾海提

基本情况:**1. 性别:**

- 女性
- 男性

2. 教育程度.

- 高中以下
- 高中
- 本科
- 研究生
- 研究生以上.

3. 年龄:

- 18岁以下
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65以上

4. 年收入

- 低于60,000元
- 60,000- 100,000 元
- 100,000- 150,000元
- 150,000- 200,000元
- 200,000- 250,000元
- 高于250,000 元

芬兰作为旅游目的地

5. 请选择你期待去旅游的北欧国家?

- 丹麦
- 瑞典
- 挪威
- 芬兰

6. 你对芬兰了解多少?

- 一点不知道
- 稍微了解一点
- 不多不少
- 相当多
- 知道非常多

7. 请选择你对芬兰的印象?

- 酷
- 创造力强
- 极端
- 信用度高

8. 以下哪一项将吸引你去芬兰旅游. (至少选择三项)

- A. 便利的交通,
- B. 美丽的自然景观
- C. 灿烂的文化资源
- D. 商品选购, 芬兰品牌, 北欧时尚, 高科技产品, 纪念品, 返税服务
- E. 仅为旅游目的, 尽可能多的到更多地旅游
- F. 探亲访友
- G. 参与某项活动或运动

- H. 其他

如若到芬兰旅游

9. 你会选择哪项， 如若有机会去芬兰旅游

- G. 参观旅游景点
- H. 品尝美食
- I. 购物
- J. 欣赏歌剧， 演唱会或其他
- K. 参加会议或论坛
- L. 参加体育活动

10. 你将停留在芬兰多久， 如若有机会去芬兰旅游

- 少于一周
- 1-2 周
- 2-4 周
- 多余四周

11. 为什么不选择芬兰做为旅游目的地

- A. 无闲暇时间
- B. 旅游费用昂贵
- C. 签证办理事物繁杂
- D. 对芬兰一无所知
- E. 不感兴趣， 觉得没有什么值得去参观
- F. 寒冷的天气， 漫长的黑夜.
- G. 更乐于去别的国家， 如法国， 意大利.
- H. 其他